

Scheduling: An Active Way to Pursue Obedience to Jesus

I have grown to love my personal calendar.

I know different people treat their time in different ways; I've found that I thrive most in a structured environment. So I've tried in the last few months to take a more proactive role in structuring my time, particularly at work. Rather than simply having a "to do" list of tasks, I have begun to transfer those tasks to blocks of time on my schedule. So I break the day into segments, sometimes 30 minutes, sometimes an hour, and assign particular tasks for that given period of time.

For some tasks, it means multiple blocks of that time during the week. I might devote an hour on Monday, then another on Tuesday, then 30 more minutes on Friday. And at the end of each day, I evaluate the remaining days in the week and adjust the blocks of time according to what I was able to accomplish during that day... and as I'm writing this, I'm realizing that it sounds pretty obsessive. Maybe even a little compulsive to go along with it.

For me, though, this is more than a helpful time management practice; it actually has a spiritual component to it.

From time to time, I feel overwhelmed when faced with a laundry list of things that have to be done. I start to worry about the time it will take to get it all done; I begin to feel anxiety about what's before me. And when I do that, I have to realize that my worry and anxiety is not only unhealthy; it's actually disobedient:

"Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear" (Matthew 6:25).

So said Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. He continued to hold up birds and wildflowers as those God provides for, making the point that we, as His children are much more valuable than these things. Then Jesus reminds us that worry and anxiety over the stuff of life is the characteristic of idolaters:

"...the idolaters eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you. therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own (Matthew 6:32-34).

It's that last statement that gets me – tomorrow has enough troubles of its own. My problem is that I tend to bring the worries of tomorrow into today. But this is also the point where keeping a schedule can actually be of great aid in our obedience to the command of Jesus to be free of worry.

If we are proactive in time management, scheduling out time can help us leave the worries of tomorrow until tomorrow. So, for example, let's say you have a massive project you have to get done at work, and you find yourself disobediently worrying about getting it all done. But you very much want to obey what Jesus said. Perhaps a practical step in the right direction would be to break up that project into smaller chunks and then schedule time into the next several weeks to accomplish each one.

You have task 1 to do on Monday. You don't have to worry about task 2 because you know you've already allocated time to get that done on Tuesday. So you move forward, one step at a time, treating the day you have before you as a single day, and you're able to put down the phone and lay your head on the pillow knowing that tomorrow you can do the exact same thing. The point of the exercise, though, **is more than finding a way to get things done; it's an active way to pursue obedience to Jesus.**

And I'm finding more and more that these small, seemingly insignificant choices are the nuts and bolts of what it means to truly follow Him.

> Read more from Michael.

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