

Ever After | It's Time... | Discussion Guide - *Ephesians 5:15-17*

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Time Hacks For Couples.

It takes time to have a better marriage. It takes even more time to have a good or even a great relationship with your spouse. Your marriage IS worth the time it will take to make it better.

God believes your marriage should be a priority. Consider these verses from the Bible.

Deuteronomy 24:5 *"A newly married man must not be drafted into the army or be given any other official responsibilities. He must be free to spend one year at home, bringing happiness to the wife he has married."*

1 Corinthians 7:33-34 (NLT) *"... a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. ... a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband."*

Reset the Speed of Your Marriage. FAST or S-L-O-W.

Your Marriage is Worth Fewer Priorities. Do we realize that we can't actually do it all? We can't be loved by all nor can we please everyone. Have we ever taken a moment to realistically consider how many priorities that can be realistically managed? Marriage, health, kids, career, church, friends, house, possessions, citizenship, and taxes are just a few demands upon our time in any given day. To say "We are overwhelmed" is an understatement.

Your Marriage is Worth Slowing Down. In the book *Prayer*, John R. Rice states, "*Martin Luther said that he had so much work to do for God that he could never get it done unless he prayed three hours a day!*" How does that make any sense? How could someone slow down in prayer in order to accomplish more? But it is a well known principle, that slowing down is a vital key to success in many walks of life.

Jeremiah 2:25 (MSG) *"Slow down. Take a deep breath. What's the hurry? Why wear yourself out? Just what are you after anyway? But you say, 'I can't help it. I'm addicted to alien gods. I can't quit.'"*

Your Marriage is Worth a Little Examination. We need to examine ourselves. What is the reward we are receiving for all of our busyness? Why are we finding so much value in so little? If we took time for an honest self evaluation, would we discover our true feelings? Could we explore why we feel so insecure, devalued, and alone? If we were honest, we might learn that it is not someone else's fault. There is no one that we are waiting for in order to change our life and our marriage. We might experience the freedom to take RESPONSIBILITY for our own TIME! Then the most important people in our lives could start receiving the best of us rather than our leftovers.

Your Marriage is worth saying "NO" gracefully to any number of competing priorities. The word "NO" is a super power. Say "No" to the dinner invite that you really don't want to accept and you get your evening free. Say "No" to the need for volunteers on a project that really isn't important to you and you get your week back. Saying "No" to the board position on the outreach that isn't really your passion can get months of time back on your calendar. Often saying "no" to a lesser priority is saying a giant "YES" to your marriage.

Decide to Fight Busyness

When John Ortberg took the preaching pastor role at Willow Creek church, he asked his mentor for some advice to manage the greatly increased responsibility. The answer he received was, "*You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.*" He wrote it down and then asked, "What else?" To which his mentor replied, after a long pause, "That's it, *You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.*"

What would it take to eliminate hurry from our lives? Would a day without a watch, or an extended cell phone absence help us redefine our comprehension of time? Whatever course of action we decide, we must agree that we **MUST** do something to reclaim vital time for our marriages.

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NLT) So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. 16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. 17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.

Choose to MAKE Time

We'll never FIND time for our marriages. We should stop trying to FIND time. We must choose to MAKE time for our marriage. Les and Leslie Parrot recommend a "*If I do nothing else today*" list instead of a "To Do" list. Maybe we should also make an "I'm not doing this today" list? We could list things like, "I am not going to be distracted, feel sorry for myself, or waste time worrying."

We could also give ourselves a little Margin. We tend to write everyday to the edge of the page. Then when the unexpected arrives, who pays? Usually the ones we love and need most pay the price. Isn't that a tragedy? The ones who actually meet our needs, the ones who love and value us get kicked to the curb simply because we left no room for the unexpected. Honestly, we can't keep filling EVERY night and weekend. We NEED room to breathe.

Make Time for Church. Our marriages and families need inspiration. We need worship, God's Word, scriptural teaching, prayer, and fellowship. Our children need to worship WITH us. Our children also need to see their Parents BELIEVE in God and work with God to have a great marriage.

Let's commit today to MAKE TIME for our marriages.

Let's Talk About It

- What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.
- What makes you feel most busy? In what areas of your life do you most often feel that you must "pedal faster" to keep up? Why?
- Do you feel like there are areas of your life that are "on hold"? What keeps you from moving forward? What are you waiting for in order to live?
- What would give your marriage more time right now?
- Busyness can negatively affect four areas: your conversations, your love life, your ability to have fun, and your spirituality. Which of these four areas is the most negatively affected by your busyness? Why?
- Discuss some actions or strategies you could use to take back your time. Is there something you need to say "no" too? What? Why?
- Is there anything in today's topic that you would be excited to share with a friend?