

Personal Time, Christian Time

"Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." (Colossians 4:5-6, ESV)

When I wake up in the morning, I realize I have left my Sleep Time for my Awake Time. In my Awake Time, I have Work Time and Non-Work Time. Non-Work Time includes Meal Time. Which of these times of mine does not first belong to God? I want to pray before I go to sleep, and perhaps also I may pray when I wake up to thank the Lord for the good night's rest. When I eat, I want to thank the Lord first for providing. Perhaps it is good also to pray when beginning work and leaving work? Outside of Meal Time, that leaves the remaining Non-Work Time. In my effort to pray without ceasing, I may do well to recognize the various times of my day and to devote them to God. But, what about this Non-Work Time?

In Non-Work Time, I may be out shopping for groceries, out walking the neighborhood, exercising, socializing, etc. Paul encourages Christians to devote this time to the Lord as well. When we do not encounter others, we try to conduct ourselves well. (Rom. 13:3) When we do encounter others, let us also use this time wisely. Just as we treat our meals as special, devoted to the Lord, let us also consider that our interaction in the world, showing the light of Christ to the darkness, as something special. I am not social by nature but it is something I push myself further to become. When speaking with others, I sometimes struggle to be gracious with my words, to season them as if I were salting them to improve their flavor or preservation. I know that each person requires an individualized, personal response. I hope, when meeting people, to give them my full attention and to listen more than I speak.

Is there really a personal time when I am not a Christian? I do not believe so. This does not mean I should be on edge or anxious, but aware for opportunities that may appear. The Lord may provide open doors, open hearts that are eager to seek his truth. Or, perhaps they need convincing from scripture and salted words. In whichever way, in whatever portion of the time that God has given me, let me devote that time to God's service, looking for ways to minister to others. Since God is the provider of all things, even time, let me give that time back to him and use it wisely.