

Stewarding Our Time

Three Week Small Group Series based on the Book Getting Things Done for Teens





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Stewarding Our Time



Small Group Plan: Week 1

Snack & Ice Breaker Time:

- Get everyone to grab a snack and come back to the area for announcements.
- What do you think when you hear the word “ready”? Are you ready? (Ready for now? Ready for what’s next? Ready for transitions? Ready for anything?).

Announcements: *(Make sure they have their phones out to schedule this)*

- Share the next event coming (YA/YM or church events).
- Share the next Prayer Summit coming up.
- Encourage them to meet up outside of cell, find someone after cell to connect with during the week.

Devotional Sharing: *(in groups of two)*

- Choose one day of devotions from your journal and share what you received.
- Share how many days of devotions you had this week.
- Share how you have been feeling/doing this last week.
- Repentance: confess any sin & share steps taken to turn from sin and turn to God.
- Share who you reached out to, how did you rest, and how your Weekly Action-Step went.
- Pray for each other.

Teaching (Information is taken from the book **Getting Things Done for Teens by David Allen**):

Before we tackle stewarding our time or time management, we need to tackle the brain, and the two areas of your brain that impact how we use our time and “being ready” are the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex.

The amygdala is your brain's first line of defense, it is scanning and responding to everything that comes into your world AND it continues to alert you until whatever is in its sights is taken care of. Your brain desires closure and completion so when something comes in and is not taken care of it remains an “open loop” and will pop up with reminders at any time. Ever find yourself, getting into the Word, finally relaxing, or getting ready to sleep and then you start to remember one thing after another. Your brain is taking advantage of the quiet to “complete the open loops”. The prefrontal cortex on the other hand is used when you slow down and think.

Genesis 2:7 (ESV) then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

Psalms 139:13-16 (ESV) For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

We are realizing more and more how true this passage is.



In light of *Psalm 139* let's dig a little further into the brain. Your amygdala, the reactive part of your brain, is highly stimulated. In this day and age, it is often overstimulated to the point of forming an addiction to digital simulation. It was designed to deal with short bursts of stimuli, not be in constant high alert. The ability to think, deeply, imaginatively, and creatively is being threatened by the fact that we are always connected. Your ability to think, to conceive ideas, and to make them happen require room and space to think without distraction. It is the result of rest...does the word rest ring a bell for anyone?

Leviticus 23:3 (NIV) There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a sabbath to the Lord.

Yes, the sabbath! It is designed for us to come together in worship, giving God the first of our time, and it is a day that is His. It's fascinating to think that He also designed us to need a day of rest, with no distraction in order to think, to build ideas, and be creative.

Knowing this re-read *Psalm 139*, spend time in thanksgiving.

When our amygdala is at capacity without time for the prefrontal cortex to kick in, what happens? There are two major pitfalls that we risk falling into when we have too many "open loops".

1. Overload & Overwhelm

We could find ourselves in a state of overwhelm and completely overloaded. This could look like:

- Not sleeping.
- Constantly forgetting.
- Too much to keep track of.
- "I don't know where to begin."
- Not being able to keep up.

2. Distraction

Sometimes out of overload & overwhelm, we fall into distraction. Sometimes we get distracted for no other reason than our amygdala is highly attuned to distraction.

So how do you get ready and avoid the pitfalls? You need a system that allows for appropriate "operational" control over and perspective on your 'stuff'. What is operational control? It's like when you're playing a video game, you don't have control over the environment or the challenges, but you can decide what your character does in the video game. Perspective is the ability to look ahead and determine "where" you are going while determining the why behind what you choose.

Over the next few weeks, we will talk about that, and a system that you could use.

Reflection

Prayerfully answer the following questions. Ask Jesus to bring to mind anything he may want to highlight in these areas.

- List the things that you feel, experience, or sense when you are feeling "off".
- List the things that you feel, experience, or sense when you are feeling ready.
- How do you typically deal with "stuff" in your life, to make sure that "stuff" gets done?



- What is your biggest pitfall?

Out of your responses ask Jesus for one step He wants you to take this week. Commit that step to Him in prayer.

Sharing & Prayer

- Share your responses and the step Jesus asked you to take.
- Share a prayer request.
- Pray for one another.

Remind them of any announcements necessary from the beginning.



Small Group Plan: Week 2

Snack & Ice breaker time:

- Get everyone to grab a snack and come back to the area for announcements.
- Ice breaker question: Do you tend to put things off until the very last minute or are you the type of person to just get it done right away?

Announcements: *(Make sure they have their phones out to schedule this!!)*

- Share the next event coming (YA/YM or church events).
- Share the next Prayer Summit coming up.
- Encourage them to meet up outside of cell, find someone after cell to connect with during the week.

Devotional Sharing: *(in groups of two)*

- Choose one day of devotions from your journal and share what you received.
- Share how many days of devotions you had this week.
- Share how you have been feeling/doing this last week.
- Repentance: confess any sin & share steps taken to turn from sin and turn to God.
- Share who you reached out to, how did you rest and how your Weekly Action-Step went.
- Pray for each other.

Teaching (Information is taken from **Getting Things Done for Teens by David Allen**):

Last week we started by taking a look at our brains, that they carry “open loops” of all the things we need to do or keep track of until we actively close them (by doing something with them). This leads us to being over-stimulated. We looked at how God designed us for rest to be able to think deeply and creatively. How do we get a handle of the things that we need to do? Let’s start in the Bible...

Ephesians 5:15-17 (ESV) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Psalms 90:12 (ESV) So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

God deeply cares how we spend our time, being called to use our time wisely and make the most of the time we have been given. Our whole lives are spiritual, including our work, talents, relationships, and rest. That’s why making the best use of our time, including rest (sabbath) is so important, it all counts.

We need a system to manage the tasks and items coming at us. In **Getting Things Done for Teens by David Allen** we are given a system that we are going to dig into. This is just one way, but it is a great place to start. Just like anything else, it will take more work at the beginning to set up the habit than it does to live using these tools regularly.

The **Getting Things Done for Teens** system is broken into three parts so between this week and next week we will look at each part to establish a system that allows us to be faithful with our time.

Part 1: Five Steps to Help You Gain Control



The goal would be to complete this process once a week.

- Step 1: Capture

Gather everything that requires your attention or needs to be completed into one place. This should be a tangible place, so either a basket or a note program that you are familiar with. Why is this important? This simple act of “collecting” your stuff into one area removes it from the amygdala’s “watch list” and closes the loop, moving that item to your prefrontal cortex to deal with.

- Step 2: Clarify

Once you have captured everything, you will want to clarify what you will be doing with it. You will go through each item that you have captured individually. Ask yourself if the item is actionable? Being actionable requires you to do something or take a next step.

If the answer is no, it is non-actionable and would fall into one of four categories:

- Trash; throw it out immediately.
- Check list.
- Someday/maybe list.
- Reference item.

If the answer is yes, it will fit into one of two categories.

- Next Step: Determine the next step you need to take and schedule it in.
- Project: Determine what doing the project looks like and the end goal, once you know that you can schedule in a next step. (We’ll dig into this next week.)

- Step 3: Organize

This model recommends setting up 3 “maps” to help organize your actionable items. Plug all of your actionable items into one or more of these maps to ensure they get completed on-time.

- A calendar
- Next Action List
- Project List

The non-actionable items, that are not trash, need to be filed in such a way that it is easily retrieved, with minimal effort.

- Step 4: Reflect

Review and update the contents of your “maps”. Are there items that have been completed where a new next step or date needs to be assigned?

- Step 5: Engage

When you’re not scrambling or running behind because something has been forgotten or missed, then you can fully engage with the people and the world around you. Pouring into those that God has placed into our lives and the call God has placed on each of us as Christians.



This is why stewarding our time is so important. Jesus knows that there are things that we just need to take care of in our lives. He also gave every Christian the commandment of loving people, and the commission of spreading the gospel.

Matthew 22:36-40 (ESV) *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV) *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Reflection

In prayer:

- Ask God, what stops you from stewarding your time?
- When you look at these 5 steps, what may hinder you from doing them?
- Ask God if there is something, He wants to reveal to you in these areas. Confess, if needed.
- What is one step that God is asking you to complete regarding stewarding your time wisely?
- What would stop you from actually fulfilling your step this week? Be honest! Ask God for a plan to overcome it.

Sharing & Prayer

- Share what your step is this week.
- Pray for one another.

Remind them of any announcements necessary from the beginning.



Small Group Plan: Week 3

Snack & Ice breaker time:

- Get everyone to grab a snack and come back to the area for announcements.
- Ice Breaker Question: Do you tend to say yes to everything? How has that worked out? Feel free to share a story of the result (either good or bad).

Announcements: *(Make sure they have their phones out to schedule this!!)*

- *Share the next event coming (YA/YM or church events).*
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Devotional Sharing: *(in groups of two)*

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Teaching: (Information is taken from **Getting Things Done for Teens by David Allen**)

What does living a life of focus look like? Or living out your calling? Who are some people in the Bible that lived their calling? Probably names like Jesus, Joseph, Moses, Abraham, Paul, etc. come up. Sometimes we put too much pressure on ourselves to have a calling, struggling between letting it happen and making it happen. Can you think of others who fulfilled their calling but that life of focus looked different than what we equate with calling or having a life of purpose?

What about Joseph (Jesus' earthly father)? He was called to take Mary as his wife and raise Jesus, his life was being dad and a carpenter. Jesus followed in his footsteps of being a carpenter until He was 30. What about Lydia (Acts 16:11-15)? A wealthy independent woman, who was a "seller of purple goods". She offered Paul and his crew a place to stay, pouring into and helping the church. Their lives were lived with focus and with purpose but maybe not in ways that we expect.

They knew the focus of their lives and it was clear in their actions. What would our lives look like if we had that focus in our own lives?

Part 2: Levels of Focus Pyramid

The second part of the **Getting Things Done for Teens** model is levels of focus. This gives you a chance to look at the purpose of your life, and by doing that seeing the value of stewarding our time. We don't struggle with stewarding our time because of a lack of knowledge or knowing how to, but because of a lack of value. **Getting Things Done for Teens** is not based in Christian values and principles, but the tools are still useful for us in working through and answering.



Levels of Focus Pyramid:

- At the top of the Pyramid, we have Purpose; this holds the broadest view of your life, like a zoomed-out image of google maps.
- The next level is Vision; this is what you would like to be true in the future, ideally what will your life look like.
- Then Goals; out of your purpose and vision, these are the goals you create to achieve Purpose and Vision.
- After goals come Areas of Focus; these are the major parts of your life that need attention continually, that you are committed to maintain.
- The final two levels are Projects, and then Actions. These two levels flow out of the previous 4 levels. Having said that these are the biggest sections and make the two base layers of your pyramid. Without these layers, nothing comes out of the rest of the levels but daydreams. Some projects will come to you clearly defined, and others will require you to set the parameters of the project. Your actions are the steps you need to take to complete the projects.

We can look at this and think, I got this, I have dreams and goals, I can fill in the blanks. But let's remember the two passages from last week ***Ephesians 5:15-17*** and ***Psalms 90:12***. This process should not be done without God; we should prayerfully consider these areas as we build our own pyramids of focus. This will give us a framework to establish when we say yes and when we say no, while giving us the why of stewarding our time, but we always need to allow God to change those plans and focuses as we learn and grow with Him.

Part 3: The Planning Map

The final part to the **Getting Things Done for Teens** model is a Planning Map. The Planning Map is modelled after the process that our brains naturally go through when we are faced with a decision. That process can be broken down into 5 steps:

- Define purpose, principles, and standards; you have the urge to make something happen and what are the boundaries of that idea.
- Outcome visioning; you imagine the outcome. For example, if it's a school project, what will that final project look like? Is it a paper, is a presentation, how long, the topic, etc.
- Brainstorming; you generate ideas that might be relevant.
- Organizing; you sort through those ideas for some structure.
- Identifying next actions; you define a physical, visible action that will begin to make it a reality.

Every time an idea pops into our heads, our brain does these 5 things on autopilot. So why don't we intentionally use the same method when we have projects that we have been tasked to do or asked to do or ideas that we have.

Read ***Matthew 25:14-30***.

We have all received "talents", whether that is the time we are given, the talents and giftings we receive, the circles of influence we hold. Did you notice that He did not expect each servant to have the same results? It was about living wisely and using what had been given. As we wrap up this series, remember perfection is not the goal, being like someone else is not the goal. It is about taking steps to



grow in areas that we are struggling in and continuing to grow when we feel like “we have arrived”. Most importantly it is about following Jesus in what He is asking of you, continuing to grow, and seeking after what He has for you.

Reflection

Prayerfully ask God:

- What He has for you out of *Matthew 25:14-30*?
- Have you been living your life on purpose? What hinders you or at times holds you back from living a life of purpose? Confess where needed, if it is something that you need to pray through talk to your leader or set up an appointment with the team in the Care Ministry.
- Is there an area of life (or the levels of focus) that is difficult for you to clarify?
- Ask God if there is something He wants to speak into that area.
- Pray into what God is asking you to do.

Sharing & Prayer

- In pairs:
 - Share what God revealed to you and what He is asking you to do this week.
 - Pray for one another.
- As a cell:
 - Spend time in thanksgiving:
 - For whom God is.
 - How He created us.
 - For the gifts and talents, He has given to us.

Remind them of any announcements necessary from the beginning.



References

Getting Things Done for Teens by David Allen

<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

