

Releasing the Power of T³

How you manage 3 “T”s in your life will determine how closely you follow God.

Time—Most people are time poor. Because of the lifestyles they have chosen, their time is filled with either work or leisure activity. **The most common excuse for not getting involved in service is lack of time.** In the same way Jesus limited Himself (Phil. 2:5-11) **people must learn to set limits upon themselves and their children to free up time to serve God.** This may mean changing one’s standard of living, reducing extracurricular activities for adults and kids, or removing distractions from one’s life. Often the things which need limiting are not bad in themselves. They are merely distractions from what is truly good. We are commanded in scripture to “redeem the time,” it means, to rescue or recover our time from waste (Eph. 5:16).

- ✦ **Limit extracurricular activities by kids** to one thing in order to free up their time and yours (no more shuttling back and forth).
- ✦ **Limit your own personal leisure** activity in order to free up time to serve.
- ✦ **Identify the major time wasters** in your lifestyle. What can be done to limit their impact?
- ✦ **Require at least one meal a day to be spent together as a family.** This is a time to debrief, share goals, encourage one another and reinforce values.
- ✦ **No time for God means you are too busy.** Carve out a specific amount of time daily (at least an hour) to be spent in God’s Word and Prayer. You can’t hear God’s voice if you are not actively listening to it.

Treasure—The average evangelical gives 2.6% of their income to God. Over 25% give nothing. If we were to tip waiters and waitresses this it would be seen as a scandal. **People must be taught that their giving reflects their spiritual affections.** They must also be taught to be creative in finding new ways to give. Here are some examples of what they can do

- ✦ Families can begin training children to give by having them **save loose change.** Tally at the end of the month and give to a mission agency.
- ✦ **Graduated tithing**—Families determine what their basic level of living expenses are and tithe a full ten percent on that. They then gradually increase the percentage for every thousand dollars above that. So the next \$1000 of income is tithed at 15%, the one after that at 20%, etc.
- ✦ **Faithing money**—families together determine a specific amount they will give to the Lord over the next year. They are sure to select an amount that far exceeds disposable income and will require sacrifice by each family member. They trust God to supply what they need to reach that amount.
- ✦ **EBay and Craig’s List extravaganza**—Wheel and deal your way through all that stuff stored in your garage and attic. The money raised goes to missions. Set a minimum goal

and a maximum goal to see how well you can apply your creativity and deal making skills to increase the gift.

- ✦ **Incubating money**—each family member begins with a specific amount of money and works over a set period of time to increase that amount. Say you start with \$200 and have 6 months to increase it. You find ways through working, selling and reselling, bartering, etc to see how many times you can multiply the seed money into a gift to God.
- ✦ **Found money**—there are times in the year when you just fall into money. Instead of considering this money to spend on yourself, consider it money God sent to use for His Kingdom.

Talents—The chains of professionalism and elitism that are shackling the minds of people in our churches must be broken. **People must realize that they need not be the best, the most educated, the professional to be effective ministers and servants.** For too long, through modeling and media, people have been convinced that if you can't do a perfect job its better to do nothing.

- ✦ **Emphasize that doing *some thing* is better than doing *no thing*.** Faithing requires action. When we respond with what God has already entrusted to us, He is able to fill up what lacks and demonstrate His power.
- ✦ **Learn through service how God has gifted you.** Use service opportunities to explore your spiritual gifts and your ability to creatively express them.
- ✦ **Practice thinking outside the box.** Scan the major news stories. Think of your talents, interests and gifts and how they could be applied to the problems you find in the daily news.
- ✦ **Search the web to find out creative things others with talents or gifts like yours are doing to serve Christ.** Find out what doctors, engineers, mathematicians, athletes, etc are doing to serve. If they can do that, what can you do?