

Letter to our 18.26 Network members – February 1, 2022

What about time? Do you have enough time? How do you spend your time? Is your time entirely your own? Or do you just not think about time that much? Do you just let it fly by? Timely questions for committed Christians as they begin a new year.

James Taylor's *Secret of Life* claims:

*The secret of life is enjoying the passage of time
Any fool can do it
There ain't nothing to it
Nobody knows how we got to the top of the hill
But since we're on our way down
We might as well enjoy the ride*

Mason Williams wrote in his book, **Reading Matter**:

Sometimes I wish that I were still a paperboy back in Oklahoma City; where my problems were only thick papers; rain and cold weather; a few mean dogs; a couple of grouchy people; and porches I couldn't hit from the sidewalk.

He preceded those thoughts with a little ditty:

*What has happened to time?
It doesn't come around anymore.
The very last time I saw
Was a-whistlin' out the door . . .*

My *Intensive Training* leader in Operation Mobilization, George Verwer, constantly challenged our small group of *intensively-trained-trainees* to "redeem the time." That phrase challenged me, it challenges me today – and it also makes me feel like I'm never doing enough.

That feeling runs counter to what my mom used to always say:

All work and no play make Jack a dull boy!

I want 2022 to be both productive and fun. Like James Taylor, I want to enjoy the passage of time. Like Mason Williams, I would like life to be less complex. Like George Verwer, I would like to redeem the time. But I don't want guilt to ruin my life and make me dull.

I've started reading Proverbs for my private devotional time. Jan and I are reading D.A. Carson's **For The Love Of God, Vol. 1** each morning for our regular daily devotions. We also spend an extended time on Monday mornings meditating on Scripture. I have decided this year to spend my meditation time in the Book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 16:9 (ESV) says about the passage of time:

*The heart of man plans his way,
but the Lord establishes his steps.*

Proverbs 3:5-8 (ESV) expands on that theme further:

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.
It will be healing to your flesh
and refreshment to your bones.*

As I look forward to the rest of 2022:

- **I don't want to be coasting along on a down-hill ride**
- **I don't want to idealize the past, thinking that life used to be so much less complex**
- **I want to redeem the time – I want to seize the moment in a wholistic way – I want to put the *fun back into fundamentalism* (to coin a cute phrase)**
- **I want to trust the Lord with all my heart and acknowledge Him in everything**
- **I want to be humble, teachable and quick to repent when I make wrong turns along the way; I want to learn about true wisdom from the True Wisdom, Jesus Christ – who is *my Lord and Savior***

Jan and I are praying that you are looking forward to a good year, come what may! We pray that you grow even closer to Him as you seek to advance the Kingdom for His sake.

We pray for your health and welfare in the fullest sense that those words can convey. And we hope that you have a lot of wholesome fun along the way. *Amen!*