

This week, Andy presents the fourth and final installment in his four part series on "Growing Through Goal Setting". In a society where everything seems to move at high speed, the problem is not one of "time", but rather one of "time management". Do YOU control your time, or are you CONTROLLED by your time? If you feel pushed and pulled by your schedule, Andy says you need to begin to practice "Goal-Directed Time Management". As a believer, you have been given a new life in Christ. Ephesians 5:15-16 says "Make the BEST use of your time ... do not be vague but firmly grasp what you know to be the will of the Lord." Be goal-directed. Be intentional as you approach your day. You need to identify "life goals", and purposefully pursue those goals you believe God has created you for. Organize your activities so that your "goals" become "actions" and do not stay merely items on a list. Build your daily life on lasting values. Titles, awards, bank accounts and all that the world would have you believe is the "goal" of everyone who really matters will vanish in the face of eternity.

Read 1 Corinthians 3 and see what Andy is talking about when he refers to "Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones". These are the things of true value in life that will remain after you leave this world. In the natural world, gold, silver, and precious stones remain behind when a fire consumes everything else. Gold is the most valuable. The most important goals to reach for God in your life should be "golden". Goals less important than "golden" goals, but that are still very important, are the "silver" goals. Behind silver goals for your life comes the smaller life goals that you can consider "precious stones", each unique from the other, each of a different value. How can you manage your time and keep your perspective about what God wants you to do with your time? Andy presents a four-quadrant matrix for importance and urgency by Steven Covey to illustrate some approaches to time management. Each quarter or "quadrant", represents a possible aspect of the demands on your time and how you respond to it. There is the quadrant of the "Urgent and Important" (the things that require immediate attention) that cause you stress and burnout and a feeling "crisis". The second quadrant is the quadrant of the "Urgent But Not Important" ("interruptions") and causes you feelings of "frustration". A third quadrant is the quadrant of the "Not Urgent and Not Important" (trivia or "busy work"), and causes feelings of "guilt" because of a sense of wasted time. The last quadrant is the quadrant of the "Not Yet Urgent But Important" (Planning and Prevention) and fosters your feelings of "significance". You should seek to live your life in this last quadrant whenever possible. Here you plan to meet the needs of your life and to resist being controlled by the demands of the other three quadrants. By planning your time to meet the demands of life before they become "controlling" you can achieve significant things for God in your life and in the lives of others. You can fulfill the purpose God created you for.

When the "new heavens" and the "new earth" promised to us in the Word of God come, the only things of this present world to go there will be those souls saved by Jesus. How will you begin to schedule your time now so that you can invest your Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones into the lives of others?