

AN EIGHT-WEEK STUDY FOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS



## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT

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## DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Adopt A Stewardship Mindset

**Assess:** If you were to describe your attitude toward time in one word, what word would you choose?

### Insights and Ideas

**T**he time management maze usually positions us to tackle the “more in less” predicament. We’re always looking for the latest idea, the newest technology and the best strategy to get more done in less time. However, the starting place for effective time management is not a tool or a technique, but rather a mindset — the stewardship mindset.

In Matthew 25, Jesus shares the Parable of the Bags of Gold. In the story, a master makes his three servants stewards of three different amounts of gold — five bags, two bags and one bag — while he’s away on a long trip. The first two servants put the gold to work, doubling it before the master returns. The third servant hides the master’s treasure in the ground out of fear.

Matthew 25:19 says, “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.” When the accounts are settled, the master deems the first two servants as “good and faithful,” and the third as a “wicked, lazy servant.” From this parable, we learn an important truth about stewardship: It is a trust managed faithfully, not a possession owned recklessly.

The servants didn’t own the money as a personal possession; it was a trust. The servants’ responsibility was to manage the gold that the master entrusted to them. Interestingly, this is not just a money management principle. It applies to all areas of our lives, including how we use time.

Time is a trust. All of us receive the same amount each day. Like the servants, as a team you cannot control how much time you receive, but you can determine how to use it. Our job is to manage time faithfully with the Master’s interests — not ours — in mind. A day of reckoning came for the servants, and the same will be true for each of us. God will hold us accountable for how we used the resources He entrusted to us as leaders, and as a team. Adopting a stewardship mentality is the first step to developing an effective time management habit. When we acknowledge time as a trust, our hearts will assume a posture of faithfulness, and we will intentionally manage time for our Master’s glory.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. When are leaders most tempted to view time as a possession rather than a trust?
2. God is our Master, and He has entrusted us with time. How does this truth convict you or challenge you?
3. What does it look like to manage time with God’s interests in mind?

### Apply

In the coming lessons, we’ll look at the practical side of time management; however, before you can leverage new ideas and better methods, you must begin with the right mentality — a stewardship mindset.

For the next seven days, begin each day with this prayer: “Lord, help me to see and treat time as a trust from You. Today, give me the wisdom and courage to manage time with Your purposes in mind. In Jesus’ name. Amen!”

You might even gather together as a team and collectively pray at the start of your day.

## Adopt A Stewardship Mindset

**Assess:** If you were to describe your attitude toward time in one word, what word would you choose?

### Insights and Ideas

The time management maze usually positions us to tackle the “more in less” predicament. We’re always looking for the latest idea, the newest technology and the best strategy to get more done in less time.

The starting place for effective time management is not a tool or a technique, but rather a mindset – the \_\_\_\_\_ mindset.

### The Parable of the Talents

In Matthew 25, Jesus shares the Parable of the Talents. In the story, a master makes his three servants stewards of three different sums of money – five talents, two talents and one talent – while he’s away on a long trip. The first two servants put the money to work, doubling it before the master returns. The third servant – out of fear – hides the master’s money in the ground.

Matthew 25:19 says, “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.”

**Key Thought:** Stewardship is a \_\_\_\_\_ managed faithfully, not a \_\_\_\_\_ owned recklessly.

Our job is to faithfully manage time with the Master’s interests – not ours – in mind. A day of reckoning came for the servants, and the same will be true for each one of us. We will be held accountable for how we used the resources God entrusted to us as leaders, and as a team.

**Key Thought:** When we acknowledge time as a trust, our hearts will assume a posture of \_\_\_\_\_, and we will intentionally manage time for our Master’s glory.

### Apply

For the next seven days, begin each day with this prayer: “Lord, help me to see and treat time as a trust from You. Today, give me the wisdom and courage to steward time with Your purposes in mind. In Jesus’ name, amen!”

## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT

## Conduct a Time Audit

**Team Review:** Over the last week, in what ways did you feel challenged to treat time as a trust from the Lord?

**Assess:** On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rank your time management? Why?

### Insights and Ideas

**T**ime is precious. Olympians understand the value of time when they cross the finish line ... in fourth place. Parents realize how fleeting time is when their kids graduate high school. And we all reflect on the brevity of time when we stand at the casket of a friend or loved one.

Psalm 90:12 says, “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” When we lose sight of life’s brevity, we are inclined to squander time. As a result, we grow foolish rather than fruitful, collect regrets rather than rewards, and become wasteful rather than wise.

Most of us don’t understand how, where or when we waste time. In fact, we often take pride in the number of appointments in our schedule — and the number of events on our calendar — assuming that our busyness equals productivity.

To steward wisely the time that remains, we need to evaluate the time that has passed. This happens best when we conduct a time audit. A time audit is a minute-by-minute review of how you spend your time over the course of a week (or longer).

When teams track the use of their time, they can mine important lessons. Each team member should consider four things after a time audit:

- 1. Priorities.** How much of your time did you allocate to your highest priorities? Which tasks received too much time, elevating them to an unwarranted priority status?
- 2. People.** What persons, or groups, consumed the greatest amount of your time? Who deserved more of your time than what they received?
- 3. Patterns.** What healthy, and unhealthy, trends have you observed in the use of your time? How are these patterns impacting the rest of the team?
- 4. Problems.** What immediate problems do you see in your current management of time? Are you consuming too much of a fellow team member’s time?

### Reflect and Discuss

1. Why is it so easy to lose sight of the brevity of life?
2. How could a time audit benefit our team?
3. If you had to guess, what negative patterns would a time audit reveal in you (personally as a leader), and in us (collectively as a team)?

### Apply

To experience the impact of well-managed time, have each team member conduct a time audit. A time audit can happen in two ways. First, if you track your time with a tool or technology, do a quick review of the past two weeks. Second, carefully track your time for the next seven days in 15-minute increments. After conducting your time audit, organize your activities into categories such as “sleep,” “eating,” and “exercise.” As you categorize your time at work, be much more specific. How much time did you spend in each category?

Finally, look at your audit through the review process previously outlined: priorities, people, patterns and problems. Then answer these questions:

1. What surprised you about your use of time?
2. How much time do your team members spend in meetings with one another?
3. What observations would be beneficial to share with the team?



## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT

## Conduct a Time Audit

**Team Review:** Over the last week, in what ways did you feel challenged to treat time as a trust from the Lord?

**Assess:** On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rank your time management? Why?

**Psalms 90:12:** “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

When we lose sight of life’s brevity, we are inclined to squander time. As a result, we grow foolish rather than fruitful, collect regrets rather than rewards, and become wasteful rather than wise.

**Key Thought:** Most of us don’t understand how, where, or when we waste time. In fact, we often take pride in the number of appointments in our schedule — and the number of events on our calendar — assuming that our \_\_\_\_\_ equals \_\_\_\_\_ .

A time audit is a minute-by-minute \_\_\_\_\_ of how you spend your time over the course of a week (or longer).

### Four Keys to Consider After a Time Audit:

- \_\_\_\_\_ . How much of your time did you allocate to your highest priorities? Which tasks received too much time, elevating it to an unwarranted priority status?
- \_\_\_\_\_ . What persons, or groups, consumed the greatest amount of your time? Who was neglected and deserved more of your time?
- \_\_\_\_\_ . What healthy, and unhealthy, trends have you observed in the use of your time? How are these patterns impacting the rest of the team?
- \_\_\_\_\_ . What immediate problems do you see in your current management of time? Are you consuming too much of a fellow team member’s time?

### Apply

A time audit can happen in two ways. First, if you track your time with a tool or technology, do a quick review of the past two weeks. Second, carefully track your time for the next seven days in 15-minute increments. After conducting your time audit, organize your activities into categories such as “sleep,” “eating” and “exercise.” As you categorize your time at work, be much more specific. How much time did you spend in each category? Finally, look at your audit through the review process above: priorities, people, patterns and problems. Then answer these questions:

- What surprised you about your use of time?
- How much time does your team spend in meetings with each other?
- What observations would be beneficial to share with the team?

## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT

## Clarify Your Priorities

**Team Review:** What were your greatest takeaways from your time audit?

**Assess:** What do you believe are your most important priorities in life? At work?

### Insights and Ideas

**I**t's easy to limit time management to nothing more than a race against the clock. If we can check off more tasks than we add to our to-do lists, we feel like we're making progress. But checkmarks aren't the goal of time management. The true test is whether we achieved our highest priorities. What good is efficiently accomplishing the wrong things?

In John 9:4, Jesus said, "As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work." Two things stand out to me from this passage. First, our Heavenly Father assigns our work. Second, our time to do this work is short.

That raises a question: What are the works each member of your team should do? What are each member's highest priorities? True time management might be better described as priority management. When you understand your priorities, you obtain a guide for where to allocate time. Several years ago, I ran across seven questions from John C. Maxwell's *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* curriculum. These questions will help you clarify your greatest priorities.

1. What are you recognized for (the things that fellow team members say you do well)?
2. What is required of you (the things in your job description)?
3. What are you requested for (the things others ask you to do because they recognize them as your areas of strength)?
4. What are you rewarded most highly for (the things that others in your church or organization reward you for when you do them well; the reward may be monetary or verbal praise)?
5. What produces the greatest results (the things that generate the highest return on your investment of time)?
6. What do you rejoice over (the things you celebrate in your role that bring great personal satisfaction)?
7. What do you want to be remembered for (the things you want others to remember you for long into the future)?

The answers to these questions will help each team member create a roadmap to steward time effectively. Furthermore, the answers to these questions will position team members to leverage their God-given strengths for the good of the team. Answers that surface repeatedly are probably a good indication of what your priorities should be.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. What is the difference between time management and priority management?
2. How do unclear priorities impact your ability to manage time?
3. What would happen if each member of our team focused time on his or her answers to the seven questions?

### Apply

Answer Maxwell's seven questions to help you clarify your priorities. Pay close attention to the areas where your answers overlap. After answering each question, create a list of your top priorities. You may want to categorize these priorities in areas such as your relationship with God, family, work and other important areas. Don't worry about whether you're actually pursuing these priorities. Your goal is to gain clarity. We'll talk about putting priorities into action soon. Be prepared to share your observations with your team.

## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT

## Clarify Your Priorities

**Team Review:** What were your greatest takeaways from your time audit?

**Assess:** What do you believe are your most important priorities in life? At work?

Checkmarks aren't the goal of time management. The true test is whether or not we achieved our highest priorities. What good is it to efficiently accomplish the wrong things?

In John 9:4, Jesus said, "As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."

Our Heavenly Father \_\_\_\_\_ our work. Second, our time to do this work is \_\_\_\_\_ .

### Defining Your Highest Priorities

- What are you \_\_\_\_\_ for? *(The things that fellow team members say you do well)*
- What is \_\_\_\_\_ of you? *(The things in your job description)*
- What are you \_\_\_\_\_ for? *(The things others ask you to do because they recognize them as your areas of strength)*
- What are you \_\_\_\_\_ most highly for? *(The things that others in your church or organization reward you for when you do them well — the reward may be monetary or verbal praise)*
- What produces the greatest \_\_\_\_\_ ? *(The things that generate the highest return on your investment of time)*
- What do you \_\_\_\_\_ over? *(The things you celebrate in your role that bring great personal satisfaction)*
- What do you want to be \_\_\_\_\_ for? *(The things you want others to remember you for long into the future)*

(Adapted from John Maxwell's *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* curriculum)

### Apply

After answering the seven questions above, pay close attention to the areas where your answers overlap. After answering each question, create a list of your top priorities. You might want to categorize these priorities in areas such as your relationship with God, your family, work and other important areas. Don't worry about whether or not you're actually *doing* these priorities. Your goal is to gain clarity ... we'll talk about doing them soon.

## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT

## Identify Your Gaps

**Team Review:** After answering the seven questions in the previous lesson, what did you determine to be your highest priorities in each area of your life?

**Assess:** What percentage of your time would you estimate you are currently allocating to your highest priorities?

### Insights and Ideas

**W**e often experience gaps between what we aspire to do and what we actually do. This gap shows up in many areas of our lives. Our actions don't keep pace with our intentions. The problem is, nobody knows what you intended to do; they only know what you actually did.

James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." Deception results from inaction. To believe without action is nothing more than a fruitless wish. Shouldn't we leverage the time God gives us to accomplish His assignment? After all, your greatest contribution to your team, church or organization comes from leveraging your time to do what you do best.

After completing your time audit and clarifying your highest priorities, you probably noticed some gaps. I certainly do when I complete these assignments. Becoming aware of the gaps that exist between how you aspire to use your time and how you're actually using it is a good thing. You can't close gaps until you bring them out of the dark and into the light.

Your gaps provide direction for your actions. Your gaps pinpoint — with great specificity — the exact areas you need to focus on if you want to manage time more effectively. The starting place for eliminating these gaps is reviewing your time audit and your priorities, and then answering these questions:

1. What are your five (or more) biggest time wasters, and how can you reduce or eliminate them immediately?
2. Where do you add the most value to your church or organization? (How would the rest of your team answer this question?) How can you spend more time on these priorities?
3. What tasks have unnecessarily elevated to priority status, and how can you change this?
4. What people need more (and less) of your time?

Your answers to these questions will help you shift behaviors and eliminate gaps. We'll explore some practical steps to make these shifts in upcoming lessons.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. What is one gap you immediately observe between what you aspire to do with your time and what you're actually doing with your time?
2. When and how did this gap first appear in your schedule?
3. What systems or expectations in our church or organization make it difficult to focus on our highest priorities?

### Apply

Do a thorough review of your time audit (how you are using your time) and your priorities (how you should use your time). Look carefully for the gaps that exist between the two. Then make a clear list of these gaps (in other words, the changes you need to make so that you are using time effectively and efficiently to do the right things). Here's a good question to wrestle with in this process: What gaps do I need to close to reconcile how I currently use my time with how I should use my time?



Study  
4

## TEAM GUIDE

## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT

**Identify Your Gaps**

**Team Review:** After answering the seven questions in the previous lesson, what did you determine to be your highest priorities in each area of your life?

**Assess:** What percentage of your time would you estimate you are currently allocating to your highest priorities?

We often experience gaps between what we aspire to do and what we actually do. This gap shows up in many areas of life. Our actions don't keep pace with our intentions. The problem is, nobody knows what you \_\_\_\_\_ to do; they only know what you \_\_\_\_\_ did.

James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

**Key Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_ results from \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Key Thought:** Your gaps provide \_\_\_\_\_ for your \_\_\_\_\_ .

**After Reviewing a Time Audit and Priorities, Ask...**

- What are my five (or more) biggest time wasters, and how can I reduce or eliminate them immediately?
- Where do I add the most value to my church or organization? (How would the rest of my team answer this question?) How can I spend more time on these priorities?
- What tasks have been unnecessarily elevated to "priority" status, and how can I change this?
- What people need more (and less) of my time?

Your answers to these questions will help you shift behaviors and eliminate gaps.

**Apply**

Do a thorough review of your time audit (how you *are* using your time) and your priorities (how you *should* use your time). Look carefully for the gaps that exist between the two. Then, make a clear list of these gaps (in other words, the changes you need to make so that you are using time effectively and efficiently to do the *right* things). Here's a good question to wrestle with in this process: What gaps do I need to close to better align how I currently use my time with how I should use my time?

## Plan Your Time

**Team Review:** What were the three biggest gaps you identified between how you're actually using your time and how you aspire to use your time?

**Assess:** How do you determine what gets put on your schedule each week?

### Insights and Ideas

**W**ithout a plan, your time will naturally drift toward the urgent and the unimportant. Things that really don't matter in the grand scheme of things will consume your focus, energy and time. Worst of all, unmanaged time will cause you to drift toward your weaknesses.

Proverbs 21:5 says, "The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty." If you don't intentionally plan your time, you'll unintentionally create unproductive time management habits. Consider these five helpful tips for intentionally planning your time so that you can experience immediate traction.

**1. Choose the right tool.** You need a tool to help you track your time, organize your calendar and schedule what matters most. A simple Google search — or asking fellow team members — will give you plenty of options to choose from. The best tool is the one that works for you.

**2. Schedule your priorities.** It's not enough to prioritize your schedule; you need to schedule your priorities. Your priorities and goals are the "big rocks" that get entered into your schedule first. Sermon preparation is one of my big rocks. It's entered into my schedule as a permanent recurring appointment.

**3. Conduct a weekly planning meeting.** This planning meeting isn't with anybody but you, and it should last no more than 15 or 20 minutes at the start of each week. This meeting has one focus: to plan the rest of your week. It's the most strategic moment in your week to determine what you'll say "yes" or "no" to. It's your opportunity to be proactive — rather than reactive — with your time.

**4. Block out large chunks of time.** In your weekly planning meeting, block out large chunks of time for your highest priorities. Small chunks of time will naturally appear — a meeting ends early, somebody shows up late or a task takes less time than anticipated. Large chunks of time do not appear unless you purposely create them.

**5. Schedule appointments back-to-back.** You can easily consume an entire afternoon with just two or three meetings because you put too much time between each meeting. Scheduling meetings back-to-back gives a hard and fast start and stop time for each appointment.

There are dozens of other time management strategies, but these five will give you an immediate, noticeable boost. Start here, and keep honing your time management efforts.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. When and how do you plan your week?
2. Which time management tip represents your greatest strength, and which highlights your biggest weakness?
3. Have each team member share his or her best time management strategy.

### Apply

This week, put the five time management strategies to work (or a tip shared by a fellow team member). Adopt a new (or better) time management tool, if needed. Have a meeting alone to map out the rest of your week. Schedule your highest priorities first, and allocate large chunks of time to your goals. Do your best to schedule meetings back-to-back, and whatever you do, eliminate your biggest time wasters immediately.

## Plan Your Time

**Team Review:** What were the three biggest gaps you identified between how you're actually using your time and how you aspire to use your time?

**Assess:** How do you determine what gets put on your schedule each week?

Without a plan, your time will naturally drift toward the urgent and the unimportant. Things that really don't matter in the grand scheme of life will consume your focus, energy and time. Worst of all, unmanaged time will cause you to drift toward your weaknesses.

Proverbs 21:5 says, "Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty" (NLT).

**Key Thought:** If you don't \_\_\_\_\_ plan your time, you'll \_\_\_\_\_ create unproductive time management habits.

### Five Tips to Intentionally Plan Your Time

- Choose the right \_\_\_\_\_. The best tool is the one that works for you.
- Schedule your \_\_\_\_\_. It's not enough to prioritize your schedule; you need to schedule your priorities.
- Conduct a weekly planning \_\_\_\_\_. This planning meeting isn't with anybody but you, and it should last no more than 15 or 20 minutes at the start of each week. This meeting has one focus — to plan the rest of your week.
- Block out large \_\_\_\_\_ of time. In your weekly planning meeting, block out large chunks of time for your highest priorities.
- Schedule \_\_\_\_\_ back-to-back. Scheduling meetings back-to-back gives a hard and fast start and stop time to each appointment.

### Apply

This week put the five-time management strategies to work. Whatever you do, eliminate your biggest time wasters immediately.

## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT

## Delegate

**Team Review:** How did your first week of planning your time go? What do you need to tweak in your planning process?

**Assess:** If you could delegate one task on your to-do list, what would it be? Is the thing you would delegate a natural strength for another member of the team?

### Insights and Ideas

**S**ome things on your to-do list have to be done even though they fall outside of your natural strengths. It's not that you enjoy doing them; you simply have to do them. Or do you?

Sometimes we get in a habit of doing tasks and having meetings without ever evaluating whether someone else can accomplish them instead. I often tell our team, "Your first job is not to do ministry. Your first job is to equip and empower people to do ministry." There will always be more ministry to do than there is money to do it. That's why it's critical that our teams focus on equipping and empowering others. Ephesians 4:11-12 says, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

There are certain things that only you can — or should — do, and this list is pretty short if we're really honest. But if you spend all of your time doing what others can do, your ultimate contribution to your church or organization will be limited. So, to whom can you delegate? Here are four options to consider:

- 1. Team members.** Who on your team is gifted to do what you want to delegate? Can you trade certain tasks? Delegation is actually the best way to develop other leaders, by testing their ability with new opportunities.
- 2. Interns.** What student could you invite into an internship at your church or organization? Internships are a great way to give young leaders experience and coaching, while simultaneously finding the support you need.
- 3. Volunteers.** Who in your church or organization has the skills to do what you need done? Do a thorough search, evaluate skills, provide necessary training and be willing to release tasks to a team of willing volunteers.
- 4. Vendors.** Can you outsource a task to a vendor or service? Maybe it's somebody to do graphic design, financial services, administrative work, catering or a host of other tasks. Hiring a vendor is often less expensive than hiring new staff.

Delegation is an essential key to time management. It will help you focus more of your time on what only you can do.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. What is the hardest part of delegation? Why?
2. What have you been hesitant to delegate to someone else that you know you should hand off? Why?
3. Which of the four delegation options is your team not using? How can you leverage each option more strategically?

### Apply

Make a list of the tasks on your to-do list that someone else could do. Which of the four delegation options will you use to release this task to somebody else? Choose one task you will delegate this week, and create a delegation timeline for the remaining tasks.

Study  
6

## TEAM GUIDE

## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT

## Delegate

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**Assess:** If you could delegate one task on your to-do list, what would it be? Is the thing you would delegate a natural strength for another member of the team?

Some things on your to-do list have to be done even though they fall outside of your natural strengths. It's not that you enjoy doing them ... you simply have to. Or do you?

**Key Thought:** Your first job is not to *do* ministry. Your first job is to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ people to do ministry. There will always be more \_\_\_\_\_ to do than there is \_\_\_\_\_ to do it. That's why it's critical that our teams focus on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ others.

Ephesians 4:11-12 says, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

### Whom to Delegate

- \_\_\_\_\_ . Who on your team is gifted to do what you want to delegate?
- \_\_\_\_\_ . What student could you invite into an internship at your church or organization?
- \_\_\_\_\_ . Who in your church or organization has the skills to do what you need done?
- \_\_\_\_\_ . Can you outsource a task to a vendor or service?

Delegation is an essential key to time management. It will help you focus more of your time on what only you can do.

### Apply

Make a list of the tasks in your schedule that need to be done, but not necessarily by you. Which of the four delegation options will you use to release this task to somebody else? Choose one task you will delegate this week, and create a delegation timeline for the remaining tasks.

## Create Time-Saving Systems

**Team Review:** What task did you delegate last week? Which task is next on your delegation list?

**Assess:** What time-saving system do you need to create to become more efficient?

### Insights and Ideas

**C**ounting the cost is indispensable as disciples of Christ. Jesus said, “And whoever does not carry their own cross and follow me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).

Then He made a comparison to constructing a building or assembling an army. Jesus said, “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?” (Luke 14:28). He continued, “Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?” (Luke 14:31).

Counting the cost is essential in time management, too. As leaders, we have to determine how much time critical tasks will take, and we have to look for effective ways to streamline processes and improve efficiency. One of the best ways is to create automated time-saving systems.

Author Rory Vaden asserts that automation is to your time what compounding interest is to your money. When you create a system today that takes care of a task tomorrow, you free up time tomorrow to do what you should be doing. Vaden drives home this principle with an example called the 30x Rule that he gleaned from a business executive. According to the 30x Rule, if you have a daily task that takes you five minutes to accomplish, it will take up to 30 times longer to train somebody else to do the task. Therefore, it will take up to 150 minutes of training to delegate the task at hand. This probably sounds unreasonable at first (after all, it only takes five minutes of your time). But do the math. A daily five-minute task equals 1,250 minutes over an entire year (assuming you take a couple of weeks of vacation). But if you invest 150 minutes training someone to do the task, you would save 1,100 minutes over the course of a year. That’s a 733 percent return on time invested in one year.

Vaden says, “What got you here as a performer, won’t get you there as a leader.”

Performers do the five-minute tasks, while leaders create time-saving systems by delegating tasks.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. Consider Vaden’s statement: “What got you here as a performer, won’t get you there as a leader.” How does that challenge you?
2. What systems could we create organizationally to improve our team’s overall efficiency?
3. What’s the next time-saving system you personally need to create?

### Apply

Evaluate what you are currently doing that could be accomplished quicker by developing a good system. You may need to streamline a process, eliminate unnecessary steps or schedule the time to train somebody else to do a task. This week, create one system to become more efficient in the use of your time. If you need to delegate something, use the 30x Rule to calculate how long it will take to train the right person.

## Create Time-Saving Systems

**Team Review:** What task did you delegate last week? Which task is next on your delegation list?

**Assess:** What time-saving system do you need to create to become more efficient?

**Luke 14:27:** “And whoever does not carry their own cross and follow me cannot be my disciple”

**Luke 14:28:** “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?”

**Luke 14:31:** “Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?”

**Key Thought:** One of the best ways to improve efficiencies is to create \_\_\_\_\_, time-saving \_\_\_\_\_.

Author Rory Vaden asserts that automation is to your time what \_\_\_\_\_ is to your money.

### The 30x Rule

If you have a daily task that takes you five minutes to accomplish, according to the 30x Rule, it will take up to 30 times longer to train somebody else to do the same task. Therefore, it will take up to 150 minutes of training to delegate the task at hand. This probably sounds unreasonable at first (after all, it only takes five minutes of your time). But do the math. A daily five-minute task equals 1,250 minutes over an entire year (assuming you take a couple of weeks of vacation). But if you invest 150 minutes training someone to do the task, you would save 1,100 minutes in the course of a year.

That’s a \_\_\_\_\_ percent return on time invested in one year.

Rory Vaden observes, “What got you here as a \_\_\_\_\_, won’t get you there as a \_\_\_\_\_.” Performers do the five-minute tasks, while leaders create time-saving systems by delegating tasks.

### Apply

Evaluate what you are currently doing that could be accomplished quicker by developing a good system. You may need to streamline a process, eliminate unnecessary steps, or schedule the time to train somebody else to do a task. This week, create one system to become more efficient in the use of your time. If you need to delegate something, use the 30x Rule to calculate how long it will take to train the right person.



## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT

## Establish Boundaries

**Team Review:** What time-saving system did you create last week? How much time do you estimate this system will save you?

**Assess:** What kind of boundaries have you established for how you use your time?

### Insights and Ideas

**B**oundaries sound restricting, limiting and even controlling. But the truth is, boundaries create long-term health. The boundaries of the aquarium keep the goldfish alive. The boundaries of a riverbank keep the local city or town safe from flooding. And placing boundaries around the use of your time will cultivate a healthy pace.

Jesus said, “All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” (Matthew 5:37). Why is it so difficult to do this when it comes to time management? Without boundaries, somebody else will hijack our time. But the right boundaries will protect our highest priorities. To establish healthy boundaries, take three steps.

**1. Be honest.** Talk to the most important people in your life (spouse, kids, friends, pastor, mentor) about two things. First, share your time audit with them, and seek their input and perspective. Sometimes others can see what we can’t. Second, ask them this question: How is my current management of time hurting my personal health and my relationship with you? Their answers should drive you to a place of action. Whatever you do, don’t get defensive.

**2. Set boundaries.** After reflecting on your honest conversations, identify the three most important changes you need to make, and then set some clear boundaries. Some examples of boundaries might include arriving home from work by a certain time each day (a time that you and your family agree upon); not traveling away from home more than a set number of nights per month; not scheduling meetings more than two nights per week; protecting a weekly date night with your spouse; protecting family birthdays, anniversaries and other special events; and using all of your annual vacation time. Other boundaries might involve your health, spiritual practices and even financial decisions. Ask yourself, “What’s most important to me, and how can I put safeguards in place to ensure I keep this priority in focus?”

**3. Pursue accountability.** Chances are, you won’t be able to maintain your boundaries without somebody else asking you the hard questions. Seek out accountability partners to help you stay focused and healthy. You might even secure a coach or counselor to help you cultivate perspective and foster spiritual, mental and emotional health.

These steps will help you clarify and establish the boundaries you need so that you can protect your priorities and relationships.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. Why is it so difficult to establish boundaries?
2. Which boundary is your toughest to maintain? What boundary have you successfully maintained? What has been your secret to success?
3. What are some boundaries we need to establish as a team to protect our personal and organizational health?

### Apply

As we wrap up our study on time management, work through the three steps above to establish clear boundaries. Without healthy boundaries, someone else will dictate how you use your time. Establish a filter that helps you say “no” to the unimportant so you can say “yes” to the most important.





## Establish Boundaries

**Team Review:** What time-saving system did you create last week? How much time do you estimate this system will save you?

**Assess:** What kind of boundaries have you established for how you use your time?

Boundaries create long-term health. The boundaries of the aquarium keep the goldfish alive. The boundaries of a riverbank keep the local city or town safe from flooding. And placing boundaries around the use of your time will cultivate a healthy pace.

Jesus said, “All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” (Matthew 5:37).

Without boundaries, somebody else will hijack our time. But the right boundaries will protect our highest priorities.

### Three Steps to Establish Healthy Boundaries

1. Be \_\_\_\_\_. Talk to the most important people in your life (spouse, kids, friends, pastor, mentor) about two things. First, share your time audit with them, and seek their input and perspective. Sometimes others can see what we can't. Second, ask them this question: How is my current management of time hurting my personal health and my relationship with you? Their answers should drive you to a place of action. Whatever you do, don't get defensive.
2. Set \_\_\_\_\_. After reflecting on your honest conversations, identify the three most important changes you need to make, and then set some clear boundaries. Some examples of boundaries might include:
  - Arriving home from work by a certain time each day (a time that you and your family agree upon)
  - Not traveling away from home more than a set number of nights per month
  - Not scheduling meetings more than two nights per week
  - Protecting a weekly date night with your spouse
  - Protecting family birthdays, anniversaries and other special events
  - Using all of your annual vacation time
3. Pursue \_\_\_\_\_. Seek out accountability partners to help you stay focused and healthy.

### Apply

Work through the three steps above to establish clear boundaries. Without healthy boundaries, how you use your time will be dictated by somebody else. Establish a filter that helps you say “no” to the unimportant so you can say “yes” to the most important.