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A Most Valuable Gift

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A Most Valuable Gift

What is one of the most valuable gifts we can give to another person? We could think about value in terms of finances, or the specific gift that he or she wanted, but the priceless gift that only we can give is our time. To give some of our time to another is worth much more than can be measured in dollars, for no one is rich or another poor when it comes to the amount of time that each of us has to give. When we give our time to another as a gift, we give some of ourselves; we manifest care, respect, and some measure of love. Though others do not always acknowledge the worth of our time, it is one of the most valuable gifts we can give.

God, the creator of time, fully understands what it means for us to give back even a little of the time that we have received. God possesses an infinite amount of time. But we have a restricted, unknown quantity of days and hours, minutes and seconds. So, when we give God some of our time, God appreciates and accepts it for the significant gift that it is. Our time is precious, not to be squandered on dissatisfying or meaningless activities. With friends, we make time, quality time, even if only for a few minutes on the phone. We do not measure the communication by minutes, but by the sense of well-being in our hearts. Taking time for our relationship with God is not about the quantity, but the experience of communion that makes everything in life fit together.

Are we too busy to give time to God? We might pause, and ponder the question, but if we translate "time" as meaning "love," we will not want to say that we are too busy to love God. Love takes time – some time – to grow, mature, and become the dominant expression of our lives. But the question is more about increasing our awareness of what we need in our relationship with God than about keeping track of the amount of time we spend. Some days we have matters of such great importance that we leave everything aside while we weigh the pros and cons, and seek God's help with our decisions. At other times, we are occupied with ordinary events, and find ourselves asking God to take care of someone who just came to our attention, or to help us with a fresh idea for the work at hand, or to give thanks for the manner in which several disparate pieces have come together for a successful conclusion. If we are too busy for spending time with God, we are too busy. We do not exist to meet deadlines from outside us, but to meet lifelines inside us.

Making time for God is a reasonable practice, but rarely a consequence only of our reasoning. God not only gently invites us to spontaneous communication in the midst of our occupations, but also moves graciously in our hearts, encouraging habits of love that include making time for God, and taking time for all our other important relationships. Many of us find that it serves us well to make appointments with God, as we would with anyone dear to us. We rely on calendars and schedules to ensure that we meet with important people during our busy days. When we reflect on the great benefits to us and to everyone around us of having an open and honest relationship with God, we might readily conclude that we need some regular times in which to meet, to converse, or to be in one another's company.

From our perspective, giving to God some of our time can seem difficult or a burden because of the constant flow of thoughts suggesting that anything and everything is more important than taking time out of our day to be with God. Similar thoughts can, if they are heeded, interfere with friendships, family relationships, and engaging with people in all aspects of our lives. From God's perspective, there is no desire to take our valuable time from us, but rather to give to us meaning, purpose, inspiration, and love. Above all, love.

Do we have time to receive the essentials of life from God, or shall we give our most valuable gift entirely to the false god of "I'm too busy?" A proper and holy selfishness will lead us regularly to give some of our precious gift of time to God from whom we receive both life and time.