



**The**  
*Renegade  
Pastor*  
**Calendar**

**RENEGADE PASTORS  
CALENDAR TRANSCRIPT**

By Nelson Searcy



# MEET DR. NELSON SEARCY



Nelson is the Founding and Lead Pastor of The Journey Church, with locations across New York City and in Boca Raton, FL. By God’s grace, Nelson identified and developed the **Eight Systems of a Healthy Church®** that he has used to coach over 5,000 churches in the US and around the world to adapt those eight systems to their unique ministry fields, resulting in great health and growth. He regularly coaches pastors online and in-person through the **Church Leader Insights** and the **Renegade Pastors Network** ministries that he founded. He also leads several annual pastor in-person conferences and online training events. In ministry for more than 35 years, Nelson and his church routinely appear on lists such as “The 50 Most Influential Churches” and “The 25 Most Innovative Leaders.” He is the author of over 100 church growth resources and 20+ books, including *The Renegade Pastor: Abandoning Average in Your Life and Ministry*, *The Difference Maker* and *Fusion: Turning First-Time Guests into Fully-Engaged Members of Your Church*. Nelson is the recipient of the prestigious Donald A. McGavran Award for Outstanding Leadership in Great Commission Research. He is a longtime student of church history, especially mastering the areas of evangelism and church growth. Nelson divides his time between NYC and South Florida. He battled Stage 4 cancer and has been cancer-free since 2018, praise God! He has an amazing wife, Kelley, and a teenage son, Alexander, who continues to grow in so many ways.

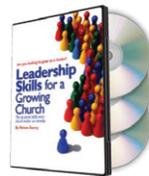
## THE EIGHT SYSTEMS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH®:



Assimilation



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Leadership



Ministry



Small Groups



Stewardship



Strategy



Worship Planning

## Selection of Books by Dr. Nelson Searcy:



**Nelson Searcy:** I want to talk to you about the Renegade Pastors Calendar. This is going to be a two-part session. During the time that we have together, and if it sounds rather simple at the offset, hopefully, you will find it very helpful and enlightening, by the time we're done tomorrow afternoon.

The Renegade Pastors Network is a network where we challenge you to abandon average. We challenge you to say no to average. Over and over in the Renegade Pastors Network, I'm always asking you to remember your calling. The truth is, none of us went in ministry to do average things with average people and average ways and get to heaven and say, "Well, average good and average service."

We all went into ministry to make it hard to go to hell from our area. To make a dent in hell. To help people get to heaven and help a grow in Christ, whatever it might be. It's probably not just average vision. I've thought a lot about, if we're going to abandon average, if we're going to say no to average. What kind of structure system, processes, mindsets, ways of thinking do we need in our lives that are different from everybody else?

One of the foundational quotes on which the Renegade Pastors Network is based is this if you don't know how to grow a church. If you don't know what to do in your leadership. If you're unclear about the next step in your ministry. Just look at what the average church down the street does and do the exact opposite and you'll probably be okay.

Because average is always wrong. The average church in America isn't growing. The average pastor in America doesn't feel like they're fulfilling their calling. The average pastor gets up on Monday morning and says, "Now what?" The average church is behind on their budget. Their attendance is declining. Average is really, really bad. I don't want average and you don't average.

In thinking about this and thinking about, "How do I challenge you to stay above average?" I always have the challenge on the monthly equipping calls. I try to bring in authors and thought leaders who will challenge you to go against average. Sometimes we're able to get those folks, like Gary McIntosh, to come and spend more time with us.

A big announcement that you're going to hear later is Bill Easom, who was just on the call last month and did a fantastic job challenging all of us, he's going to be at our next Renegade Pastors Conference this fall, and others like that.

When I do the strategy and briefing, I'm trying to find ways to challenge you to stay ahead and abandon average and that. Then, in these talks, how do you take this time and really lay out in more detail, in a deeper way, this idea of abandoning average?

Not trying to kiss up to The Vineyard guys in the room, who I love, by the way. People always say, "Why do you pick on the Vineyard?" Because they just won't accept me, that's why. I'm ordained Baptist. I went to a Methodist school, but I'm more Vineyard in my theology. I just don't know where I fit in. I've had this unique opportunity to coach all kinds of stripes and pastors.

I was listening to these John Wimber tapes that I tracked down and Kimberly so graciously converted over to some method that I could listen to. Wimber said this. He said, "Every leader has three resources to work with, and only three." I, like you, got ready to write this down.

You guys know John Wimber, right? Founder of The Vineyard. John Wimber said, "Every leader has three, and only three, resources with which to work." I thought, "This is going to be good." Here's what he said, "Time, energy, and money." Those are the three resources you have.

You have time. This gift that God gives us, this gift of a day, the gift of a season, the gift of a life, the time that we have between now and either the end of our time here on Earth upon the return of the Lord Jesus. But, we have time.

We also have energy. Webner had a very profound definition of energy. He said, “It’s not only your energy, but it’s the energy of others that you can mobilize.” I thought that’s pretty insightful and certainly that deserves the entire talk sometimes. That we should talk about that, how do we manage our energy?

In fact, tomorrow, I had a sneak preview of what Kerry is going to talk about. He’s going to teach us some lessons that he’s been learning from a book called *The Only Way to Win*. The author of that book is Jim Loehr. He actually lives right here in Orlando. Maybe we can get him at a future conference.

Jim, before he wrote *The Only Way to Win*, wrote a book called *The Power of Full Engagement*. I had the opportunity to be trained in that and to go to several live events with that. The big point that Jim Loehr made in *The Power of Full Engagement*, is that life is not about time management, it’s about energy management. That’s really good.

In fact, I was driving a very famous pastor home from the airport one time. I was doing what he would do, asking him questions. Even though this pastor was tired and worn out, and didn’t want a little punk like me asking him all these snoopy questions. I said, “Tell me some secrets. What are some insights? What are some things you’ve learned?”

They repeated that same thing. They said, “I really live in such a way that I want to maximize my peak periods of energy, and I want to minimize my low points of energy. I look at the circadian rhythms of my life and try to manage that. Energy is really important, your own energy.” That book is worth reading.

You can go online and find webinars and training events around that managing energy. Energy is not just managing your own energy, it’s managing the energy of others. If God has entrusted you with staff, or entrusted you with volunteers, or entrusted you with people who want to come along side of you. Whether that’s your family or paid or whatever it might be, you want to manage that. Certainly we should talk about that.

In fact, in April, we decided yesterday, in events coaching, that I’m going to do a oneday staffing workshop. We probably won’t promote that very widely. On Thursday, April 11th, somewhere in the nearby vicinity here, I’m going to do a oneday workshop. On finding, hiring, managing and, when necessary, de-hiring staff. If you’re interested in that you can see Scott about that. That all goes into energy.

Then Webner made a big point about money. We get all caught up about money in the church, but the truth is, it takes money to complete a mission. Jesus talked a lot about that and we understand that. Sometimes unchurched people, lost people, understand that better than we do.

I have one of my great awakenings about money when Journey was doing monthly services in New York. We had not been receiving an offering and you know, the words you about an offering are very important. You never take an offering, unless you are in Staten Island where Nick is. Otherwise you receive an offering or you give an offering. I have not been receiving an offering, and since it can be. In fact I knew a story. He was living with his girlfriend and he was drinking every night. He was putting himself to sleep and he comes up. He has got this wrinkled check in his hand.

And he is like, “I have had this for the last three monthly services.” e points to the ballroom that we were meeting. He is like, “It costs money around here.” He said, “When you are going let us get involved in this?” How much is that check? I said, “Well, right now. You know this would be a really good time.”

SI took his check and although we may have raised an ugly kid, but not a dumb one. I cashed it and we used it for a mission. Later, I ultimately decided to start receiving an offering every week, not so much for the money, but for the collection plates. That became a very convenient way to not only collect the connection cards but also to receive the offering.

But you have to manage the money well. That would be a really great talk to do sometime in the future. Maybe in future when you are getting pastors conferences we can flush that out more of looking at time and energy and money. But I want to talk about time. Today I want to look at a very specific tool that you have at your disposal regarding your time, which is your calendar.

Because in many ways, your calendar is your time. What you put on your calendar represents your priorities, what doesn't make it on to your calendar demonstrates. It's probably not as important as perhaps you said it was because it didn't actually make it on your calendar.

And then we all have calendars around us. We've got the calendar program on our computer. Every Gmail, Ymail, Xmail, Hotmail or whatever, they have these calendar programs. Every smartphone has a calendar on it. When I was growing up we had the wall calendar, and that's what we had. But I really want to make the most of my days. I am sure you do, too. I've been, over the years, quite fanatical about my calendar. I actually save all of my calendars. In fact, my wife laughs at me.

I got my first DayTimer when I was thirteen years old. It was back...remember the DayTimer kind of things? I had a one-page-a-day DayTimer. I loved that. I did try, for a while, to do the week at a glance. I tried to do monthly thing, for a while, trying to get that thing down.

I carried it with me everywhere along the way. I was doing computer programming back in that day so you know my story. I won't get into it now. It taught me to be fanatical about my calendar. I began to realize that some people get more stuff done in an hour than others. Some people get more stuff done in a week than others. Some people get more stuff done in a month than others.

If you've listened to my time-management resource, I tell the story about this book. It doesn't matter who the author is. He's actually written some great books since, but this was not a great book, but the title stuck with me. It was called *The 90-Minute Hour*. I was intrigued by that. If you know my principle offpeak, this was one of the big principles.

In fact, it was the only principle I took away from that book other than the title. The title idea just intrigued me, about could you get ninety minutes worth of work done in one hour? I was thinking that. I saw other people who were able to do that. I became fanatical about my calendar. You can see that in my life to this day. Some people think all I do is work. They'd be really surprised at how active my family life is, and how much fun time I schedule. How much vacation, concerts, and things like that, that I go to and all that.

I try to be fanatical about that and think a lot about that. In fact, it became a joke for a while that people would give me calendars. More recently, people have started giving me hourglasses. I don't really know why that is. This is true. Instead of a little trinket or gift, for a while people were giving me calendars. I was thinking back through some of my favorite calendars. I have a bunch of bulldog calendars. Anybody in here bulldog owners? Anybody? Nobody? What do you have Daryl?

**Daryl:** English bulldog.

**Nelson:** Oh yeah, English bulldog. That's what I always had, an English bulldog. What color is yours?

**Daryl:** Red.

**Nelson:** Yeah, he's got the red English bulldog. I had a solid white. It's got the flat face and the big arms, all that stuff. They say you start looking like your dog. Do you think you and I look like bulldogs?

**Nelson:** Are you a UGA guy or is there a Texas Bulldogs story I don't know?

**Daryl:** No.

**Nelson:** You just you like the bulldogs? I've always been a bulldog owner. English bulldog is my preferred. I'm between bulldogs right now. The last one died, had a brain tumor. It was horrible. We had to put him down. I'm thinking about next one maybe getting a French bulldog with the idea that he can travel with me. He could just sit up here. Lay right here during these conferences. If a cell phone goes off, he goes, "Brrrrrrrr," run back there and gets the cell phone.

The school I went to, the undergrad school that I went to, GardnerWebb University, which back in the day, was GardnerWebb College. Once I graduated, they said, "Well, maybe there's hope?" They changed it to University. We were called...

Remember what we were called, Jimmy?

**Jimmy:** The Running Bulldogs.

**Nelson:** The Running Bulldogs. People always thought I had a bulldog because I went to the University of Georgia. I did marry a Georgia girl. But yeah, they have Uga. My dog looked like Uga. I mean, he was solid white, just a glimpse. My last bulldog was solid white, the one I picked. Gardner was called the Running Bulldogs. I always laughed at this because have you ever seen a bulldog run?

They're really good from like here to the end of the room and that's it. They're out. He's, "Rrrrrrrr," and then done, for the day. We used to do this thing called Dog Party in New York City. I can't get off on this too far but we used to do this dog party. Have you ever done any of these kinds of outreaches, like Pet-a-Palooza thing? People are fanatical about their dogs. For years the outreach in New York City, Riverside Park we would do these dog parties. I would always emcee these things, because I just absolutely loved it. We would do like stupid pet tricks. We would do ugliest dog. It was amazing. More people would sign up for the ugliest dog than they would the prettiest dog. I would kiss the dogs. I became known as the dog guy. People would see me out, "Oh, you're the pastor that does the Dog Party," all that sort of stuff.

I brought my bulldog, the last one, this was before he got the brain tumor and everything. He was in his prime. I brought him and he overheated. It was like a February day but he overheated.

I had to take him to the vet. It cost me \$600.00. I swear to that. They put him in this hyperbaric chamber that cooled him down. His heart's going. He's shaking, and all this stuff. They had to put him inside this little container, and he just loved it. He kept wanting to buy one of those for the house.

He would save his little doggie money to try to get one of those. Every time we walked past the hospital he would pull me in that direction. He just wanted to live inside of that chamber. I've taken on the same approach to my life. I go up to the hotel room, down to 64. I'd see now how we're going to do it. I love bulldogs. People gave me all these bulldog calendars. People have given me monkey calendars. I don't really understand that. My dad, this year, gave me a monkey calendar. I don't even know what that means. One year, in 1988, I still have it, somebody gave me a calendar called "The Hot Men of Country."

**Scott:** I don't know that I'd have put that in there, by the way.

**Nelson:** I'm a huge country music fan.

**Scott:** You are.

**Nelson:** Scott knows this. Any other country music fans in here? Okay, so we've got, you're not going to admit it. I don't know. Maybe. I'm like, I don't know. Oh, Blake Sheldon anybody? Anybody in here? Good. I'm an old country music fan. Terry, you're country music? You raised your hand back there? Let's talk about country music 1988. This was when country was still ugly. Back in the day, if you were going to sing a heartbreak song, you had to look like you'd had your heart broke. Today, country is pretty. Today it's glamorous. We've got pretty girls and pretty guys. They're wearing skinny jeans on the country music stuff. In 1988, doggone, it was country. Waylon had just died. Willie looked like he needed to die.

I'm like, "How did they even come up with a dozen of these 'Hot Men of Country'?" Anyway, somebody gave me that. Then, this past year, somebody gave me a Betty White calendar. I travel with that.

My favorite has been "The Far Side" calendars. Remember "The Far Side"? For my birthday a few years ago, my wife... They don't write "The Far Side" anymore. They put them all in this collection, and it's two big volumes, this wide, this tall. You can buy the whole thing. Kelley found it at a used book store. Where's Tommy? That's where she had to start, Tommy, used book store. Bought it in the used book store. I have it.

If you come to my home office, it's up on top of my bookshelf. I use it to weight down things. It's got all "The Far Side" cartoons in it, but these little "Far Side" daily calendars that you can pull it off, I've pulled a few of my favorites.

If you know "The Far Side," he likes to write about Heaven and Hell. This one is all these people...

I'll pass these around here. All these people are lined up waiting to check in. The Devil's checking them into the gates of Hell, right here, so you see the setup. Then it's like, "Okay, sir. Would you like inferno or noninferno? Ha! Just kidding. It's all inferno, of course. I just get a kick out of saying that."

Okay, pass that one around. Then, this one's the flip side. It's like a *Jeopardy* setup, so this is Alex Trebek here. Then it's God and then this guy over here. His name is Norman. God is against Norman, and God has 1,065 points. Norman has zero. The Alex Trebek character is saying, "Yes, that's right. The answer is 'Wisconsin.' Another fifty points for God. Uh oh, looks like Norman, our current champion, hasn't even scored yet." I like that one.

This one is one for your staff meeting next week. The Devil is standing here and he's got the little guy who's been condemned. There are two doors. One door says, "Damned if you do." The other door says, "Damned if you don't." The header is, "Come on. It's either one or the other."

Pass that around. This one, it's in Hell. Here's the flame. The Devil's up here. He's cracking the whip, keeping them all working. Here are all the worker bees down in Hell. This one guy, he's over at the coffee pot getting coffee. He's saying to himself, "Oh, man, the coffee's cold. They thought of everything!"

All right, I've got a couple of more here. Let's see. Oh, yeah, here's one that's easy to say. This one's Heaven. I guess this is supposed to be Saint Peter. He's giving him the thing here. It says, "Welcome to Heaven. Here's your harp." Then the bottom one is "Welcome to Hell. Here's your accordion."

Okay, I'll save this one for last. Here's one more. The Devil and one of his demons are talking. They're very disappointed, because there's this one guy here who's doing his work in Hell, and he's whistling and having a good time. He's got a big smile on his face. Then the Devil says to his demon, "You know, we're just not reaching that guy."

All right, this is for... I'm a tech geek. I switched to Mac a few years ago. Anyway, the top heading, it says, "Hell for Apple users." Who uses an Apple? Yeah, okay, a lot of us do. Here's the little guy standing here, and the Devil's giving him...He says, "Welcome to Hell. Here's your PC."

I love those things. I love to laugh and not so much the "Hot Men of Country." I've been fanatical about these calendars for a lot of reasons. Several quotes along the way have impacted me regarding the calendar. Peter Drucker, and you should basically buy and read everything he's ever written. If you don't know where to start, just start with *The Effective Executive*. But in that little book, he says, "Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things."

Your calendar has a lot to do with that. How do you personally manage your calendar? What's your plan right now for managing your calendar? I want you to think about it because I want to get real specific about your calendar. Do you manage it on your phone?

People joke because I still carry a BlackBerry, but the reason why is because of this keyboard. I can just enter things into my calendar so much faster. I would think of something. I would have to go to the iPhone screen, and enter it. I gave it shot for like a year, but I never could figure it out. You may have figured it out. That's fine. But do you manage it that way? Do you manage it on your computer?

I had a guy on my staff one time, he managed everything on his computer. The problem is he had to take his computer everywhere, so he's lugging that thing through as part of that. Do you do paper? I'm a huge fan of paper. In fact, I always advise my staff, before you can automate or electrify.

That's not a word. Before you can automate or electrify anything, you first got to do it on paper. Everybody wants a magic solution. Church community builders has figured a lot of this stuff out. But some of it just needs to be managed on paper.

Maybe you just need to carry a calendar around with you, just manage it on paper. I want you to think about, "How do you manage your calendar?" Do you have more than one calendar? I'll get to that a little bit later. But how do you manage that? The truth is, if your calendar is under control, you're probably in control. But if your calendar is out of control, you're out of control.

If we want to be effective, and we want to be efficient, it does come down to this little basic tool of a calendar. I'm not going to get into the history of the calendar. I find some of that fascinating. I had a chance to visit some places in the past, in Rome and the UK, and places like that where the calendar was created. But I'll just skip all that for now. But another quote that's impacted me a lot is has been one from Tom Peters.

If you know my story of being selected as one of the young entrepreneurs back in the day, and having the opportunity to travel, I always tell the Harvey McKay story, but Tom Peters was on that same tour as well.

He had just come out with a book called *In Search of Excellence*. You don't necessarily need to read it, but it's worth finding the summary somewhere of. Then more recently, he's put out some great books. My favorite, recent book of Peters, which maybe his most recent, is called *Little Big Things*. It's all these little things that have big impact, like the cleanliness of the restroom. It's a little thing but it has a big impact on your feeling about that.

But he likes to give equations. One that he gave that we as pastors will have some disagreement with, but it's worth thinking about. He said, "You equal your calendar." You equal your calendar. Now we probably preach that. Show me your calendar. Show me your checkbook. I'll show you what's important to you. We would expand it just a little bit. But the principle's right. Show me what you're going to do. Show me what you've got scheduled. Show me what's on your calendar, and I'll tell you what's important to you.

Brian Tracy took that just a little bit further. I like Brian. As far as I know, neither Tom nor Brian are followers of Jesus. We can pray for those. I've had the opportunity on a number of occasions to witness to Brian Tracy. Recently gave him a book, and he told me, just recently he was reading it line by line.

It's a Christian book that talks about some of the questions he was dealing with. But he said in one of his resources, that calendar management equals life management. Which goes to my point.

Get your calendar under control, you get your life under control. But of course, for us, and I think we would all agree, the Bible becomes a primary source. What does the Bible say about all of this? I love Winburn, I love Peters, and Tracy, and all that. Peter Drucker was a follower of Jesus, and you can talk to him when you get to heaven. But really, we look at what the Bible says. Perhaps the most famous verse in the Bible regarding this issue of calendar is Psalm 90:12.

I grew up. I didn't grow up in church, but when I became a Christian in 1989 I traveled for six or seven years doing revivals and crusades and things like that, mainly in more independent, Baptists, noncharismatic churches where it was KJV or the highway. Most of the scripture I learned early on was in the King James, and Psalm 90:12 in the King James says, "So teach us to number our days."

Teach us to number our days. Some years when I was too cheap to buy a calendar, I would print out a generic calendar. Then you would literally would have to go through it, write "January" at the top and number it. I always thought about that verse as you were numbering the calendar. Or even today sometimes on an airplane, if I've got a little extra time, I'll sit down and number out in my journal the next few weeks, and look at my calendar, and play with it or whatever.

The verse goes on to say, "That we may apply our hearts under wisdom." Yeah. You know that verse. Right? Teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts under wisdom. Isn't that a great phrase? I want to apply my heart under wisdom. The NIV is very close to that. The NIV says, "Teach us to number our days aright."

All right, so bonus points over the next two days if you can use a sentence with the word "aright" in it, okay? So make a right. No, not that, it's one word. One word. Aright. Teach us to number our days aright says the NIV. Ever play that game by the way? Backstage on Sundays you get bored so people offer to give you prizes if you can work a certain word into your sermon? You ever done that?

You people need to live. Here's how this works. You've got a bunch of ruffian buddies like Jimmy and Tommy and Scott, or whatever. You're about to go on stage, and they come up to you and say, "Hey, I'll buy your lunch today if you can work in the word..."

**Congregant:** Ruffian.

**Nelson:** Ruffian. Like I just said. Now he owes me lunch today because I worked in ruffian. But the more exotic the word the better. It can't be curse words. It can't be something you can't say. But it's got to be kind of strange. It's got to be rather unusual. Polemic. Thank you Tommy. You can buy me dinner. That you got to work into the sermon. Anyway, bonus points if you can work in the word aright. Teach us to number our days aright. Here's

how the NIV finishes it, “That we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Like the KJV that we may “apply our hearts under wisdom.” But the NIV probably a little closer to the Hebrew, that we may “gain a heart of wisdom.”

The NLT, just to push this a little further, because Lord knows I’ll beat an idea to death. The NLT, which is the one I preach from these days, it says, “Teach us to make the most of our time.” Very solid. Very direct. Teach us to make the most of our time. It’s a prayer on to God. God teach us to make the most of our time.

I have this question that some of you have seen on my Postit notes. If I write you a little note, it says, “What’s the best use of my time right now?” That’s really a prayer that I just pray all the time. What’s the best use of my time right now? What’s the best use of my time right now? Teach us to make the most of our time. Then it goes on to say, “So that we may grow in wisdom.”

I hope that’s what will happen in the time that we have as I take you through this talk, I hope you will grow in wisdom. Whether you agree with my ideas or not, or you agree with my process or not, you will develop your own process that will move you greater in wisdom and greater use of your time.

Just so Eugene doesn’t feel left out, Eugene Peterson in the message, he says this, “Oh, teach us to live well. Teach us to live wisely and well.” That’s how he translates that in the message translation.

But there are more verses of course besides Psalm 90:12. Ephesians 5 verse 15 and 17 says, “Watch your step, use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times.” That’s good. Verse 17 goes on to say, “Don’t live carelessly unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.” That’s really what we’re after. We want our calendar. We want our lives. We want our days to be in alignment with God’s ways.

That’s really what God’s will is. God’s will is listening to God and then doing what he says. God’s will is asking God, “What do you want?” Then make that what you want, and then adjust your life accordingly. Luke 14:28 in the message translation, “Is there anyone here who, planning to build a new house, doesn’t first sit down and figure the costs, so you’ll know that you can complete it?”

In other words, God’s not against planning. That verse we often apply to money, but I think it could apply to time. Perhaps the most famous passage in Scripture about time is from Ecclesiastes 3. It says there’s a time for everything in verse one. A season for every activity under the sun. A time to be born, a time to die. Who’s the group who sings that song? Turn, turn, turn.

**Congregation:** The Byrds.

**Nelson:** The Byrds? Yeah. The Byrds. Now that I’ve got that in your mind, I’m sure George Strait said something on it Terry. I’m certain he did. A time to be born and a time to die, and a time to plant and a time to harvest, and a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to rebuild. A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance.

**Nelson:** I was hopeful. A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away. A time to search and a time to lose. A time to keep and a time to throw away. That’s a good verse to put up on your desk. A time to keep and a time to throw away. Verse seven, “A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak up. A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace.” Verse nine, “What do people really get for all their hard work?” I’ve thought about this in connection with the various kinds of work God has given people to do. God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He as planted eternity in the human heart. But even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end.

I'm going to stop at verse 11, because unfortunately, Solomon reaches a bad conclusion in verse 12. But he got the set up right. He got the questions right, even though some of the conclusions may have been incomplete. But there is a time for everything.

How do you make time for everything? What do you do? What do you give priority to? Psalm 39, 4 and 5, this should be our prayer as we proceed on. It says, "Lord remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered and that my life is fleeting away. My life is no longer than the width of my hand."

Is that this way or this way? I'm not sure. An entire lifetime is just a moment to you, human existence is but a breath. Time crawls along when you're younger they say. Summer vacation seems to last forever when you're nine, 10, and 11. Then when you get old it's like, "Oh, is the summer over already? Is the time going so quickly? Where does it all go?"

And so that verse is true. Let's pray that prayer just right where you're at. Say, "Lord remind me of how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered and that my life is fleeing away. My wife is no longer than the width of my hand. An entire lifetime is just a moment to you. Human existence is but a breath."

If that is true, and I believe it is, and you probably do too, then how do we manage this life? How are we good stewards of our life? What I want to talk to you about now and for the rest of our time is five pillars in your calendar. I've really struggled with that word "pillars."

Number one, most of you know, I grew up with a speech impediment. That's a really hard word for me to say. I have a hard time saying words like, yellow, and pillow, and pillars, and things like that. Hopefully I'll say it correctly. But if you've ever been to Greece and you've gone on the tour of the ancient ruins, you've no doubt seen the Parthenon, or at least you have an image of what that might be.

But there are these pillars that hold up the roof and it was designed that way so that if any one fell, others could hold it up for a while, and so there are these pillars. I've debated if they should be called anchors. If this should be called guideposts. If these should be called stepping stones, if they should be called checkpoints. I could keep going on words that I played with.

But I think these are pillars, these are anchors in your calendar. If you get these five pillars in your calendar, if you put these in your calendar, then it seems like everything else will be built correctly. Everything else will be able to stand, you'll have a life that can stand strong for the ages.

But what we often do is we put the wrong things as the anchors in our calendar. We put the wrong things as the pillars in our calendar.

Give you a quick example. Any of you have my Time Management Resource? I get into trouble with that because the first thing I tell you to schedule in the Time Management Resource is your vacation. Vacation, so a lot of people get upset with me about that. They're like, no, it should be, like, your time with the Lord or whatever.

What I know is, if you get certain things first, then everything else kind of falls in its place. These are pillars that you want to schedule. If you get these five anchors right, you'll be able to navigate everything else you need to do. If you don't get these right, your calendar's going to spin out of control. These anchors, these pillars help insure that your calendar will be under your control and under God's control. I want to give you five of these.

Now, as we get into our list, and we'll try to cover one or two before our lunch break, as we get into this, there's a couple of parallel thoughts I need to give you. One is that in order for this to work, you have to keep a unified calendar. You need one calendar that has everything that you need to do on it.

I'll tell you a story I don't think I've ever told outside of, perhaps, advanced coaching. A couple years ago, when I felt the freedom to start a new Journey campus and realized that I was going to be starting one in South Florida...

If you know the story on that, I felt the freedom to start another location for the first time in 10 years. I'd been pastoring The Journey's Manhattan campus. I was very happy. I was very fat and happy. I didn't know Steve Reynolds at the time, so I literally was fat and happy.

Other people had gone out to start campuses for The Journey, and I began to sense in September of 2009 that maybe I could start the next one. This was freeing because it was the first time I'd ever felt that way, and I began to pray.

I thought God said Boston and he was saying Boca. I said Boston, and he said Boca, and I said Boston, and he said Boca. I said, "Okay, I'll fly down and take a look." So, for the last couple of years, I've been leading The Journey's campus down in Boca Raton.

As I was making that transition, I was looking at all of our campuses, and I knew I wouldn't be there every day to give leadership to our larger campuses in Manhattan. What I realized is the missing piece in our systems was not the system. It wasn't even the checklist. It was the calendar, that we did not have one unified church calendar. This is a talk that I'm going to come back to at next year's Systems Boot Camp.

We began to develop this calendar, this unified calendar, of literally every single thing that we did at The Journey. It's massive, and no, I'm not going to give you a copy of it, because it needs explanation. We're not ready to distribute this yet. It's massive. In fact, this year's calendar...

Kerrick, we're already up to sixty-something pages?

**Kerrick:** I think it's beyond that.

**Nelson:** It's beyond that. Okay, yeah. It's this massive thing, and it doesn't constrain us as much as it reminds us of what we're going to be able to do. We are constantly correcting the past and changing it to what we actually did do, versus what we said we were going to do. Then thinking ahead in the future. We've created this massive unified calendar for all of our locations. Now when we start a new location, we can look at what we did and we can decide do we want to do it or not do it. It's not constraining. Don't get me wrong on that. It actually has become one of the most extreme documents that we've ever done.

In fact, by putting together this massive unified calendar, the staff's stress level has gone way down. It was stressful to put it together but now that we've got it, it's gone way down. When I talk about keeping a unified calendar, I'm not saying that you need a calendar of everything that's going on in your church.

That unified calendar is not my calendar. I'm only involved in pieces of that. The only things I need on my calendar are the things from the unified calendar that involve me personally. I only need the meetings that involve me on my calendar. I only need the Sundays that involve me on my calendar. I only need the pieces of the puzzle that involve me.

This calendar talks about what goes on in kids. It talks about what goes on in groups. It talks about what goes on in stewardship. I'm not involved in all that. But I do need a unified calendar of everything that involves me. The journey calendar is a piece of my calendar, but it's just a piece.

My family has a pretty active calendar. If you've got more than one kid, every time you add a kid it's like an expedient complication in your life. If you had grandkids, it even goes from there. I need to know the things

that involve me in my calendar. Things that I've committed to my wife, Kelley. Things that I've committed to my son, Alexander. I need a family calendar. I don't need to know everything that my brothers doing. I need to know the things that involve me. That needs to be on my calendar.

I have this other life with Church Leader Insights. I'm constantly battling with them, because in my life, my personal stuff is always first, and then family, and then the church. If there's any time left over, I'll do a conference like this, or do event like that. I don't need to know everything they're doing.

People always say, "Hey, did you see that email at Church Leader Insights?" Now, I'm like, "What email? I don't know?" These things go. They manage all that. I just need to know what they're expecting from me. What I need to write. What I need to produce. That needs to go into my calendar things that I'm working on, deadlines that I have, commitments that I have.

I just signed a contract to write a book called *The Renegade Pastor*. Banding average in your life and ministry. It will be an introduction to this network. We'll give it to everybody who joins the network in the future and get you a copy when it comes out. I want a tight deadline. For the first time in six years I didn't have a book coming out this fall. I was really excited about that. In fact, I'd already planned stuff. Other stuff to do, because I didn't have a book coming out this fall. Then this popped up on the radar.

Regal said, "If you can get it done, we'll release it this fall." I said, "When do you need it?" This was like on January 3rd. I said, "When do you need it?" They said, "How about March 31?" I'm like, "Yeah, that will be easy enough. I'm not doing anything on March 31."

"I'll probably stay up all night March 30th writing this thing." I'm a fast writer, I'm just not a good writer. That's why I have help. I tackled it. I said, "Okay, I'll try to do it." I had to add that into my calendar. If you wonder where I'm at tomorrow morning, when you're down having breakfast, I'm up in the room trying to grind out next chapter of the Renegade Pastors book. I'm three chapters in, by the way. If you were at the Renegade Pastors conference, back last October, that's the format, the seven commitments of a Renegade Pastors format. I'll recycle stuff over and over. You need that in your calendar.

What I need is, I need one unified calendar that represents my life. You know the old Proverb, "The person that has two watches never knows what time it is." Right?

The person who has two calendars, or three calendars, never knows where they're supposed to be. One of the first questions that I used to ask when I did more personal consulting for pastors is, let me see your calendar. Here's what pastors would have. They would have a calendar at home on the refrigerator that was their family calendar.

Then they would have something, like their personal calendar, like little meetings, little things they were supposed to be. Their assistant would keep up with the church calendar. I don't really know how that would work, because they were always missing stuff. You spend a lot of time, like you're at the office. But I'm wondering if I'm supposed to be someplace else? Or you're at home and you're wondering if you're supposed to be somewhere else.

There has to be this one unified calendar. Not of everything that's going on in your church. Not of everything that's going on in your family, but everything that is going on that involves you. I'll say more about that tomorrow afternoon. That could be a big takeaway, because if you find yourself missing out on stuff, not being where you need to be, or something sneaking up on you. "I forgot we had that." Well, let's put you in charge of the church twice your size if you keep forgetting that you didn't have that.

You have got to have this unified calendar. I know I'm raising some issues that I hope you're finding somewhat fanciful. Like you've got your spouse schedule on your calendar. You've been married for more than a year, you know that's a really important thing to do. You've got family? Yes.

What I do, I schedule certain things first and then work everything else around it. Like I worked you around stuff I thought was more important this week. The reason we're doing it this week is because I couldn't find anything more important to do this week.

That's true. If my son had had something this week, he had to have an endoscopy last week. Remember, we were on the call and I was asking you to pray for him? If that had been this week, we wouldn't be doing the conference this week. I set the priorities and I manage the priorities on the calendar. We'll get to that as we go along.

That's not a dismissal to you. I love you. I love doing this. It is a privilege for me to do this. It's this week, because of all the weeks that I have, this is the week where you're number four on the priority list could be number one on the priority list. I didn't have anything else competing. We'll get to that.

A thing that you're going to get into as I give you this list is, you're going to be, "If I put all five of these things in my calendar, and I know you don't know what they are yet, but you're going to start thinking. If I put all five of these things in my calendar, when am I going to do work?"

Ministry, like prepare sermons. Anybody got a sermon to prepare this week? Yeah, I've got a sermon to prepare. Do you know where I'll be tomorrow, right at the end of this conference? Doing my run-through. That's where I'll be. How many of you know the sermon runthrough? The idea? Eric was smart, he got his done yesterday.

I've got all day with you today so I'll have to do it tomorrow. But we're going to get it done before Thursday midnight. Because we have a "Thursday Midnight Rule." Yeah, I've got to prepare a sermon too. You're saying, "Okay, if I put these things in my calendar, how do I get anything else done?" You're going to start thinking this list of five can be so consuming that it doesn't leave a lot of time for anything else. You're right. You're right.

What these five pillars will do is, they'll force you to be more effective in other areas. I'm going to get to Sabbath in a moment, but do you know what the Sabbath does for me? It forces me to be effective on the other six days. I get more done by having a Sabbath day off in the previous six days than if I'd worked all seven. Here's why. It's called Parkinson's Law. Thank you.

Parkinson's Law. I want you to write that down. "Parkinson's Law." A lot of things that many of you know, it's very tough to teach a class like this because you know as much as I do about most of this stuff. You know the 80:20 rule and you could teach the 80:20 rule. We need to be reminded of the 80:20 rule. When we do the talk on energy sometime in the future, we'll get the 80:20 rule.

I had to come up with something that, maybe, you don't know. I gave you Parkinson's Law. Parkinson's Law, the history of that is a guy by the name of Cyril, How would you pronounce that? Cyril? Anybody here named Cyril? Yeah, well, I was going to give you a free pass to the V.I.P. lunch. So too bad.

Cyril Northcote Parkinson. That's the guy's name. He's a famous British historian in 1955, and a book that he wrote, actually it was originally an article for "The Economist" and it later became the focus of one of his books called "Parkinson's Law: The Pursuit of Progress," which you do not need to read. Best thing I can tell you is sometimes is just books you don't need to read.

Gary Macintosh's stuff, you should read it all. In fact they have a book table right there, you should just get everything they've got. If they don't have it, go online and get it. You should just have it in your library, after I got

off the call with Bill Eason the other day, I looked at my library. I added it up went. Bought everything I that I don't have, and some stuff I had in storage but it was just easier to order another copy. So. Ever done that? Okay, I'll just get another one. I'm not going to drive across town. See, Kimberly, I really am this neurotic. It's not like something you can see. But you don't need to read this, but here's Parkinson's Law, now that I've tried to whet your appetite a little. "Work expands to fill the time available for its completion". Isn't that good? Work expands to fill the time available for its completion.

Here's Scott's Law. Nelson's lecture will expand to fill the time I give him. The whole two hours? I only see about fifteen minutes on your notes. You better pull out the old Far Side cartoons. There's an article, if you go to a website. I don't know this website enough to recommend everything they say. But there's a website called [lifehack.org](http://lifehack.org). I do know there's a couple of other sites with similar titles that I've found to be really helpful.

I've found some good stuff on this one. They have an article, if you go to [lifehack.org](http://lifehack.org), and you search Parkinson's Law. You will find an article called, "How to Use Parkinson's Law to Your Advantage."

I want to give you a couple outtakes of this, it's worth reading the article. Work expands to fill the time available for its completion. Do you agree with that? Have you ever noticed the sermon will expand to the time allotted?

**Audience:** That's true.

**Nelson:** I think it's a very dangerous Sunday when I think, "I just don't know if I'll take my entire time today." Ever said that? That's usually like the Sunday you go over. We have a countdown clock. Like, that counts backwards on the stage, you have anything like that. It's really a helpful tool, and I'm pretty good at it. I can pretty much land it. In fact the other day I had a sermon I was telling Kerrick, "Look, I'm afraid I'm going to go over. I need to land it quickly." Do you have any advice? He's like, "Yeah, just crash land your sermon like you usually do."

So I was like, two minutes on the clock. Heads down, ladies and gentlemen, we're going down. In fact, one of the greatest compliments I ever received was about the countdown clock. I was speaking in chapel at Liberty University. Dr. Towns wasn't supposed to be there. He told me he was sick. I'm just about to get up to speak, and I feel somebody punch me really hard from behind, and I knew it was him. And he had made it over, even though he wasn't feeling well, to hear me speak in chapel. I had to give the invitation that day to the television audience. Because not every chapel is televised, but this particular one was.

No matter what time, where you are in your sermon, or what happens. When that countdown clock hits a certain number, you've got to give the evangelistic invitation. Because that's the cutout, the cutaway, in the TV show. I did it. Man, I was nervous.

Oh my gosh, I could see it coming. Sweat's pouring down off of me. I see Elmer leaning in behind me, I'm thinking, "I'm thinking I'm going to get punched again."

Apparently I hit it. He gave me one of the greatest compliments I have ever received. He said nobody's hit that and done so well since Doc. Which was Jerry Falwell. And I've carried that with me. Those times, I take it seriously.

I try to hit it. I don't always hit it, sometimes I go over. I'm often backstage telling the backstage coordinators, "Look, if I go over on time, just go to realtime." Go from the countdown to realtime, and I know where the next service is, all that. But your sermon will do that too. You set a time. You try to hit it.

So here's a few callouts from this. It says, "Parkinson's Law: Work expands to fill the time available for its completion." Means that if you give yourself a week to complete a twohour task, then psychologically speaking. Here's what's dangerous. listen to this. The task will increase in complexity and become more daunting, so as to fill that week. It's not just that the task expands, okay. It's not just that you drag it out, you spend all your time searching for your name on Google. But psychologically speaking, the task will increase in complexity.

In other words, you will make the task seem bigger. You will then play it up, you'll begin to tell people, "Oh, I've got this daunting task in front of me," in your mind, that little task will just get bigger and bigger. It'll become like that gremlin in your schedule. Oh, it's just so daunting, I've got to put it off again. It's a twohour task. But if you stretch it out over a week, that's really profound. He goes on to say, it may not even fill the extra time with more work, but just stress and tension about having to get it done.

By assigning the right amount of time to a task, we gain back more time, and the task will reduce in complexity to its natural state. I don't mind a complex task. If I'm going to tackle it, I want to tackle it in its natural state, not in its inflated state. Another quote here. It works, talking about Parkinson's Law. He makes this point that it's not some kind of magic trick. Technically if you took Parkinson's Law too far, you could just say, "Well, I'll give two minutes to every task." It's about allocating the right amount of time to every task. Just no more than is needed. So it's what's needed, but no more.

He says it works, because people give tasks longer than they really need. Sometimes because they want some leg room or buffer, but usually because they have an inflated idea of how long the task takes to complete. Ever had that happen? You think it's going to take something, but then you get in there and just drive it down.

It's like, "Oh, I got done earlier than I thought." We'll talk tomorrow about working in ninety-minute blocks. As you learn to work in ninety-minute blocks, which is a natural focusconcentration period inside of your body that God's wired you up to work that way, you'll actually get to the point where you're getting things done in fifty-five-minute blocks.

Because once you learn to master the ninety-minute blocks, you'll be surprised at how much you can get done. We sometimes joke that there are those days at the journey. Kerrick and I talked about this, because we both are early morning, get it done kind of people. We often joke that sometimes we get more done by 7:30 or 8:00 in the morning than sometimes we get done the rest of the day. It's not because we're all that productive, it just means nobody's bothering us.

If I roll in the office at 6:30, now I just walk out to my office out back, but if I just walk out there, sometimes I can just get done in that first magic hour. Three or four weeks worth of work. So, sometimes I tell people, "I've got a task that only a flight across country can get done. I just need that concentrated time. I get that window seat back in the exit row, and just grind it out on a flight across country." It's really interesting, the psychological stuff. We all talk about working harder, not smarter, but think about ways you can apply Parkinson's Law to your life.

He gives two that I want to hit. Make a list of your tasks and then divide them up by the amount of time it takes to complete them. This is where it starts. I'll talk to you tomorrow about how you don't start the day till you finish the day and some of the other ways to make a list of your tasks.

But here's something you do. You make a list of your tasks, and then you divide them up by the amount of time it takes to complete them. Okay, so, sermon prep, four hours, five hours over the course of the week. Meeting with staff, one hour. Returning emails, an hour a day. Whatever it is. Just whatever you think it's going to take.

Then, here's the twist. Then give yourself half that time to complete each task. You have to make the time limit as crucial, or see the time limit as crucial. Treat it like any other deadline.

Greatest gift you can give a writer. You know what it is? A deadline, yeah. I'd never write a sermon if Sunday didn't come every six days. He goes on, "Treat it like any other deadline." Part of reversing what we've been indoctrinated with is to see the deadlines you set for yourself as unbreakable. Treat the deadlines you set for yourself just like the deadlines your boss or your board or somebody else would set for you. That's really powerful, right?

Now, as you learn, some things you will be able to do half the time, some things you won't, then you adjust accordingly. But you begin to see how this works in your life. Then he says, at first, this will be partially an exercise in determining how accurate your time projection for tasks are.

**Nelson Searcy:** We've all had this, where the first time we do something, it takes two hours. The second time we do something, it takes ninety minutes, next time it takes an hour. Then you begin to develop the systems. What I try to do is I try to chunk it in advance. These strategy and briefing calls we do every month on the Renegade Pastor. I've got ninety minutes with you, and you expect me to deliver something sixty minutes of that time, and thirty minutes of it is Q-and-A. That's a pretty good addition to my schedule, when we started the Renegade Pastors Network last year.

The books wasn't such a big deal. Interviewing the authors wasn't such a big deal, because I was already reading the books anyway. Now I just marked up the questions as I read the books. What I do is I start writing next month's talk as soon as this month's talk is over. It's one of the reasons why I preach in series, because I can add to next week's message what I didn't get into this week's message. There's a compounding effect inside the research.

But you begin to figure out how much time it takes to get something done. He suggests you should use a timer. I know a very famous copywriter who uses a two minute egg timer. He's got the little egg timer, and he tries to write out as many headlines for the copy as he can.

I have what I call fifteen-minute tasks, thirty-minute tasks, hour-long tasks. I've literally got a little hourglass. I've got a fifteen-minute hourglass. I'll bring it out a lot of times in meetings. I have a guy in old-town Barcelona build it for me. It's got fifteen minutes on it.

If we have to go into a discussion in a meeting about something that sometimes is rather complex, we turn it over fifteen minutes, see how much we can get done during that fifteen minutes. It's just a game. It's not for everybody, but it's a game.

I use a website called [onlinestopwatch.com](http://onlinestopwatch.com). You can open up a little window in there. I try to keep my desktop clean, and I like that program that wipes everything away, and I don't have any notifications. You can tweet about me and Facebook me and all that stuff, I won't know it until I logon. In fact, I've turned off all my automatic logons, so I have to literally login to see it, because I don't want to be interrupted with that. I've got that little online thing up there and let it go.

He says, "Then, number two, you want to crush," I love this, "crush the cockroaches of the productivity world." New York City, living up there, taught me a number of things. It taught me how to run over old ladies in the subway train, because it's either run over or be run over. It taught me that.

It taught me how one old lady can block the entire sidewalk. It's like you're trying to walk down the way, just this one old lady can block the entire sidewalk. I can tell you I've spent much time in New York. Another thing it taught me is that sometimes it's hard to tell the cockroaches from the rats. Is that a cockroach, is that a rat? Is that a rat, is that a cockroach? Whatever.

Then I moved to Florida, and I learned what cockroaches are. They don't call them cockroaches in Florida, they have this nice little sounding name down in South Florida. You know what I'm talking about, Palmetto bugs, yeah, as if that's better. That's a Palmetto bug. He just hung himself on one of my ties in the shower. That's a Palmetto bug. Good Lord, what's that thing?

I had one the other day, got up in the corner of the house. We're about to go to bed. Just leave it there. It's probably been up there all day. It was on my side of the bed, too. If it had fallen, it would've hit me. It was nowhere near Kelly. But I had to deal with this.

I couldn't reach it with a shoe. The ceilings in the bedroom are too high, I had to go get the swiffer. You know the swiffer? I had to get the swiffer, get it in the corner, but then the head of the swiffer is really fluid. There, it's 11:30 at night, trying to get this thing. I've got a Renegade Pastors conference thing this weekend. I got it. Then the cleanup was worse.

Because now I had to go put the thing on the Swiffer because I killed it when the thing was naked. Now I had to go put the Swiffer thing, and I'm like, "Aahh." Clean it off. No, I think it's just the way the lights hitting. It's gone.

You've got these cockroaches in your schedule. You're sitting there trying to work, and this palmetto bug is walking right across your desk. It interrupts you. You've got to deal with it. Here's what he says. He says, "Look for those little time fillers that you might usually think take ten or even twenty or, God forbid, thirty," he writes, "minutes. These are the "cockroaches" of the productivity world. Little pests that do nothing but make your life a pain in the backside, pains that you can't seem to get rid of, no matter how much you run around the house with a shoe or bug spray." Or a Swiffer, in my case.

What are those little cockroaches in your schedule? He lists a few.

Checking email. Great productivity book that I recommend as a time-management resource is called *Never Check Email in the Morning*. Work on your most important tasks first and then get to email. Then, what he suggests is even if you do have to check email, you put a time limit on it.

Reading the blog feeds. There's really only one you should read, that's mine. Everybody else, you should just cut it out, but if you're going to read the blog feeds, put a time limit on it.

I'm a big fan of reading the paper. I'm the last guy in America that likes to read the paper. Anybody else like to read the paper? I like to handle it. I like to touch it. I like to read the paper. Here's what I like about the paper versus television. Television says I've got to sit through four or five things to get to what I want to hear. Then when they get to it, they spend thirty seconds on it.

Blogs are not editorialized. There's nobody checking the facts on a blog. There's nobody editing a blog. Somebody at least still edits the newspaper, whether you read it online with your apps, whatever.

I get the paper. I get the *USA Today*. I get the local paper. I don't always read the local paper. I give myself fifteen minutes to read the *USA Today*. Then, if there's an article that I want to tear out, I might put it in my file for a little bit later. I've basically found I can read it in fifteen minutes just as easily as I can read it in thirty, because then I just find myself reading stuff I'm really not interested in, reading editorials. I don't really care what somebody else thinks. I'll make up my own mind about it.

It's really interesting. When you check email, give yourself a timer. He says if you normally check email for twenty to thirty minutes each morning but you're not ready to take that away, give yourself five minutes. Five minutes. I'm going to look at all the email. It's amazing how much you can get done, just in that time. But not thirty minutes.

If you're going to read the blogs, read the blogs. But five minutes a day. Don't give these tasks any more attention until you've completed everything on your todo list that day. That's where you want to get to. At which point, you can then indulge in some email reading, social networking, feed reading, to your heart's content. You get the most important things done first. So, you've got to look out for these cockroaches.

I don't know what they are for your life. I have some things I'm greatly interested in. I'll subscribe to a Jimmy Buffett blog feed, because I like Jimmy Buffett. I've got a bunch of inside country music stuff, because I like to read country music. And there can be a place for all of that. Just not if I'm under it first thing in the morning, if I'm under a deadline for writing.

Later, after I get it all done, if I schedule sixty minutes and I'm done in fifty-five minutes, yeah I need that little moment to catch my breath and read and tell a joke or read something of interest.

He finishes this article, and again it's at [lifehack.org](http://lifehack.org), if you want to check it. He says you can experiment with Parkinson's Law, and I don't know how to say this word. Squashing your deadlines down to the bare minimum in many areas of your life. Just be conscious of the line between bare minimum and not enough time. Seems reasonable.

What you're aiming for is a job well done in less time, not a disaster that's going to lose your employment or clients. So, you want to be careful with that. You can't schedule...you've still got to get the sermons done. They expect you to say something new every week. How dare they?

Those are just two parenthetical comments about the unified calendar and about Parkinson's Law. Now, if I have time tomorrow, if I have time, tomorrow, I have several others of those that I can get to at the end. Just not necessarily central to what I'm saying, but parenthetical comments along the way. Everybody good?

You learned something already? All right. You want your money back? I'll get to that just before we go to lunch. So, everybody gets their money back anyways. Because God has a moneyback guarantee, everybody's going to get their money back before lunch.

I've got these five, and I don't really know where to start. I've been thinking about it. I'm going to start with the first fill word and take some time on this one. This is one you've probably heard me say before. So don't come to me at lunch, man, I heard you talk about that before, yes, and you're going to hear me talk about it again. Because you need to hear it again.

Let's start with the Sabbath. The first anchor, the first pillar, the first thing you want to schedule in your Sabbath, is every six days, you need a 24-hour period where you abstain from your primary vocation. That's what the Sabbath is. I'll give it to you again. A 24-hour period where you abstain from your primary vocation.

The Sabbath, of course I'm not going to get into the theology too much of this was originally introduced as one of God's big ten. I lost it. I lost the wheel over here. The Sabbath was part of God's big ten. Occasionally I hear people say I don't know if we should honor the Sabbath. That's Old Testament, or whatever. I'm like well which of the other Ten Commandments do you want to kick out?

If you don't want to kick out the Sabbath, do you want to kick out the others as well? Thank you, guys. I broke a chair. There I'm taking it, and fix it. I know it's very distracting, so we'll just watch him for a minute. Make it awkward for them.

Thank you, Jimmy. Thank you, Dick. So you're going to take it outside, because you don't want people to see the blood?

I wonder what sound he'll make when he hits his hand with that. Anyway, the little wheel got caught and I broke it. It won't be the first thing I break. What were we talking about? Far Side cartoons?

Did they get stuck, did they make it all the way back? So, we're talking about the Sabbath. So the Sabbath originally came down off the mountain, Mount Sinai is one of the big ten Commandments. And people get all caught up about well, the Sabbath, you don't need the Sabbath, it's an Old Testament law, and all that. And I understand some of that. Same people usually that don't want to tithe, too.

Which of the other ten Commandments do you think are no longer relevant? How about that idolater? Is that one no longer relevant? Once Jesus came, you can make all the idols you want. Once Jesus came, you can murder as many people as you want. It's really once Jesus came. If anything, Jesus endorsed the Sabbath and then he freed us from the laws of the Sabbath. The concept is still very legitimate even though we don't have to deal with the laws of the Sabbath.

How many of you live in an area where there is a substantial Jewish population and you know some of the laws? A few of us do. It's worth studying. Who's that senator, the Jewish senator from Connecticut? He ran on...

**Audience member:** Joseph Lieberman.

**Nelson:** Yeah, Joseph Lieberman. Joseph Lieberman wrote a book called *The Gift of Rest*, which is about the Jewish view. It is a modern day Jewish view of the Sabbath. When I first started the book, I was so excited about it. I'm like, "Boy, I'm going to learn and I'm going to get into it." Forget his politics. I'm making a political statement. I don't even know where he stands on most of the stuff.

I was just like, "Man, I'm going to dig in. I'm going to learn or whatever." By the time I got to chapter two, I felt so depressed. Because I'm thinking there is no way I can keep all these laws.

It's not just take a day off every seven days. It's like you can't take this many steps. You can't use electronics. You have to prepare your food the day before. He talks about having to walk home from the Capital if he gets stuck there on Friday after sundown, because he can't use a motorized vehicle.

He talks about walking home in the snow and walking home in the rain. He talks about those poor Secret Service agents who have to walk with him as part of that.

There is some beautiful imagery in the Sabbath and the way they do it, but that's what Jesus took away. He took away that legalistic idea of the Sabbath. He kept the good stuff.

There is some stuff you can learn. Sundown Friday to sundown Saturday is the traditional Jewish Sabbath. If you've ever been in a hospital on the Sabbath, you know a lot of times they have the Sabbath elevators because you can only travel so far.

If you've ever been to Israel and you've been there on Shabbat, on the Sabbath. Boy, I love the Shabbat meal. That's my favorite meal. My least favorite is breakfast the next morning, because they had to cook everything the day before.

There's a lot of beautiful stuff in the Sabbath, in the Shabbat, that we can understand. What I don't want you to miss is that God wired you up. The more you cooperate with the way God wired you up, the more productive you're going to be. Here's how God wired you up. To work six days, take a day off. Work six, rest one. There are some very important things you do on that day of rest and I'll get to that in a moment.

We struggle with that in two ways in America. Number one in America, we've invented this concept that everybody's working for the weekend. Who wrote that song? Is that the Birds, too? Everybody's working...

**Stan:** Loverboy.

**Nelson:** I think that's Loverboy, right? Is that Loverboy?

**Stan:** Yeah.

**Nelson:** Thank you, Stan, one guy in the back. Stan, I appreciate it. Coaching guy tracking along with me. I took the staff a few weeks ago to see the Journey. I always find that funny, like the Journey staff goes to see the Journey. They don't have Steve Perry anymore. You know this, right? Steve Perry is on some exotic island near Hawaii somewhere. They got this Filipino kid who sounds like Steve Perry.

**Stan:** Just like him.

**Nelson:** Just exactly like him. If you've got that Palladium channel on your TV, you can see this Journey concert like they did. They got this little short Filipino kid, who I like a lot, singing with all these old guys in Journey. He sounds just like Steve Perry, but I can't look at it. It just wrecks the songs.

**Nelson:** I can't watch him do this stuff. We took the Journey's pastoral staff to go see the Journey. Then we all wore our Journey church shirts. Everybody was like, "Where'd you get that tour shirt?" "I don't know. I don't have..." All these fanatics, they thought we had a tour shirt that they didn't have. We thought we were something there watching Journey from the back row at the concert. Do you know who opened for them? This is where I was going. Loverboy. Loverboy opened for them. What I loved about those guys is they knew they were old.

**Stan:** Right.

**Nelson:** Journey, they still try to pretend like they're young and hip. They've got the young guy out front. I understand that. These guys in the back, they're old. They're ancient. Loverboy, they knew they were old. They knew they lost their hair. They knew they were fat. They didn't care. They just wanted to have fun.

I enjoyed their part more than I did the Journey part, even though I didn't know the songs. But they opened with everybody's working for the...

All right. Thank you. Got the right crowd here, Scott.

**Scott:** Karaoke done for the day.

**Nelson:** Yeah. Tonight, over at the Giraffe Cafe. The Loverboy and George Straight!

Some Forsythe cartoons thrown in for good measure. We have been in this concept in America. Here's what became in America. Work five, take two off. Not as effective as the six and one.

Now, I'm not against taking two off. There are times when you should take two off. There are times when you have a day off and you have a Sabbath, because here's what you need to understand. A Sabbath is not always the same as a day off. A Sabbath is a particular kind of day off. Sabbath is a day off, but not every day off is a Sabbath. Do you understand what I'm saying?

I will try to flesh that out. There is a time to take a day off. Sometimes you need to take a Friday off. Sometimes you should take a Monday off. But the Sabbath is a very particular type of day off. You may do some similar things on the Sabbath as you do on your day off, but it is a day that is dedicated unto...

**Audience member:** The Lord.

**Nelson:** The Lord. That's what made the Sabbath the Sabbath. We can call it Friday night to sundown Saturday or we can call it Tuesday night to sundown Wednesday. It doesn't really matter. I do like the sundown to sundown concept. I like the idea that the Sabbath begins the night before and carries through the evening and then such. Because, Scott, actually when you separate the light from the dark and all that, you do it in that way. But that's neither here nor there.

I do like that concept. But if you can't do that, 8:00am one day to 8:00am the next day, that's fine. It's a 24-hour period that you set aside unto the Lord.

Now to Parkinson's Law. When you go through your calendar and you block out your Sabbath, it forces you to be more effective during the other six. If there's no other benefit to the Sabbath and there is a lot of other benefits.

But for the sake of our talk in here, if there is no other benefit to the Sabbath, it's knowing that that day is coming forces you to be more effective during the other six.

My favorite image of the Sabbath I've got a three-hour resource on this. I'll get distracted if I'm not careful is the shepherd who has to get the sheep in the pen because the sundown is coming.

One of the things I love about sundown is sundown doesn't sneak up on you. You get a warning two or three hours in advance. "The sun is going down. Oh, it's dropping in the horizon. I better..."

The shepherd can't just leave the sheep unattended on the Sabbath because the wolves will get them. He's got to get them in the pen and then get maybe another shepherd or perhaps in some kind of protected area, so that the Sheppard can Sabbath but the sheep still have to be safe.

I can't just abandon my church. I can't just go out of touch every six days. I have to get my sheep in the pen, so that while I am Sabbathing everything is still well back at the office, back at the church. Do you see where I'm going with this?

This idea of taking care of the sheep and then doing something particular with the sheep on the Sabbath so that everything still goes, because what will happen is a lot of times you get interrupted on the Sabbath.

There are times, by the way, in the Bible where you should get interrupted. The Bible says if a sheep falls in the ditch you need to go get it out, Okay? It does. But if it's the same sheep every week...

You need to fix that. I've got to get my work done during the six days, so that when I'm out Scott can still run COI and Kimberly can still run the office, because I'm out that day. Yes, my Sabbath is the same day as theirs. Don't get too caught up on that. This is a tremendous time management tip.

If you looked at your calendar right now, do you have the Sabbath scheduled? I will confess and some of you this will wreck your theology, that I have been known to take a Sabbath, violating the seven-day principles. It's not pretty, but sometimes I have to go eight.

Sometimes I have been going nine. Sometimes I've been called on the carpet by Kelly and others who care about me in my life and I've gone a couple of weeks without it. More times than not, however, sometimes it goes the other direction.

Sometimes just because of my schedule, I can't wait seven days so I have to go five and then take a Sabbath, so I can get the next seven, because of where I'm going to be. That's not ideal, but I'm a realist.

We all live with the tension between the real one and ideal. In an ideal world, it would be the same day every day, every week. It's not always that way. But if you're going to cheat one way or another, cheat on the positive side. Take the Sabbath the sixth day out. Take the Sabbath the fifth day out, so that you can get the next seven as it might be. But put it in your calendar.

In 2005, I think was the year. I'm having a monthly conversation with one of our financial supporters. In fact, I think he would be fine with me telling you his name. His name is Bryant Wright. He pastors Johnson Ferry Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Anybody know Bryant?

Bryant was one of the financial sponsors of The Journey. They came in a little late, so all the other financial partners had rolled off because the three years was up, but they came in a little late so we were still doing it.

Part of that benefit of having them as a financial partner is I was able to have a monthly phone call with Bryant. It was just one of those calls I didn't miss. I got to pick his brain and here's a guy that pastored a great church, gave a ton of money to missions.

He went on just recently to be the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Doing things like that, a really great leader and a really great church outside of Atlanta.

One day, we're just chit chatting and all of a sudden he proceeds to call me a sinner, like in my face and he's a really nice guy. He's got that gift. He can say really harsh stuff and make you thank him for it later.

I say really soft stuff and people are like, "Why are you being so harsh?" I'm like, "Why are you calling me a sinner?" He's like, "You're violating the Sabbath." I said, "Man, I just don't..." He said, "Yeah, you're just violating the Sabbath." Man, sure enough, I had been. I'm a recovering workaholic. Going way back in the day I used to work seven days at a computer business and didn't think anything about it.

It was nothing. To me, the idea of vacation was you just stop and die for about a week. Then you come back, you run really hard, and all this stuff.

He begins to teach me about the Sabbath. I had a lot of questions about the Sabbath. I'm like, "What do you do?" If you take the time off, what do you do? Do you answer your phone? Do you answer email, any of this stuff? I'll get to that in a moment.

He called me on the carpet and I trace that back to 2005 and here's why. The next year, I started doing coaching. The next year I wrote my first book. The next year, The Journey was rated as one of the fastest growing churches in America.

Here we are seven years later, 11 books down, one more coming out this year, and 1,200 pastors who have gone through the coaching networks. Four more churches have been started out at The Journey. Other campuses have been started at The Journey.

The last seven years have been some of the most productive years of my life. I trace it back to him calling me on the carpet and telling me that I was a sinner. I stopped doing something, working on the Sabbath day, and then productivity went through the roof.

He said, "Well, maybe that wasn't the only thing, stage of life," blah blah blah. This, that, and the other, the compounding affect. I understand all that. But the simple answer is it was when I got serious about the Sabbath.

Do you have a 24-hour period where you abstain from your primary vocation? Abstain from your primary vocation, which for all of us would be the church that we pastor.

What do you do on your Sabbath? I just want to say a word about this and I'll take some questions here about Sabbath if you want. There are several areas I could go and I want to at least cover one more before lunch. I've got 3540 minutes to be able to do that, so we're in good shape.

What do you do on the Sabbath? First of all, you want to rest. These all start with "R." You've got to rest on your Sabbath.

Sometimes people are concerned, especially some of the folks that have been in coaching with me. They know the Sabbath and we talk about it a lot, and go deep about it in advance coaching and different things.

Some people say, "I'm just so tired when I get to the Sabbath." That's a good thing. You should be tired when you get to the Sabbath, because you worked your proverbial behind off during the previous six days.

That says that you did something right. It says that you should be tired. You are going to be tired every six days when you take a day off or not. The Sabbath should be a little bit of rest. There is nothing wrong with that. If you look in the Jewish tradition of the Sabbath, it starts with a meal, a very long, slow, meal. Because you've been running ninety to nothing, or "9011," as they say in the Midwest.

You've been running like that and then all of a sudden the Sabbath forces you to slowdown. Here comes the sun going below the horizon. You're starting to slowdown, you're starting to get back into the natural rhythm of life, and you begin to realize I'm tired.

That's okay. You should be tired. If you get to your Sabbath and you're not tired, maybe you didn't do a whole lot during the previous six days.

You will become less tired the longer you do the Sabbath. Because one of the reasons you're going to be so tired at first is because you've been violating it. You're fatigued. Not fatigued, but tired.

There is a rest. There are two types of rest. There is passive rest, which can be good. Nothing wrong with passive rest, just go to bed early. Wayne Cordeiro told me this principle, he said, "It's okay to sleep in, just sleep in on the frontend."

Isn't that pretty cool? If you normally go to bed at 11:00 or you normally go to bed at 10:00, or you normally go to bed at 11:00, go to bed a couple of hours early. Most likely you're not going to be able to sleep a couple of hours late the next day.

For one, as you get older, your body doesn't allow it. That's a curse. The other thing is you got stuff to do. Just because you're Sabbathing doesn't mean the kids aren't still going to school, or this, that, and the other. You still may have stuff to do and that's good. You can maybe go to bed on the front end a little bit.

What I find in passive rest is sometimes the things that you normally do to rest, you just have a little more freedom with on the Sabbath. Freedom to go to bed a little bit earlier, freedom to read.

What I like mainly about rest is active rest, because there is such a thing. There is active rest. That's the second area of your Sabbath that I want to talk about, which is recreation. Recreation is how we say it. That's how the cool kids say it, anyway.

Recreation, recreation, this is active rest. These are the things that fill you with energy. These are the things that add to your tank. They put gas back in the tank. They put coffee back in the cup, whatever image you want to have here.

On your Sabbath, one of the things you want to do is you want to do things that will actively fill you up. There may be a fine line between recreation and passive rest. For example, I like to go see a movie on the Sabbath.

Nothing wrong with that, that's a little bit passive because you're just sitting there. It does refill you. There's something about being in the movie theater. Nobody else is there because it's the middle of the day. You're sitting there and it just fills you up. You get to drink that big drink at least, if you're not in New York, because Bloomberg won't allow you to drink little tiny drinks in New York.

You can have forty ounces of marijuana in your pocket. You just can't have forty ounces of Coca Cola.

It's a crazy day. We know that. There is something to that. There is something to the active rest. Go see a movie. You normally workout, maybe if you're a runner or a bike rider like Jeff back here.

You go on your long bike rides. You go on your long run on that day. You get to figure out what that is. It's really some of the stuff that you would normally do, but you're expanding it. You normally read fifteen to twenty minutes a day, on your Sabbath you read for an hour. If that didn't fill you up, then it doesn't fill you up. You have to figure out what those things are that fill you up.

You recreate, you recreate. You want to do all those things first. You want to rest and you want to recreate.

I know it gets into some issues if you have a spouse that works and their Sabbath is on the same day for you. Some of you in here may be bivocational. I know that gets into some issues. But I'm telling you if you're serious enough about the priority, those things will work out.

Scott can give you a testimonial about being bivocational and being able to take the Sabbath. He willfully chose to spend one less day on the weekend to lead his church, so that he could honor the Sabbath.

He worked a fulltime job during the week. He only had the weekend to do his church or at night to do his church. He said, "I'm not going to violate the Sabbath." He can tell you that story if you're interested in that.

You rest, you recreate, and then you reflect. You reflect. On the Sabbath, this is what makes this day different than a day off. On a day off, you're generally just getting errands done. You're taking the dry cleaning. You're running to the hardware store. You're got to get the car oil changed.

There's a lot of stuff you can do and Parkinson's Law will allow that stuff to fill your entire day if you're not careful. You may have to do a little bit of that on your Sabbath. I'm not so strict that I think you can't run an errand or do something like that. What I try to do is move that during my week. Get the errands done during the week. Get the oil changed during the week.

Pay somebody is what I do, because I can't even change a light bulb, so I just have to get the handyman around the corner. A guy can come in for \$20 and he can fix everything that would take me five weeks to fix. I try to move in that direction to free up the Sabbath.

That's a day off and there's a time for a day off. We could talk about that if you want. One of the things you want to do on your Sabbath that makes the Sabbath different and you don't want to do this on the frontend. This is not like a Friday night activity or even a Saturday morning activity, but maybe a Saturday afternoon activity you want to reflect.

What you want to do is look back over the previous seven days. Reflect back over the previous seven days and say, "How am I doing? Did I get it all done this week? Did I get those sheep in the pen? Did I lose my temper?"

Just for the sake of time, one of my favorite activities in this area and you don't have to do this every week, but one of my favorite activities is to go through the fruit of the spirit. You know the fruit of the spirit, right? New Testament, Paul writing. Is everybody with me?

Just checking the crowd here. Galatians or something, I don't know how to pronounce the book. But it's about toward the end of the chapter, lower righthand side in my Bible. Something like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and selfcontrol. Did I get it right?

There are nine of them. I did a series one time on the seven deadly sins. We called it seven, seven deadly sins. We did the seven deadly ones. It's really great, especially if you're in a high Catholic culture everybody wants to know about the seven deadly sins. A couple of years later, I got all excited. I'm like, "We're going to do a follow up series with that. We're going to call it eight. It's going to be about the fruit of the spirit."

Then we had eight. We had designs. We were excited. We had that thing scheduled out on our preaching calendar. Somebody comes over and says, "Nelson, I got some bad news for you. There's not eight. There are nine."

There are nine fruits of the spirit, not eight! It wrecked our whole preaching calendar that year.

I didn't know what to do. I'm like, "What are we going to do? We got to do nine." Actually, we did nine and it worked out okay. We had to do it in two parts. We had to do five up here and then we had to come back later and pick up the other four as part of that. It messed me up there. But there are nine fruits of the spirit, so you reflect back and you say, "How did I do showing love?" The opposite of love is not hate as you well know. The opposite of love is apathy or indifference. How did I do with the proactive love?

You can do this with different domains in your life. I got to do showing love to my spouse. I got to do showing love to my kids. I got to do showing love to my coworkers, love to lost people whatever you want to do you can take it in various directions. But love and enjoy the difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is based on circumstances. Joy is based on your relationship with Christ.

How was my joy level this past week? Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, and on down the line. I probably messed it up there. Write it down in your journal. Make a list. Rate yourself. How did I do? Reflect back.

One of the reasons, I think, God gave us the Sabbath is six days in the wrong direction is enough. Let's get it corrected. So you do a little course correction and you get back on track. Say, "Okay, God. Forgive me for all of that." Call somebody up, on your Sabbath, or make a note to call them the day after your Sabbath. Fix that, if there's something going wrong.

The difference between a problem and a major problem is, sometimes, how quickly you fix it. The leak in the roof is a problem. It becomes a major problem, a catastrophe, if you let it go unfixed. So you can do some repair there.

Also, don't be too hard on yourself. Some of you are so guilty. Just say, "God, I'm going to do better. I'm going to move in that area."

I also reflect on my calendar. Did I get everything done, this past week, that I said I was going to get done? Did I schedule myself too tightly? Did I have enough margin? Did I miss date night? Was I distracted on date night? Whatever it might be, I reflect back, not to beat myself up but to do what Ken Blanchard called feed forward. You look back so that you can change the future.

My mindset is not too much to live in the past. If I've offended you in the past I've probably forgotten. If you've offended me the good news is I've probably forgotten. So that's a problem on one hand, a blessing on the other. I

don't beat myself up too much in this. But some of you might so I'm not talking about beating yourself up and all that. I am talking about looking back and making course corrections, making changes, doing some evaluation.

And then the fourth R... rest, recreation, reflection... is profection. Profection. Yeah, I know it doesn't start with an R. Do you know how hard it is to find a forward-looking word that starts with R? So the way you do that, you do little P, big R. And profection is not a word. I just made that up too. But it's pretty good. It's pretty good. You profect in your calendar.

Now again, this is not something you want to do early in the Sabbath because you want to get too caught up. But late in the Sabbath Day, look over the next week. And you start praying over those meetings. You've got that difficult meeting with the staff person, say, "God help me to live out the fruit of the Spirit with that staff person."

You know you've got date night coming up, you say, "Hey, God. I'm going to start the date night a half hour early this time because I need that half hour to decompress between work and date night." You take the lessons from the past and you put them in your calendar for the future.

Now this is the one that Scott hates the most because this is where I start changing things. I'm like, "Scott, I'm just too scheduled." Have you ever seen the webinar schedule he gives me? Sometimes I'm doing seven webinars in a week. I'm like, "I'm not going to do that Wednesday night, 7:00." He's like, "Well, what about those Australians?" I'm like, "Okay. I'll do Wednesday at 7:00." Sometimes we do them late at night for the rest of the world or whatever.

But I start making these changes. I'm too overbooked. I'm too overscheduled. I can't cancel this event but I can shorten something else.

The other day I had a situation like this. I said, "Instead of it being a face to face meeting I'm just going to do it by phone." You don't want to do that all the time. You've got to meet with people. But I was able to take a one hour meeting and turn it into a twenty minute meeting because we did it by phone. We didn't have to do all that pesky stuff like, "How are you," and, "How's your family," and, "You're looking good." We could just get to the heart of it.

You can't do that all the time. But you learn these little things that you can do. You learn that you need to schedule, you need to readjust. You can move a morning meeting to the afternoon meeting so now you have a block of time. It doesn't really make a difference if you do it morning or afternoon. But you look over the future and there's some very specific things you can look at there. We'll get to those as we go along.

But that's a pretty good Sabbath Day. Throw in a long lunch with your spouse. Throw in, go and have lunch with your kids at school if they're young enough. Or go in and pick up the grandkids on the way home from school. Or make in some phone calls to your parents. Or whatever you want to add in to that.

You say, "Man, I feel a little stressed now that I've got all this stuff added in to my Sabbath." Well, you're not doing it every week. You don't have to do all of these things every week. But you have an intentional plan for how you're going to use that day, not in the 618 laws of the Old Testament but maybe four or five that you say, "I can handle." Make sense?

We've got 21 seconds here before I have to move on. Are there any questions about the Sabbath? Just the Sabbath, not Parkinson's Law, not any such as the Sabbath. Let's at least cover one more. One more. And I really am debating about which one this should be because there's a natural connection to the Sabbath and the other two.

But I'm going to go ahead and cover this one. You know this one's coming. You know I was going to teach this

one. Maybe it will create a little bit of anticipation about tomorrow and what's the other three going to be. Let's do this one as second, which is worship.

You want to schedule time in for worship. You're saying, "Are you talking about the worship services at the church?" No. I'm talking about your personal worship. I know worship is an everyday thing. I believe that. Pray without ceasing, God says, and he gives you the power to do that. That's all really important. But just like we would expect the people in our church to make a priority of weekly worship, we should make a priority of weekly worship.

You can stack this, by the way. You can do like, if your Sabbath is Friday night to Saturday night you could make your worship night on Friday night. But when you think about worship in your life, do you have these inputs of worship, these scheduled times of worship?

I'm going to give you three types that you need. Daily, weekly, and intermittent. Just common spelling on that. Daily, weekly, and intermittent. My spellchecker said that's spelled INTERMITTENT. Does that sound right, Tommy?

**Tommy:** Sounds good to me.

**Nelson:** Am I saying that right? Intermittent.

**Tommy:** Yes.

**Nelson:** Never teach over your own head. That's a good lesson. I used to put together these big conferences and there was a lot of demand at the time, at the conference, for somebody to come in and speak on evolution. I don't get into that personally. I've pretty much settled it in my mind. It's fine. They ask for this so I went back into the speakers room, because I'm running this conference, and said, "Who here has a lecture on evolution. There's a lot of interest in it and if we can do a bonus session before the main session tomorrow I think you could get a pretty good crowd and help some people. Who wants to do this?" One guy raises his hand. His name happens to be Jeff.

He's right here in the front row. This is Jeff. No. I'm just kidding. This is Jeff but it's not that Jeff. But if you see him later and you want to pretend like it is it'd be a really cool thing to do. "Jeff, give me your lecture on evolution."

Anyways. I'm sitting there and his name happened to be Jeff but you wouldn't know him. There's a bunch of Jeff's. So Jeff said, "Well, I'll do it." So we promoted it. We got up that night and we said, "Hey, you've asked for it. Tomorrow morning, at the conference, if you want to come in an hour early Jeff is going to teach you on evolution and answer all the questions the skeptics have about this." It was packed, especially for an 8:00 in the morning kind of thing.

I'm sitting there in the front row with a colleague who's with me, the Scott of that conference. His name was Michael. About half way through the lecture Michael leans over and he says, "Mental note. Never teach above your own head." Not only did we not know what Jeff was talking about, Jeff didn't know what Jeff was talking about.

I don't know what intermittent is, but if I stall long enough you'll be ready for lunch and I won't have to talk about it.

Let's do daily worship. Daily worship is your daily time with God, of course. Everybody does this differently. I'm open to that. I don't know why God has allowed me to have such a great love and appreciation for pastors but I do. I don't know why God has entrusted me with this ministry and how long He will let me do it. I don't know.

When I started coaching pastors, back in 2006, there was just a group of church planters who were trying their best. Some were Baptists. Some were Assembly of God. Some were Charismatic, nondenominational and all this. Then it went beyond church planters and it became just traditional churches.

I remember the first time I did a coaching network and half the network was older than me. For a while, that was a game. People would show up wondering how old I was and all this stuff. I never knew if that was good or bad. Did they expect me to be really young or did they expect me to be old? And I have two last names so it creates a lot of problems. I understand.

But then, it's like now I look at that list of all these pastors I've coached. How many of you have been through like a formal coaching network with me? Let me see your hands. So look around this room. They're very different, very different ages. In fact, we have an 81-year-old in this next coaching network. I've now officially coached someone who's 21 and someone who's 81 as part of that.

For a while a lot of people would join the coaching network and they were in their 60's and they wanted to join the network just to finish well. We kind of developed a whole track. In fact, I've kept a lot of people from retiring because they got so excited in the network they stay on for a few more years as well.

I had this great appreciation, this great love, for pastors of all different denominations and all different stripes. You sit in one of my conferences and you've got this Lutheran guy sitting right next door to a Pentecostal and one is rich one is poor, because all Lutherans are rich. It's just this dramatic kind of thing. I don't know.

I'd say it like, what that's taught me is there's no one way that pastors should worship on a daily basis. But I can tell you, you should. You should. I don't know what that means to you.

I think Larry Osborn probably helped me as much as anybody with this. Larry wrote a book. I think they changed the name of it but originally it was called "The Contrarians Guide to Christianity." Do you know that book? Larry has a great new book out on hypocrites and Pharisees. It's actually mainly about Pharisees but I enjoy the part about hypocrites as much as anything.

Larry says, "Look, don't get caught up on it. It's not about reading five chapters of Psalms and one chapter of Proverbs or reading through the New Testament. You've just got to have a plan for you."

Some of you, it's meditation. Meditation is a lost art. Not meditation where you repeat the same thing over and over but meditation as thinking deeply in the presence of God. That can be a time of worship. You look at your calendar, you look at what you've got going on, and you're just thinking deeply in the presence of God.

Others, it's nature. I've never been a huge nature person. But I've learned to do that. In New York I learned to go up high. There was something about that, to get up above everything, high, looking out at the whole area. That was beautiful. I used to do a coaching network over in Tampa. I would schedule a time before my flight to go over by the beach and have an hour to sit out there on the beach and look at the Gulf. Just practice that.

But you've got to figure that out for whatever that is.

I know some because I know you really well...It's the same time every single day. Your time with The Lord is a lot like your breakfast. You eat the exact same thing every single day. And that's extremely legitimate. The danger is if you think everybody else has to operate that way. Okay?

I used to travel with a guy and he was always, "If you're quiet time isn't growing by a minute every year you're in The Lord, you're not spiritual or whatever." I started doing the math and, by gosh, if you became a Christian when you were like eighteen, by the time you get to like seventy, half of your morning. I read the old stuff about

give your mornings to God and I'm a big fan of that and stuff too.

But you've got to have it. For whatever it is with you. If you don't have it, leakage or decline or creep or whatever it is will begin to set in. I heard Heibel say it but I'm sure others have said it. "When it comes to your spiritual life you're either gaining altitude or losing altitude, you're never gliding." I've tried to glide.

The truth is I can trick you, for a little while, with my gliding. I can skip breakfast and be okay today. I can skip breakfast and be okay tomorrow. But if I skip breakfast long enough the consequences will catch up with me. We often think of the opposite.

Wouldn't it be cool if every time you ate something bad it was immediately obvious the next day? You go eat a Big Mac and then it just shows up right here. A Big Mac. I better not do that anymore. But life is not that way.

Failure is really just a few minor mistakes repeated every day. That's really what it is. You can translate that into your spiritual life.

Just real quick, I'll tell you this. When you coach 1,200 pastors, not everybody makes it. I wish everybody did but not everybody finishes the network. I don't really know why. People will cancel one week before the final session. I'm like, "Look, it's already paid for. Just finish it," or whatever, because we don't like to give refunds. I've got to get to that, by the way. The ministry has to run even if you cancel. We prepared for your spot.

Anyway, when you coach 1200 not everybody makes it. Unfortunately, in the midst of those 1200 there's been three or four that have had moral failures. Some are pretty well known in that. So, because I had this relationship with them I called and asked all the questions you wanted me to ask. How did it happen? What were you thinking? When did it happen? How far in advance?

It's funny, there's no real rhyme or reason. You look at the two or three that have had sexual moral failures, one was like a spur of the moment decision. Wrong place, wrong time, wrong woman, and they did it. Were the seeds of his destruction sown well in advance? Yes they were. But the decision was more of a right there.

Others were thinking about it, plotting, planning, going over in their mind. They had a long history of...they knew exactly, when the opportunity came, what they were going to do.

Which is worse? I don't know. One says that you don't have good safeguards in your life, the other says that you don't have good accountability. I don't know. But what I have learned is they all trace it back to this daily thing because walking with God, living with God, it's a daily thing. It's a daily worship.

Do I struggle with it? Yeah, man, I struggle with it. I struggle with it. But it's in your calendar, making time for it, setting priorities. Yes, there's a role for breath prayers, there's a role for, "Hey, I've got the gift of an hour." Isn't that a great thing? A meeting gets canceled and you've got the gift of an hour. A conference gets out early and you've got the gift of some time.

You get to the airport and you get through security fast and you've got the gift. This awareness of giving that to God and using that time for worship, you can figure that out in your own life but it's got to be there.

Then I would say there's weekly worship. Weekly worship is difficult for us because we are the priests and the temple conducting the weekly worship. I don't want to take that image too far. But I do find it, sometimes, hard to worship at my own worship services. Maybe you don't. Maybe you're wired up that way.

At the Manhattan campus, where Carrie gives leadership to, they do four services. They've got three, 10:00, 11:30, 1:00, and then an evening service. Back when I was younger and I used to be able to preach all four of

those...Now, it's like, "Which one are we going to show the video of?" "Let's hope we get a good recording at 10:00 because I don't know if I can make it until 1:00."

But I would actually be able to carve out some worship time by the time I got to the evening service. I could do the morning and by the time I got to the third...I have a very good rote memory issue so I could pretty much deliver that evening service and be able to go into the worship service and I could find my weekly worship in that service.

The last few years, me and Donny Boca, we just have one service. It's pressure. The church is growing, a lot of problems, new people, a lot of unbelievers. I don't get to worship a lot at that one. Number one, it's just one service. Even when we do two it's still not quite enough, with two. I've had to find it.

Early on this was different. When I first started the journey I stayed very much connected to my home church, which was Saddleback Church. So, in the midst of all the pressures I was working bivocational, I was trying to start a church on the side. Kelly and I would carve out Saturday night to log online and watch Rick and watch the worship service.

I think they still do it but in those days they broadcast the worship and the sermon. We'd pull out our little laptop and, right there at the house on Saturday night, we could tune in to their 4:30 service, which was 7:30 on the east coast, and we could have our own worship service right there.

Then I remember, for years things were so busy and I would get home so late that it would be me and Jonathan Falwell at 10:00 at night. It would be "The Liberty Hour." I'd get so excited. Charles Billingsly would come on and sing these old hymns and then Jonathan Falwell would preach. That was my hour. Kelly had already gone to bed. She had to find her hour somewhere else. But that was my hour.

Then I found another church that had a Wednesday night service and I could go there on Wednesday nights. Then a Saturday night service, I could go there on Saturday nights.

I don't know what it is for you but if you're not doing this I would challenge you to seriously consider adding it to your schedule. I'm going to be so bold to say if you can't get it weekly then every other week. If you can't get it every other week at least get it monthly. But you need that time of corporate worship.

It's good to do it with the body if you can. It's good to be involved if you can. I know that creates problems. Where do I give my tithe and all that stuff. I'm not saying you should abuse or cut from your church or whatever.

But then, from time to time, when you're not preaching it's good to just worship at your church. That's a beautiful thing.

I love those Sundays...It doesn't happen very often, but a couple times a year where I just get to go in like anybody else. I get to check my son into Journey Kids. I get to go in and get a bulletin. I get to go in and have a seat. I just get to enjoy the whole worship service. But you need that weekly. You're created for that weekly.

Cautiously, because of your role. You do have a limitation in your life because of your calling. It does create some problems. But it's not insurmountable.

Next it's intermittent. This would be something you plan, whether it's every year or every two years or two or three times a year. I don't know. But it's where you have this massive commitment to worship. We use an R word, often, to call this but I don't like the R words because they all are passive. But we often call this a spiritual retreat or revival. A retreat is what we often called this.

That retreat could just simply be you at home with a couple days off. It could be going to a conference. Not this kind of conference but there are conferences that are tremendous worship experiences.

I haven't been lately but I used to go to the pastors conference at First Baptist Phoenix... excuse me, First Assembly. Gosh, Tommy would roll over if he knew. But, First Assembly at Phoenix. I wonder if they have one at First Baptist. Probably not. But anyway, First Assembly, out in Phoenix, it really was a worship conference. That's what it was. You go to the Hillsong conferences. That's really what they are. They're really worship conferences. I mean, you get more to that but they're done...

There needs to be, sometimes, these massive injections of worship into your life. It shouldn't replace the daily, it shouldn't replace the weekly, but sometimes we have to let it. It's good just to have it there. I know you can't go to everything and you can't invest in everything. I understand that.

But even at something like this, what if you took a couple hours tonight and used that for worship? I know downtown and Disney is tempting. I saw some of you over there, last night, walking around. We were over there, last night, walking around. But instead of going at 6:00 you go at seven and you take that hour and use that for worship.

We don't start until nine in the morning. For those of you that are owls that's early enough. For those of you that are larks, you're going to be up early. So, in the morning. Tell everybody back home it starts at eight. Not to lie but just to take that extra hour along the way.

The advance coaching guys that are in the room...they happen to all be guys in this case but if it was guys and ladies and whatever. Sometimes they fly in early and take a half day of worship on the front end, or stay late and take a half day of worship on the back end or even add in some of these other things. But there is something to that intermittent thing.

So you put these in your calendar. You put your Sabbath in your calendar. If worship overlays with your Sabbath, all the better. If it doesn't, you work that in. Then occasionally, you plan these retreats. I really try I'll talk more about this tomorrow not to start the year until I've planned the year, not to start the month until I've planned the month, not to start the day until I've planned the day.

I want to go back and finish the talk that we started yesterday...It seems like it's been longer than that, but yesterday...about the Renegade Pastor's Calendar. Many of you have had something to say to me about that. Some of you have made some jokes about Parkinson's Law and some of that. I'll get to that in just a moment. I was joking about the newspaper and how I like to read the newspaper. A bunch of people under thirty came up to me and said, "Now what exactly is a newspaper?"

I tried to explain to them what this is. Then somebody gave me this. It's "50 Things That We Don't Do Anymore Because of Technological Advances." See if you can relate.

Number one is call theaters to get accurate movie times. In New York we had The Movie Phone. They made it popular on Seinfeld. Visit a travel agent's office to research vacations. Record your favorite things using VHS recorders.

Do you ever find yourself saying, "Did we get that on tape?" People are like, "What's tape?" You don't ever do that? Dial Directory Assistance to find someone's number. Which reminds me, what's the number for 911?

Use public telephones. Sometimes I see that at a movie, somebody uses a public telephone. Of course the old comedian's joke is if you see somebody using a public telephone you ask, "What are they, homeless?"

Number six, book tickets for events over the phone. Number seven, print photographs. Number eight, put a classified ad in a window. Call the 24-hour operator to get the exact time. I think that one's even older than me. Carry portable cassette or CD players.

I thought this one was interesting. Number 11, handwritten letters. Apparently they're not reading *Fusion*. Sometimes as things go more high tech, if you move toward high touch, it'll stand out.

In one of the coaching networks somebody started writing the handwritten notes like I talk about to the first time guests. A first time guest took a picture of that and put it on their Facebook page because it had been so long since they had received a handwritten letter. Sometimes you can go against the grain.

Buy disposable cameras. Take plenty of change for pay phones. Make mix tapes...anyone?

Pay bill at the post office, I don't remember that. Use an address book, check a printed map before vacation. Of course if you've got that iPhone map you had to get your old maps out for a while.

Reversed charges at a pay phone...call collect, we don't call collect anymore. Buy a TV Guide, TV listings. Own an encyclopedia. Register your car at a DMV. I don't know, I still have to do that, but I guess they do it online or something now. The Yellow Pages...that's dead. Look up something in a dictionary.

Remember phone numbers, that's one, right? We get so used to having that with us. I was always like, "What if I ever got put in jail? Would I know my wife's cell number?"

It's keyed. Thankfully I've not gone to jail, so I'm okay. Use pagers, every once in a while you'll still hear somebody talk about that. "Turn off your pagers and cell phones." I had a pager...first church I pastored.

Where's Brandon? We were talking about Duke Divinity School. I did a graduate degree at Duke and I had a pager when I was there. They would page me if something went on at the church. That's how long ago that was.

Fax documents, I don't know. I still like that. Buy CDs, have CD collection. Pay by check.

Have you been through The Stewardship Seminar? People don't have checks anymore.

Warm drinks on the stove. Dial star 69 to find out who called you last. That actually could be still really helpful, I think. I didn't really understand this one. Number 38, tie on shoes at the mall. Do shoes just not have shoestrings anymore? Am I just out of touch with that one? I wasn't quite sure about that.

Send love letters. We'll get to that one in a moment. Maybe you should do more of that. Buy flowers from a florist. Visit yard sales and flea markets. That seems like it's still pretty big. I thought that was still pretty big. Hang laundry out to dry. That would be one and then buy newspapers was number 47.

Keep a personal diary. Go to a dictionary to learn how to spell something. Kind of an interesting list with things we don't do anymore, but these are things you still should do and you should have in your calendar.

I started the talk yesterday by saying there's three resources every leader has to work with. You have time, energy and money. We're going to talk about time, particularly a tool that you have, which is your calendar. Maybe contrary to this list you need a paper calendar and there's absolutely nothing wrong with a paper calendar or a calendar that you can actually use and is easily accessible to you.

I gave you the Peter Drucker that, “Efficiency is doing things right, effectiveness is doing the right things.” Then we talked about how you personally manage your calendar. I asked the question, is your calendar under control, out of control, or are you under its control?

Tom Peters say, “You equal your calendar.” Brian Tracy says, “Your calendar equals life management.” We did a study of Psalm 90:12, which in the NIV says, “Teach us to number our days right, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Did you ever see that Transformers movie with Optimus Prime? Yes, you owe me because I just got Optimus Prime into the talk.

It’s funny what people talk about. Ephesians 5:15 and 17, Luke 14:28, Ecclesiastes 3:111, Psalm 394 and 5, and then we got into 5 acres into your calendar. I gave you two parenthetical comments, one keep a unified calendar, which some of you are still struggling with. “How do I get this unified calendar thing going?”

Then a lot of fun, as you’ve caught me this week about Parkinson’s Law. That seemed to be a crowd favorite from yesterday. “Work expands to fill the time available for its completion.” This talk will expand to the time that I have to complete it, but I’m going to try to finish early so you can take some photos and meet some people and all of that.

Actually if I end early what I’d like to do at the end is hear some application points, some things you’ve learned over the last couple days that you’re going to go back and do. Not questions, but application points, as we go along.

A lot of you have had fun with Parkinson’s Law and I gave you that article from [lifehack.org](http://lifehack.org). That takes us up to the first element in your calendar, which is the Sabbath. That’s a 24 hour period where you abstain from your primary vocation. I really, seriously do hope that you sat down with your calendar and went through and added in your Sabbath.

Mine is Friday evening to Saturday night, so my Sabbath this week is going to be Friday night. I have the lunch conference tomorrow. This area here will be turned into a church planting conference tomorrow with about 100 church planters and then I’ll finish that up around 4:30. Then I’ll be waiting and watching as the sun goes down, as I go onto Sabbath time tomorrow night.

I’ve got to get all the sheep in the pen. I’ve got to do my sermon run through tonight, make a few little, quick calls about Sunday and then tomorrow night into Saturday I will rest, recreate, reflect and proffect as part of the Sabbath.

Number two, I think the one that we dealt with yesterday is worship and putting worship into your calendar. Which may be on top of your Sabbath, but could be also in addition. We talked about daily worship and having your daily time with God, then that weekly worship. Which may be at your church. you may be able to find that time for weekly worship at your church, or you may have to find it somewhere else.

The word of the day yesterday was intermittent worship, like an intermittent retreat or an intermittent injection of worship into your soul. so that’s where we are. Everybody good?

Let’s go to number three. I’ll do this one just to build off of our Q and A time. This one is three, and that is rest. Not now, don’t go to sleep now but later. There’s a time to work and there is a time to rest. Sabbath is a particular kind of rest, but Sabbath is a defined rest that is more than rest. Then there’s other types of rest that you need as well. And rest is very important.

Most of us run really hard. In fact one of the things I want to talk to you about and I have some just random thoughts at the end of my talk that I want to give you, but I do hold my staff accountable for these areas in their calendar.

For example, my general theory on hiring staff has been to hire bull dogs, we are already with a bull dog on our back here, me and dear the bulldog owner, so I've tried to hire bulldogs and put a chain on them, as opposed to hire lap dogs and try to teach them tricks. And that's been my general approach to hiring. I want to hire highly driven, hard charging 'go get them' kind of people.

And I have a lot out of the secular world. I don't feel like everybody I hire and contrary to some changes in America I don't always see seminary education as a huge plus, but I used to hire a lot of investment bankers. And investment bankers are used to working 80 hours a week. Now a lot of us toss around 80 hours a week but if you ever think about it, 80 hours is a lot of time to work.

I really, as hard as I push, I really work eighty hours. That's seven days a week, twelve to thirteen hours a day. You take one day off as part of that. That's fourteen, fifteen hours a day for six days. That's a lot of time. But these young investment bankers that come to New York, all the times that's their life.

And then they come to Journey and they'll get saved and they end up being great administrative pastors or executive pastors or sometimes, you don't call them an executive pastor because they don't know if they are called to ministry, so they are the executive director of your ministry, or the administrative director of your services or something like that.

Well, they thought coming to work at Journey where we only work sixty-five to seventy hours a week, they thought that was great, you know. They just thought they had slow down to come to work for us. But then what I find, and there is particular theologies of this, where it's you don't work at all. It's like I have to push you to work 40 hours a week, or I have to push you to work fifty hours a week.

My general approach to work is that I get paid by the Church to work five days a week, and then I voluntarily work the sixth day, which is Sunday. Because I ask everybody in the Church to volunteer on Sundays, so I volunteer on Sunday. I really changed my perspective by the way.

So my church salary that I get, it pays me to be in meetings on Monday. It pays me to plan worship services on Tuesday. It pays me to prepare the sermon on Wednesday, and on down the line. But then I volunteer on Sunday.

And that just changed everything for me. Because now I'm no longer a hireling, I'm a called minister, and so I show up and exercise my gifts on Sunday just like the worship team does and like the Childrens' Ministry volunteers do, and the parking lot, and the greeters, and all that kind of stuff.

So, I volunteer on Sunday, and then Saturday is my Sabbath, or whatever day in the week it might be as part of that. But what I'm trying to do is I've tried to hire these bulldogs that are really willing to work, and then put a chain on them and teach them how to Sabbath.

And I would rather do that than try to hire these lazy people and try to get them to work. Unfortunately, there is a lot of laziness in ministry. We are. That's just how it is sometimes, but I have to hold my staff accountable to take the Sabbath. And that can be a problem.

In fact, one of our yearend reviews that we...questions that we ask is how often did you take the Sabbath over the previous year? There is occasion to violate the Sabbath, but that should be once a year, twice a year at the very most. Maybe if there was a prolonged illness or something that took you out of the office like the birth of a child for a while and something like that. But generally speaking I want to hold them accountable.

So because of this I have to also have to push my staff to rest. I have to walk around at night and tell them to lock it up, shut it down, go home. Because there needs to be a time where you turn it off. There needs to be a time to rest. I'm not just talking here about the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a particular type of rest, but even every day.

By show of hands how many of you have a hard time turning it off? Yeah, okay, so I got the right crowd for this talk that I'm about to do. I have a hard time turning it off. My mind gets on something and I go home, and even if I'm with family and I can be very focused and very disciplined, I'll get to family time and some of that here in a moment.

Then the son goes to bed, Kelly goes to bed early. I'm a little bit more of a latenight person than she is. I'll find myself turning it back on. And I say well I could just do one more little project. Or let me just do one more reading of the book, or let me just put together this talk, or while I got the next three Sundays done, but let me just work on the fourth Sunday.

The next thing you know, it's 11:00, midnight, 1:00, and then I go in there and I lay down and I turn on the classic country music and I just can't sleep. And so rest becomes really important. So when you think about rest, let's talk about sleep for just a moment. I have an article, but for the sake of time, I'm not going to reference it, about sleep.

If you're interested in that, maybe send me an email at the Renegade Pastors email, and I can post it into your hub. It's by a guy who I really don't know, but he wrote an article on how to get better sleep.

But there is a couple things I will point out. One is, he says that according to research from Harvard Medical School, almost 33% of American workers and 66% of pastors. Okay, he really didn't say that, I just thought it sounded right. 33% of Americans are not getting enough sleep. As a result, they suffer from chronic exhaustion. So that's an issue, and they're not functioning at peak levels.

He tells a great story in the opening about, you remember when in the Seinfeld episode when Kramer was going to try to copy Leonardo Da Vinci's sleeping patterns? Did you see this Seinfeld? Because what Da Vinci would do, is he would only sleep twenty minutes every three hours. So Kramer is going to try to copy this, and that's the setup to this particular article.

But then he goes on to talk about how much lost production is related to getting enough sleep. How many health issues are related to getting enough sleep. In gaining weight, they now say that you gain more weight when you sleep less than if you sleep enough.

So, do you know, and I won't get into all this. He gets into things about keeping your room cool and powering off devices and having prebed rituals and all that. If you're interested and we have time I can come back to the article. But as you think about your sleep, I think a good rule is do you wake up in the morning rested? Or do you have to wake up with the alarm clock and hit the snooze button? Well that says something is off.

Sometime I'm going to give a talk about circadian rhythms and biological clocks and things like that, because I really am fascinated, and a parenthetical study that I've done for much of my church systems work has been to study bodily systems and the way your body is wired up by God and try to match these two, and the stress and relief principle, and some of that is a part of it.

But with your sleep, are you simply getting enough sleep? Are you rested? It's very very hard to solve problems when you're tired. It's very hard to fight your shadow self when you're wore down, to pick up on that phrase from earlier. So sleep is important.

In my own life, I get a lot more sleep. I have a hard time sometimes going to sleep. But I get more sleep than probably most people think. I'm not a five-hour-a-night person. I'm not a six-hour-a-night person. I really want seven to seven and a half, and perhaps on the Sabbath more like eight hours kind of person. I've gone to bed or I've left problems at the office that are so big and so overwhelming, and then had a great night's sleep and woke up the next morning and they seem so small. The problem didn't change, but I changed. Sleep is restorative, you were meant to sleep.

The other thing that's really impacted me regarding sleep has been something Wayne Cordero taught me. Wayne Cordero taught me that, tonight is the beginning of tomorrow. Okay, let me explain that. When God created the world, he separated dark from light, and it seems as if the night is our zero, and then it goes into the day.

In other words I go to bed tonight not because I'm tired from today, I go to bed tonight to rest in preparation for tomorrow. You see how subtle that is? I know it's a little hard to get your mind around. But in the American way of thinking, tonight is the end of today.

So my day started at 6:00am this morning and it ends when I go to bed tonight. In the more Hebrew way of thinking tonight is the beginning of tomorrow. So I go to bed as the start of my day. So I start the day with sleep and then I end the day with work, versus starting the day with work and ending the day with sleep. And that little shift there has made all the difference in the world to me.

Then Cordero taught me also that principle I gave you yesterday, which is if you're going to sleep in, sleep in on the front end. So I've got so much to do between 8:00 and 5:00 tomorrow, or between 8:00 and 6:00 tomorrow, I better go ahead and go to bed at 10:00 tonight. And that's been freeing for me. But sleep can be really powerful, more we could say on sleep perhaps, but I'm just going to leave it there. But sleep is a very important part of rest.

Also a part of rest is days off in addition to your Sabbath. So as hard as I worked you over about the Sabbath and how you're sinning and you're probably going to lose rewards in Heaven and you'll probably lose your hair too if you don't take the Sabbath, then I would also say that there is a time for days off in addition to the Sabbath. Now, I think these should be more strategic than perhaps just randomly assigned or maybe something that you feel is an obligation that's due to you, an entitlement.

So something that's more intentional versus an entitlement because there is a time to look at the busyness of your life and say, the seasons are so busy, the work is so much, I better plan some additional days off. And if we have time at the end I want to talk to you about seasons just a bit, and how the seasons flow into your calendar. But we are in a season right now. And now up until say April 5, which is the week after Easter, that's going to be a really busy season.

So it's going to be hard to get a day off with that. But an intentional day off after that busy season to allow you to rest from the busyness can be really, really powerful. And so want to be strategic about that additional day off. Then connected also to this issue of rest are longer periods of rest. And I am not so much talking about vacation. I get to vacation here in a moment, but taking a full weekend off can be really powerful.

You were not created to preach fifty-two weeks a year, right. All of you have learned that yet, you are just not. I was joking yesterday about how in New York in the Manhattan campus there are five services, or they have four, they are adding a fifth, sometimes they do six depending on special days and things like that.

The torture you put your body through to deliver a sermon is just incredible. The adrenalin that floods your body, the intensity and focus that floods your body, that's just not natural. And then to do that week after week after week...

I was talking about Jim Lore and some of his work about managing time versus managing energy. And Lore developed this phrase that he called “the corporate athlete.” And he says that in every other sport, there is a season, except in corporate America. And so you think about professional baseball players, they work x number of months and then they take x number of months off.

You think about professional football players, they work x number of months, they take x number of months off. My brother who is a professional body builder for many years, yes it does skip a generation, they would have a season where they competed, and then they had a season that he referred to as the ‘fat season’. And then you know, then they would get back in shape and go backyard and compete.

We don’t have that. You know, we’re corporate athletes, we are ministry athletes. But there is not really a season of that. We are expected to get up and to deliver and to preach, week in and week out and we just are destroying ourselves in the process, because we will not take a weekend off. Now you say, well okay, cut to the chase now, we have not much time this afternoon and all that.

What do you mean? I am talking about number one, let’s just start with fifty weeks a year, okay. Whittle that down. I think the least you can do is probably forty to forty-two. Anything less than that, you are probably going to undercut your leadership unless it’s a planned Sabbatic or something like that nature.

But if you are preaching fifty-two, try to get it down to fifty. If you are preaching fifty, try to get it down to forty-eight. If you are preaching forty-eight, try to get it down to forty-six or forty-four, and then you can do what I do, sometimes you take weeks off, but sometimes you coteach with somebody else.

Tagged team teaching, where you teach the intro and somebody comes out and teaches the middle and you come back and teach the conclusion or vice versa. If that doesn’t sound all that exciting to you, wait till you get to the point we are doing four or five a weekend, then it sounds really, really good to have somebody come in and take 20 minutes of the sermon off your shoulders.

But thinking about taking a full weekend off, even when you attend church, just as a regular ordinary person, like we talked about yesterday, or taking one where you go down and visit another church. And again I am not necessarily just saying that you got to benchmark against them but you can’t help it.

You are going to go down even if you try to go down and worship, you are still going to try to steal their ideas and word up on those brochures and ask questions and all of that. But that’s part of this rest as well. You need a break from preaching. You need a break after the busy seasons of life.

Now if you do all this right, what you won’t need is a vacation. But you should take it anyway. Because the vacationing for you, if you schedule your preaching right, if you schedule your Sabbath right, and I know this sounds really crazy by now, because some of you the only time you rest is on vacation. But if you schedule your Sabbath right, if you schedule your days off right, if you schedule the days out of the pulpit right, you really won’t need a vacation to rest.

But you still need to schedule your vacation as part of rest, because your vacation will be for those you love. And when I go on vacation, I don’t want to veg out on the couch. I want to be able to be engaged with my family. And so that is a different kind of rest. And I do find clarity on vacation about issues and ideas and things I can’t find anywhere else. But vacation is part of this. It is a time to turn it off. So let’s talk about vacations for just a moment.

I heard somebody say, I am going to attribute it to John Maxwell, because I think it was him but it may not have been. And you know my idea, you know my general thought about attribution don’t you, if you don’t know who

to attribute a quote to, if you have a quote but you don't know who to attribute it to, and it's a spiritual quote, you just attribute it to Charles Spurgeon.

So most people don't know. He wrote a bunch of stuff anyway. It sounds really eloquent in the Old English. You just say "Charles Spurgeon always said," and most people say, "Well, he probably did say that."

Then if it's a secular quote, not so much a spiritual quote, you just attribute that to Winston Churchill because he said a lot of stuff. He wrote a lot of books. He's a smart guy. You find yourself sometimes in this spot. You're up preaching and you realize you didn't attribute the quote in your notes, so you're saying "It's been said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country,'" said Winston Churchill.

And you'll be fine. You just keep going. People don't know. Then if it's like, "Cleanliness is next to godliness, Spurgeon always said."

You just keep going. I don't really know who said this, but I'm going to attribute it to John Maxwell. He said, "You take vacations with your family when they're young so that you can remember the vacations when you're old."

My dad, who was not a believer growing up, he is thankfully, praise the Lord, one now. At least, I think he is. Sometimes I can't get a straight answer out of him because sometimes your family is the hardest. But he tells me that he is and I believe him. But as I was a kid, there were certain things that he just understood intuitively because I was the last of three boys. One turned out okay, one didn't turn out so well and the jury is still out on me.

But because there was a vast age difference between me and the others, he had figured a few things out just in his life. He had figured this vacation thing out. Even though he was a guy who got up early and went to work, he came home and he had dinner with the family. Then he went back to work at night, we went on vacation. We took vacation.

I had a friend. His dad had very much a ninetofive job. He was just that traditional nine to five, union guy. When he came home, nine to five. Well, when they went on vacation, his dad was disengaged. He just went on the couch. He didn't want to go anywhere, didn't want to do anything with that.

You can be the judge of that and you can say I'm judging the guy too harshly or whatever, but one of the things I always knew is that when I as little boy went on vacation with my dad, I had the attention. I had their focus. We were on vacation.

Now, did mom and dad do stuff they wanted to do? Sure, they did. Did they drag me along to things that I didn't want to go to? Sure, they did, because I was a little kid. That was their right to be able to do that. But my dad understood that if he was going to work hard and do things there needed to be a time where he could say, "Okay family, you've got my attention."

Then when I first went in ministry, there was a guy who was a mentor in a lot of ways to me, really blew it in this area. The only time he ever did vacation with his kids was to go to the denominational meeting. That was the vacation. Dad would go vote and do the denominational work, and they got to hang out at the pool or something. I suppose that was okay, but I heard him later regret that. Being in ministry twenty years you see things. You see kids grow up and all that.

Not the tightest talk I've ever given here on vacation, but a time to turn it off and a time to take the vacation. The busier you are, the bigger your ministry grows, if you're going to model Jesus, the more time you have to take off.

There is a time to just abandon. One of the first things I think you should put in your calendar is your vacation time, and you block it out.

One of my mentors, who is going to be with us at the April meeting for our advanced coaching, he said “Nelson, you need to understand the power of a two week vacation.” I said “Two weeks? I’ve never taken more than three or four days.” He said, “Well, you got to grow up. You got to learn to take a two-week vacation.”

So I started with seven days. I learned a lot on seven days. In fact, he told me I should do a cruise. I said, “Well, I can’t afford it.” He said, “Check the prices.” I added up what I was going to spend at a hotel and food and travel and I realized we could go on a seven day cruise cheaper. You get that inside cabin for \$500 a person. So Kelly and I went on this seven day cruise.

Then we got upgraded because my wife is really good at building friendships with travel agents and people like that. We ended up getting upgraded and we had a little balcony and stuff as part of that. She, to this day, still gets us all kinds of special treatment in hotels and they like her and all that.

We went on this cruise and there’s where I realized the first two days I’m still thinking about church. The next two days I finally disengage and I relax. Then the last three days on the cruise, the family had my attention. Then my mentor said “Well, what if you could stretch that to two weeks? So now, it takes you two days to disengage, two days to rest, but now you’ve got ten days left to give the attention to the family.”

I’m still working on it. I’ve taken a couple of weeks here and there. I’m still struggling. I’m trying to move to the point where I take a full month off at one time. You can’t do that as a church planter. But when the church gets 10 years old and the church is like the journey and it gets more stable and you’ve got a team and you’ve got staff, you can move toward different things.

But vacation becomes really important, making those memories. Vacation doesn’t have to cost a lot of money. If it’s a \$500, seven day cruise, you have to save up for that. None of this stuff comes easy. If you have a credit card that you use for ministry stuff and then the church reimburses you, you can get credit card points. A lot of times you can get your air fare and hotel taken care of just from the points that you get on the credit card.

Sometimes people joke with me because I’ll go to a concert. I like to go to concerts. I’ve never paid for a concert. I just use credit card points because on my credit card you can buy concert tickets, pretty good deal. It doesn’t cost you a lot of points, so we do that. But then you can use that for air fare and you can use that for car rental and things of that nature.

I once had a seven day vacation where we went to Gettysburg and Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., and a bunch of old Civil War sites, less than a thousand dollars for the whole week. You can do it. There’s different ways to do it.

Then there’s a time to save up. Ten-year anniversary, my wife and I were supposed to go on a Greek Isles tour. Her dream had always been to go to the Greek Isles. My family is Greek. Searcy is a Greek name, CIRCE. Anybody know what that means, by the way?

**Audience member:** Church.

**Nelson:** No, it does not mean church, but that would be cool if it did. It actually means little gift. sometimes people remind me that it’s little, little, tiny, little bitty gift. I’m like, “Oh, little gift.” Anyway, she always wanted to go to Greece. We saved up. We go to book it and that’s when they had the Olympics in Greece. You couldn’t get a flight in. You couldn’t get a cruise or whatever. So finally, finally last year we went. Seven years later we

went on this cruise. She's gotten to know this company because every year they call and say "Are you going to go this year?" I went on a cruise seven years later but I paid the prices from seven years prior, when it was dirt cheap and all that.

There's a time to just save up and make some memories and do something like that. Your tenth anniversary, you know, that's one. Your twenty-fifth anniversary, that's one. My parents started celebrating their fiftieth anniversary at year forty-six. They just didn't want to risk not getting there, you know? But you're only forty-six! And they say, "But we've always heard so much about the fiftieth." Let's just handle it.

Rest is very, very important. I was saying I'll tell you on rest and I'm very aware it's the afternoon session and all this stuff. But the last thing I'll tell you on rest is sometimes fun should be a part of your schedule when it comes to rest as well. That can be tied into your vacation. That can be tied into your days off. But, you know, you shouldn't feel guilty about having some fun.

We were talking over lunch about some of the theological movements that are happening in America, some of which no longer believe in evangelism or church growth and different things like that, but there's also always been this undercurrent of puritanism in America that says, "If it feels good, you probably shouldn't be doing it."

But there's nothing wrong with having a little fun. Fun can be very restful. Going to a concert, whatever stripe that is, whether you're going with me and we're going to see Alan Jackson or George Strait or we're going to see Jimmy Buffet or whether you're going to see the Foo Fighters or you know, I can't even think of anybody that would be modern day. Adele, I guess. I like Adele. I don't know. Does she give concerts?

But whatever that is. I mean, you're going to watch the ballet. You see that? They do that in a movie theater. You can go watch the ballet in the movie theater. I mean, what kind of world? It's just like it's a modern day miracle that you can do that. Whatever it is, there's nothing wrong with having fun.

Look, if you've been working hard for three or four months, and on the Monday after Easter you want to go to a movie, go to the movie. It's okay, you know? It's fine to have a little fun into their category.

If you want to play softball on the civic softball league, play softball. You can get by with that every once in a while. There's something that's okay with that, especially if it's part of this rest. Now you don't want to do that and not do the church ministry stuff, okay? You still got to get your sermon done. The sermon won't write itself at the movie.

But a time to turn it off, and then when you rest, when you go on vacation, when you Sabbath, turn it off. Don't check your email. Don't be on text. Don't return phone calls. Buddy of mine, he says, "I've got two phones. One that only my wife and family has, and one that the church has. When I take my day off, I put the church one in the drawer." They'll be okay. They'll be okay.

Be there. Be on the focus. Give it the time. Everybody with me? Okay.

Now you're like, "Well, I've got the Sabbath. I've got my worship time. I've got my rest time. What else could you possibly say?" Well, let me give you a parallel one to this. Number four I believe we're up to.

I've called this "Date night," date night, date night. Yeah, finally, right? Let me share this with you before I go to date night. This is a very bad transition here, but I want to go back, because if I talk about date nights and then talk about napping, that's not going to go very well together.

You guys know Mike Hyatt, the publisher at Thomas Nelson? He used to be at Thomas Nelson. He sent me an article about napping. I want to go back to rest for just a minute. Just talk about rest. I've never been able to nap. Anybody in here able to nap? Yeah, a few. Good, good! Anybody napping right now?

Apparently Mike is a big nap taker, and he says, "I've had almost one every day for years." This is...Spurgeon, by the way, was a napper. I'm not just saying that because it's Spurgeon. What he would do is he would lean back in his chair...this is true. It talks about it in one of his books. He would lean back in his chair with his keys in his hands.

You know, back in those days keys were like a big set of key ring kind of thing. By the way, if you ever want to know if you're doing too much or not, just look at the number of keys on your key ring, because if you got too many keys, you're just doing way too much.

But anyway he would lean back in his chair. He would just grip the keys rather lightly, and he would nap, but he wouldn't go so deep because what would happen is when he would get into it. And that would wake him up. He would say that was just enough to regain his focus, to regain his attention in doing so.

I was talking about that at conference, and then I got this article about it. So there's some interesting stuff here. Leonardo da Vinci took multiple naps a day. We talked about, you know, he slept twenty minutes every three hours, and he just kept working. I think he also went insane, but anyway...is he the guy that cut the guy's ear off? Or that's Van Gogh that did that? I don't know.

I don't think this is necessarily in our favor, but Napoleon was also not shy about taking naps. He took one daily. Thomas Edison was embarrassed about his napping habit. He practiced it every day. Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of Franklin D. Roosevelt, used to boost her energy by napping before speaking engagements.

Gene Autry, the singing cowboy...I was talking about Gene Autry the other day. Is Tommy in here? He didn't even know who Gene Autry was. He routinely took naps in his dressing room between performances. John F. Kennedy ate his lunch in bed and then settled in for a nap every day. I may try that.

Oil industrialist and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller napped every afternoon in his office. Did you watch that, "The Men Who Built America," by the way? Yeah, if you get a chance. I don't know if it's on Netflix or Amazon Prime or something, but there was a sort of a documentary about the men who built America, about Andrew Carnegie and John Rockefeller and all that. It's really interesting.

Rockefeller, if you read the biography about him, the big Rockefeller book, he would sometimes sit in a meeting and he would sit outside of the conference room. They would have the meeting and he would just sit and listen. They never knew if he was really listening or if he was taking a nap.

But he would just absorb all that stuff, and then sometimes, in the middle of the conference he would come out with this brilliant solution. Winston Churchill took an afternoon nap. It was nonnegotiable. It was into his schedule. He believed it helped him get twice as much done.

Now, there's another thing you should know about Winston Churchill and this is not, this is true. This is not me just attributing it to Winston Churchill. He wrote all of his speeches in a bath tub while drinking a bottle of brandy. Half of that you could probably do. I don't think you'd be able to do all that, but he would be so pruny in the bath tub where he's writing these speeches.

Lyndon Johnson took a nap every day at 3:30, and he believed that broke his day up into two shifts. I was in vocational evangelism for seven years, so I was usually in college. I'd go to class all day, then around 2:00 or 3:00

I would shower and get dressed and then I would either have to...back in those days you could actually catch a flight in a half hour, you know? Pre 9/11, you remember that? You could just get to the airport about a half hour before your flight. You had to go run into the flight. I would always have a flight at 4:00 or I would have to drive somewhere. Then I'd land a 6:00 and you would speak. Then you could get back sometimes at 9:00 and be home. I'd go to school the next day. That always...like that shower in the afternoon, that 2:30 shower in the afternoon seems like it gives me energy into the end of the day.

Ronald Reagan famously took naps. So here's the benefits of napping. It restores alertness. The National Sleep Foundation, I'm sure you can trust them, they recommend a short nap of twenty to thirty minutes. A nap prevents burnout. Of course, a lot of cultures they take naps. They have the siestas.

Heightened sensory perception. That was kind of Spurgeon's thing. Reduces the risk of heart disease. Who knew? A midday siesta at least three times a week means you're 37% less likely to die of a heart attack. Working men are 64% less likely to die of a heart attack. Then it makes you more productive.

I have this chair that he talks about here. Michael says he had a zero-gravity chair. You got one of those, Steve? Good. You can get them out at the Relax Your Back store. You ever been to the Relax Your Back store? Do you know what I'm talking about?

Okay. So Google this when you get back home. I don't know if they have this in South Georgia or not, Carl, but if you drove to the big city of Macon, I bet, or something they would probably have it.

So the Relax Your Back store is for people like me who have back pain. Anybody else? I have lower back issues. People say, "Why do you sit down when I teach?" Because I want to be able to walk out of here when I'm done. I have some lower back issues. It's from birth kind of thing or whatever.

But you can go into the Relax Your Back store, and it's like the Brookstone store in the mall. You don't have to actually buy anything. You just get to use all the gadgets, you know? I look to go in there and hang upside down. They have one right down from our office in Boca, so I've had to stretch my relationship with this salesperson for years, because I've been going there now for three years just to hand upside down.

I'm like, "Just one more time. May I just try it one more time?" I thinking maybe if I don't go all the way back. So literally, you put your feet in this thing, and you hang upside down. And oh, man! It just releases everything in that area of your body that you shouldn't talk about, like your behind. It just releases everything. You walk out, you feel like you're two or three inches taller. You probably are in some ways. It's just like upside down, so their big theory is that any day without gravity is a good day on your back.

So they had this thing, and I've got one of them in my office called a zero gravity chair. It's got feet on it, and you would lean all the way back. It's contoured so that there's like as limited amount of gravity of every part of your body. So Michael says he naps in a zero gravity chair, so I'm going to have to try that. Haul that thing over to the office.

Anyway, be consistent. Be short. Turn off the lights. Use a blanket and be discreet. Those are his tips. If you go to MichaelHyatt.com, MichaelHyatt.com. It's a good blog that he does anyway. So I was talking to me editor at Baker. I don't know who you work with at Baker, Gary. You ever work with Chad Allen?

Chad and I were talking about this the other day. We're going to try to practice that, but apparently the office culture at Baker is not that conducive to napping, so yeah, it'd be tough. But the worst time to nap is on your date night. I bet you won't find that at MichaelHyatt.com!

So let's talk about date night for just a bit. Jimmy Brent in here? Jimmy's outside, getting ready for our next event. Jimmy Brent and I have been traveling together for a long time. Sometimes he goes with me to other states and stuff. Just part of my parole provision...not being able to travel alone.

We were down in some kind of little beach retreat, and one of the guys I was speaking with, he was just getting married. His fiancé came in for the weekend. We were sitting around talking. They asked me and Jimmy to give them some marital advice.

I give them my low expectations talk, you know, like the key to a happy marriage is really not low expectations, it's really no expectations in my part. Because every argument it's about me putting some expectation on Kelly that she's unable to meet or whatever. I give him this little talk. And it wasn't that great. Kind of like this talk.

So Jimmy says, "You've got to schedule time for one another." Well, they're young. They're in love. They don't know any better. This just, like, wrecks her. She just thinks he's the biggest idiot in the world. Just gives him all the reasons, like, "I want him to be so in love with me, that he doesn't have to put me on his calendar."

How many of you have been married for more than a year, and you realize that it's the exact opposite, right? It's the exact opposite. Love is putting the other person on the calendar. Now certainly love is more than that. Being married is...you remember that book. It never did very well, but there was a book called "The Two Minute Kiss." The theory was that you should kiss your spouse for two minutes every day before you leave.

Now I've been trying to get Kelly to buy into this, and some days...my wife's not here. I can't...you never want to tell too many stories. My wife's great if you ever met her. Whatever.

But I've never quite been able to get her to buy into the two minute kiss kind of thing, but I have been able to seriously get her to buy into the date night. Usually it's not her. Usually it's me. But the date night idea of having a time in your schedule that is carved out specifically for those that you love.

Now, I would expand this and I don't know if I have time, if we have time in our Q and A session we can talk about it. I would expand it to not just a date night with your spouse, but also schedule time with your children and grandchildren. Daddy daughter date day. I hear that. Doesn't work so well with Daddy's son, okay? But the idea is still the same.

The grandparent's breakfast, the grandparent's lunch. Some of you are nodding your head. You have that. Most of us, we have treasured childhood memories of that, whether it's just...I used to go to my...I only grew up with one grandmother. We called her "granny," but the others had already died before I was born.

I would go there and we would have lunch. That was a pretty standing Saturday kind of thing. My parents were probably doing date night, who knows? My dad might have been trying that two-minute kiss thing or something.

But whatever it was, I would go there and we would make grilled cheese sandwiches. Man, there's hardly a time that I smell or see a grilled cheese that I don't think about how much my grandmother loved me. Honestly, she was the only Christian in my family at the time, so who knows what kind of influence she had on me. Because I was one of the first later to become a Christian after she died.

That kind of principle, of that scheduled time where you give some focused attention. Now, my mom grew up in a family with seven or eight brothers. One died young, but seven that grew into adulthood that I knew as aunts and uncles. So it might be a little harder to have individual time with all seven, but the birthrate in America has gone way, way down. So most of us have the 1.4 and we're fine.

But the idea here is to schedule specific time, primarily first of all among equals, with your spouse, but then you can also filter this principle down to children and at a certain stage, to grandchildren.

With children, this can be applied and I'm circling around children so I can come back to spouse. But with children, especially grown children, this can be applied to a consistent time where you connect by phone or as Matt and I were talking, with Skype. Retired people are buying computers for Skype. You know, buy iPads for Skype, because this is the way it works. So now you don't just talk anymore, but you see. But it's that scheduled time.

There's some great benefits to having this scheduled time with your parents, because the commandment says that if you honor father and mother, you will have years added to your life. You actually live longer if you honor your father and your mother. So there should be time for that as well. You can apply this in all of its various ways.

There's a bug up here, not a cockroach or a palmetto bug, but some other kind of nasty bug.

You can apply that in all kinds of ways, but primarily you want to apply this to your spouse. Should it be a weekly date night? Perhaps, in an ideal world, it should be a weekly date night. I don't live in the ideal world. I live in the real world, but I think it should be scheduled. Weekly's great, every other week if you have to, three times a month if you can, but having it scheduled.

And here's the thing. Don't ever finish one date night without having the next one on the schedule. First thing you want to do is get the first one on your schedule. By the way, this could be date lunch. You can get really creative. It could be a date breakfast. You take the kids to school, come back home, and cook breakfast and have a date morning. It doesn't really matter, except that it's a focused time.

Talk to the guys here just a moment. We all pursued our spouses before we were married, and then we stopped pursuing them after we're married. We call it "taking them for granted" is what happens. But you want to express the same kind of pursuit after marriage as before marriage. Just as you would pursue them in dating, you pursue in this date night.

Then take some of that creativity that you use to plan worship services and use that to plan your date night. Creativity is important. A little romance is important, and it does wane. Here's what I've noticed. Romance tends to peak in couples in their twenties and then it comes back later, when couples are in their sixties. So let's try to close that gap.

Verne, do you give a testimony to that? You just caught my eye, like I saw you, I saw you and your wife coming in the other night. Yeah, had a little look on their face. Verne was in one of my very first telecoaching networks, I believe. I met you before that, because he's up in upstate New York.

I'm leaving the hotel the other night after some kind of dinner. They come giggling up like school kids down from...have you been to downtown Disney? Is that where you'd been? As far as I know, right? Yeah, sorry, I'm out. I'm out.

Verne's like the only guy I know, it's like the longer I know him, the younger he gets. You and Taylor Field down in the city. Sixty-five, and so it's great to have you here. Great to see you. I saw him the other night. I didn't say too much to him, because I could tell they were a little embarrassed and holding hands and skipping.

By the way, do you know it's impossible to not smile and skip? You can only skip and smile. This is true. You look like you don't believe me. I mean, I tell you all this stuff about napping. You're like, "Oh, yeah. That's true. Napping." "Oh, yeah. That's true. Better write that down. Get that zero gravity chair. Go hang upside down. Guy

said I should.” You try it. It is impossible to skip and not smile. So you cannot skip with a frown...you know what I’m talking about, the skip?

**Audience member:** Yeah.

**Nelson:** Okay. Like the little thing, you know, with that? Yeah, you do, in kindergarten. And if you eat a grilled cheese sandwich while you do it, my grandmother will show up! No, I’m just kidding.

All right. So, it’s afternoon. I got to lighten it up here a little bit. I don’t have much else to say. I’m pretty much out of it.

All right. So, anyway, you know, it seems like in your twenties and early thirties, do really well with the romance. Then the romance comes back, it comes back if you make it through on the other end. I think that’s really cool, but I don’t think you have to give it up in the middle there.

The reason why it gets so tough in the middle. You have little kids, and the house is messy and you’re tired. These are peak earning years and all that stuff that they say, but part of it is just intentionality. Intentionality with the date night.

Use some of that creativity that you have in planning those worship services and planning the opening of your talk and telling the jokes and all that. Use that to plan your date night. Creativity is like a muscle. It’s not like you if you use it on your date night, you won’t have any left for Sunday. You’ll get more. It’ll refill itself. So you plan some creative dates.

Finding what you and your spouse love to do, taking turns picking the movies. I’m sure there’s plenty of stuff out there. In fact, I went to Focus on the Family. We had...I just did an interview with H. B. London on the phone with us the other day. He used run the minister’s help line at Focus on the Family, vice president there. After that phone call, we were talking about some stuff, and he was saying something he didn’t get to was date night.

So we pulled it, and Focus on the Family, they still have these articles that he wrote for pastors and date night on their website. So you can go to Focus on the Family.

More recently, someone has written about it. You guys know Eric Geiger? Eric’s read some great stuff in church planting, excuse me, in church leadership. This is not about napping here, is it? Okay. No, this is not.

So where did the intro go to Eric? Anyway, Eric was the coauthor of *Simple Church* and has written some other great books. I just recently finished his on discipleship. But he has some thoughts. He wrote an article for “Authentic Manhood,” which they would never ask me to write an article for. I don’t know what that says about me.

He wrote an article about date night. he says this, “While there is not a Biblical mandate to have a date night every week with your spouse, there is a command to love your wife as Christ loved you, Ephasians 5:25.” How did he love us? Here’s the quote, “He pursued us when our hearts were cold to him. He continually wooed us to himself. He offered himself fully to us to establish an everlasting relationship, one that will endure for all time.”

“Men often stop pursuing and dating their wives with the same passion with which they initially pursued them and this is a full reflection of the greater marriage we have with Christ. Let’s bow our heads and pray together,” so we can just close it up and go home.

When God confronted the church at Ephesus, he rebuked them for losing their first love and challenged them to do the things they did first. They had lost their intimate walk with The Lord and he was calling them to repentance.

There's a connection between losing your first love and stopping the things you did at first. Time with The Lord, sensitivity to His Spirit, daily repentance, applied to marriage, the same is true. There is a connection between drifting from love expressed and the stopping of things we did at first. In other words, men, date your wife. That's just beautiful, very well said.

Ericgeiger.com, he gives some tips. His list is as good, if not better than my list, so I'll just give it to you. Number one is schedule it. You've got to put it in a schedule. My principal is don't finish this one until you have the next one scheduled.

We practice, at our house this principal I call "living off peak," which a lot of you have heard me talk about. Kelly and I rarely do date night on Friday night or Saturday night, the restaurants are just too busy. It's hard to get tickets to the theater on those nights.

We're big fans of live theater, we even like to go to comedy clubs and things like that. It's harder and it's more expensive too, a lot of times, on Friday night than it is other nights. Our date night often ends up falling sometime during the week. We usually lead growth groups on Tuesday or Wednesday night so sometimes Monday night can be a pretty good day for us, but Thursday night is often our go to night for date night. You put it on the schedule.

Schedule it as a block of time, as much as a you can, depending on your life stage. He has a second challenge, which is to start again. If you miss a week or you're out just get back on track. Just because you got out of the habit doesn't mean you can't pick it up next week.

He has this idea of "kid swap." I tired that one time but the other kid just kept coming back. It's like the baby changing station, you put your baby on there, he stays the same. He doesn't change at all. Anyway.

"Kid swap," this is an excuse that you often hear about date night, "Well, we can't afford babysitting." I had to hold one of my staff accountable to this. We were doing the yearend reviews. I don't do everybody's, I just do the one's that report to me. I asked him, I said, "How are you doing on your Sabbath?" He said, "Great." I said, "How are you doing on date night?" It's just one of those things, it's not even n the list, it just kind of came to mind. He said, "Well, not very good."

I happened to have sixty bucks in my pocket, which is a rarity. I had sixty bucks in my pocket, I said, "Here's sixty bucks, get your next date night scheduled." I said, "Until you get it scheduled, it's ten points a week on the sixty dollars." Do you know what points are? It's a 10% interest rate on the money I gave him compounding weekly until he gets his date night scheduled.

At that point in time I had this dilemma, on the one hand I wanted him to schedule his date night immediately, on the other hand I'm thinking, "That's \$66 next week, \$74 the week after that, eighty... " I could have like a hundred bucks if he would just delay it another month or two. I could get like a hundred bucks out of this deal.

But he got it scheduled and gave me the \$60 back, but the excuse was babysitting. They have small children, so how are you going to pay for the babysitting? I said, "Maybe you could swap?" That's what Eric is talking about here, you find somebody to keep your kids this week and you keep their kids next week. There's always ways around it.

The more we talked the more we realized there were opportunities you were not taking advantage of. There were parenting gymboree kinds of places in town that had Parent's Night Out. There are churches that have that, they offer a Parent's Night Out.

In Boca, it's such a wealthy, snooty area they provide child care at the movie theater. In fact one of the top restaurants in Boca Raton is actually in the movie theater. I can't remember what the name of it is right off, something with a B. It's really a nice, upscale kind of restaurant. Not Morton's or anything like that, but somewhere above Chili's. You can go and they'll even keep your children while you do that, for the price of a movie ticket.

If you buy an extra movie ticket for your kids you can take them to the playground. They get to watch little kid's movies in there. It's clean and safe and nice. I know this is not for newborns, but later on...my son loves it. In fact, I was going to take him to see the new movie the other week. He didn't want to go see the new movie, he wanted to go to the playground. I felt like I had to oblige him and I went to see the new Stallone movie.

Kelly's like, "How'd it go with Daddy-Son Date Day?" I'm like, "Fantastic!"

"It was great!" By the way, did anyone else see that Stallone movie? I didn't think so. It's like me and Carl, that was it. Nobody else saw it. The thing made forty thousand dollars or something like that.

Literally, it made nothing. The only thing that did worse was that Al Pacino movie about the old guys who were going to kill each other. It didn't do anything. It was no *Twilight*.

You can be creative with the expense. Then, date night doesn't have to cost you a lot of money. A picnic in the park during the warmer months can be pretty cool. Something at home, you can do a "staycation" date night. Just don't spend the time unloading the dishwasher or whatever...with this.

Eric goes on to say, "Use this time to try something new." That's my words, not his. He said something slightly different in the article. Don't just fall into the same routine every week with your date night.

**Nelson Searcy:** Now, my theory on that is, routine is good 60% of the time. Maybe 75% of the time. We like to go eat at the same places. We like to go do the same things. There's something to that. But don't let it be, maybe 100% of the time. Try something a little new. Kelly, she went online in New York and now in South Florida. You can subscribe to all this stuff, like free lectures that are going on at the local colleges or maybe some high school theater production that's going on. We've been to see plays at the high school theater and they cost you 10 bucks and the kids are up there, and sometimes they're just phenomenal, just doing a great job.

As part of that, I went to a thing, we went to a thing the other day, and then I got a, Kelly got me a Christmas gift for this. We went to an Edgar Allen Poe little theater thing that the kids at college drama department were doing.

Now, something you should know about me is, I do not like to be spooked. I don't go see scary movies. If a thing comes on like in the movie theater, the, what is that called? The preview? Like, I take my glasses off because I can't see anything and I just wait, man. I just wait. I just think about happy thoughts. I quote the 23rd Psalm. Then, Kelly's like, "It's over," and I put the glasses back on. I do not like to be spooked.

When I first went in ministry, the pastor I was serving with, he was a big *X-Files* guy. Remember *X-Files*? Shoot, I wouldn't watch that. It was too scary, man. The longer I've been in ministry, the less I need to be spooked.

I mean, I get spooked enough just in ministry. But, so we went to see this Edgar Allen Poe thing. Kelly's like, "Oh, I couldn't believe you held my hand." I'm like, "I wasn't holding your hand. I was scared to death."

As far as that beating heart, dadoop, dadoop, rapping, rapping on my chamber door, "Never more," I said to that. A little Edgar Allen Poe humor.

Then, like, this was like last November, to top it off, Kelly went on to this used bookstore place that I like. Last year, she got me the Sherlock Holmes collection, the Arthur Conan Doyle. So we've been getting these newsletters from this first edition kind of place or whatever, so she bought me an Edgar Allen Poe book. It showed up in bed that night, and it's on my nightstand. I'm like, "There's no way I'm reading that."

I have enough problems sleeping. *Count of Monte Cristo*, *Sword of Damocles*, I am not reading that. So anyway, you can be creative, is what I'm saying with that. Then Eric gives us this advice, and I think it's good. Romance, romance. You don't have to wait until you're at home to kiss. Hold the hand of your spouse. Talk, embrace, enjoy each other. It's pretty good.

He used to live down in Miami, and then he says here he now lives in Nashville. He gives you some spots in Miami you should go to. He says, "But I'm not giving away my Nashville spots." Kelley and I are going to Nashville next week. So if you're looking for me next Sunday night, I'll be at the Grand Ole Opry. That's where I'll be.

But date night can be really important. Now a date night does not always have to end, begin, or include sex, but it's not a bad benefit. But just understand that it doesn't have to, and that's obviously something that you have to let float naturally. Yes, I am blushing just a bit.

I can talk on masturbation on Parents' Weekend in New York City but apparently I can't talk about sex with a group of pastors.

Gary, do you want to come back up for some Q-and-A? Maybe kind of fill it up here?

All right. I think I'm good on date night. What's that? Did you have something? Were you going to say something?

**Gary:** I said I got a good story on that later on.

**Nelson:** Oh, okay. Great, great. Well, you'll have to pay for the cigars. Okay. The only other thing I was going to say about date night. Of course, I mentioned the children and then the grandchildren. I'm sure you can structure that out yourself. That may not be a weekly thing. Depending on where they live, it may be more difficult.

The only other thing I was going to say on this area is that there is a time to merge those two with rest and your spouse. There is a time just to go away by yourself. There's a Latin word for that. My wife keeps trying to teach it to me. Does anybody know? It's like a vacation where you leave the kids at home?

**Audience member:** Heavenly.

**Nelson:** Heaven, yes. There it is right there, yes. So thank you, sir. I appreciate that. So we got this little thing going with the different acts. But yeah. There is a word for leaving your kids at home and going on vacation. If you're a grandparent, you can give that gift to your children in spite of the fact that they probably don't deserve it. But you can give it to them anyway. Then it's good for you. It's good for your children, and it's good for you to get away from them from time to time. All right.

We've covered four of these, right? I've said a word about staff accountability. Real quick, I've talked about the nap thing on rest. Just another thought on the date night idea that has a universal application beyond just date night.

Back in the day with the Top 10 Young Entrepreneur thing when I travelled around and all that. Zig Ziglar was one of the speakers, so I learned a lot from Ziglar. Ziglar was known to hit the airport as soon as we were done to try to get home, and his goal was to spend as many nights at home as he could even though he traveled the country and was one of the top speakers in America at the time.

He just passed away recently by the way. I'll tell you the story real quick. Scott and I were doing a halfday in Nashville, right? It was in Nashville? So I try to go there as much as I can. We have to go in and do a Wednesday event, so Scott will take me to the Tuesday night Opry there.

So in the middle of the seminar, somebody just yells out, "He's dead!" I thought it was the person next to him. I thought somebody died right in the middle of the seminar. Scott was running over there. He was going to lay on top of him and see if he could bring him back to life.

I thought, "Well, signs and wonders. Who knows? Maybe." Anyway, at the time I was telling a story about Ziglar. I guess somebody had just seen on their phone, which violated one of my principles, so I kicked him out, after I got the story. But anyway, Zig Ziglar had passed away. I wrote about him on the blog, and you should read his books and all that. Great Christian guy. He dated his wife. In fact, the last time I saw him in New York City was after a meeting. He was down in the village, and he and his wife were going out to eat that night and doing a little date night in the village. Jean is her name. So, Zigler, he was always known to speak and then head to the airport and try to get home and spend the night at home. And there were those occasions where he would get home at a reasonable hour. Sometimes it would be 1:00 at night, or midnight, or whatever. But, I asked him one time, I said, "So are you not too wound up when you get home, or how does this work?"

He says, "Wometimes I'll pull into my neighborhood, and I sit at the park down the street before I go inside and I listen to music for fifteen minutes." I thought, well wait a minute. You're speaking, you're like, literally, are just running from this to the airport, to make...and then if you get home like at 6:00 in the afternoon and you're about to go into your house, you sit down the street for like thirty minutes and listen to music, and I'm like what do you mean. He said I call it the decompression chamber.

He said, whenever you're changing gears between work and home, or home and work, you should put yourself through a forced decompression chamber. Isn't that a great principle?

**Audience member:** Yeah.

**Nelson:** I think of it as domains. I have different domains in my life. One domain is church. One domain is this ministry. One domain is as a writer. One domain is as a son to my parents. One domain is as a father to my son. One domain is as a spouse to Kelly. So, whenever I'm shifting between those domains, I need a little decompression chamber, depending on how intense the experience of the previous domain was, will determine how long the decompression chamber needs to be.

So, on the way home from work, for example, I try not to do a lot of stuff on the Blackberry. I try not to listen to a lot of "good for you" material. I don't listen to a lot of teaching tapes or old Gary Macintosh DVDs on the way home, sorry Gary. I don't try to do any of that on the way home.

Now, going to work, I will. In the morning. Going to work, man, I don't ever listen to talk radio. I don't ever listen to that. I listen to books on tape. I listen to good stuff on the way. But going home, it's all music. Because music helps me make the transition into the domain. And I'm going from the work domain into the home domain.

You know, you land after a big speaking engagement, you get in your car and you want to run home, and then you get there, like, everyone's mad at you because you're the grouchy and the grump and all this kind of stuff because

you didn't shift domain properly. So you've got to learn this shift between these domains. So, your date night is like that too. If your date night's going to start at 6:00, don't work until 5:55.

Everybody with me? You work until, say, 5:05. And then you use that fifteen minutes to take a shower and smell nice, and listen to a little music, and then you've shifted into the domain as part of that. So, I just wanted to mention that decompression chamber and scheduling that into your calendar. If you want we can even say a word about margin and having margin in your calendar, which is not scheduling yourself so tight.

Probably got about thirty more minutes to finish up this talk, and then that will save us some time for application. Number one in your calendar was?

**Audience member:** Sabbath.

**Nelson:** Sabbath.

**Nelson:** Number two? Number three?

**Audience member:** Rest.

**Nelson:** Number four?

**Audience member:** Date night.

**Nelson:** Number five. Growth. Growth. Growth. You've got to schedule time to grow. I'm talking about your personal growth time. Now this is a little different. If you've got my resource on developing a oneyear personal growth plan, I think that's in your Renegade Pastors Hub. I think if you go to the outstanding resources, everyone been in their hub at the Renegade Pastors Network? Yeah.

If not, you go to [renegadepastors.com](http://renegadepastors.com), you log in with the email that we emailed you the reminders at, that's your main email. We can change that if you need to, but that's the email you should log in with. And then if you don't know your password, just put in your email address and click forgot password and it'll email you the password of that address, and then you can change it once you get in if you need to.

Inside there, you have a directory, which is like my Rolodex of all the different relationships. People, I mean, Liberty Press is in there, CCB is in there. I just put Gary's cell phone in there, so you can call him any time day or night. He is standing by, ready to go. It's right below Rick Warren's. So it's Rick Warren, and then Gary Macintosh, right there, his personal cell phone numbers.

And all that's in there, that directory is there. And then there's the bonus resources, and then you have the monthly resources with your monthly tabs. Well in the bonus resources, you should find the oneyear personal growth plan. And that's how to put together a one year personal growth plan. It's basically the preaching calendar idea applied to personal growth. But that's a little different because it incorporates a number of the ideas I've talked about here.

In fact, this talk that I've done for the last two andahalf hours now, could be an expansion of that little 90minute talk. If you want to use that talk with your staff or something like that, it's a pretty good overview.

In there, I give you a growth plan but this is a little bit different. When you think about scheduling time for your own personal growth, you should understand that growth doesn't happen by accident. You don't just naturally grow.

Just because you've been in ministry twenty years like I've been or actually I'm going on my twenty-second year. Let's see, 2013. This will be my twenty-third year. I'm going on my twenty-third year in ministry. I could just have one year of experience, even though I've been in ministry twenty-three years. Because it could be that I have one year of experience and I've just repeated it twenty-three times over the last number of times. We've all known people like that.

I knew a guy who switched churches every eighteen months because he only had eighteen months of sermons. It was just easier to find a new church than find new sermons, so you just do that. We've all seen that. We sometimes talk about wisdom, maturity, age, and all that. Sometimes you just get old. Sometimes you get old without getting the wisdom. Sometimes age comes alone.

You have to be intentional about your personal growth. You have to invest in your personal growth. You have to plant seeds of personal growth every single day, week, month, and year of your life. Good ideas rarely sneak up on you. Jesus said, "If you want to find them, you have to ask, you have to seek, and you have to knock."

I'm preaching to the choir here because you all came. You came to the conference. This opening point of the talk should better for those who didn't come to the conference. You came, so you have a bent toward growth or you have what Carol Dweck calls an open system, which means you're open to learning. You're continuing to seek your learning.

The opposite of that, of course, is a closed system, which means you think you know it all. Some things you learned after you thought you know it all that really matters. It's the books you read after you get out of seminary that really make a difference.

You have to have this time of growth in your calendar. What's interesting about the time of growth is a little bit of every day can reap some tremendous rewards. We talk about this in the first session of coaching. Those of you that are in the new coaching network, I've already put it in the lecture notes for our February 28 meeting.

You plant little seeds. From those little seeds come a lot of fruit. The fruit is just proportional to the number of seeds. You can plant one seed and get a bunch of fruit. Also, it's little investments. Let's just get into it.

What are you going to do every day to grow? Just as you schedule in that daily worship time, is it possible to also schedule in some daily growth time? These two can go hand-in-hand. Let's say you want to read a 200-page book every year. By the way, how many of you would be interested in a oneday event on how to write a 200-page book? Anybody interested in that?

We were talking about this. I don't know if it was in this group or not. Gary's written twenty-one books. I've read twenty-one books. I've written eleven along the way, ten are in print. I just signed a new contract, by the way. The next book, did I tell you this? It's going to be called *The Renegade Pastor*. It will be an intro to this network and then I've got two or three more sitting around out there, too.

I got a book that the publishers won't publish. It's called *Tongue Pierced*. They won't publish that because of the tongue. They don't like that idea too well. It's about the power of your words. It's got a thirty-day cursing challenge. Not to curse for thirty days. That's probably why. I bet that's the reason why they don't like it!

Scott, will you check that? It's supposed to be cursefree for thirty days or whatever. So, anyway, that's the point.

We were talking about maybe doing a half day or something one time about writing your first book and maybe do something on that. Let's say you want to read a 200-page book. If you divide that up over just business days, in the course of a month that's ten pages a day.

You schedule your daily devotional time and then you add twenty minutes to it. Let's say you can read one page in two minutes time. It takes you two minutes to read one page. If you have twenty minutes, you can read ten pages. You could literally read a 200-page book in a month just doing it like this.

There are books that I say require a lot of time. Then there are books that I say I could read just by putting them on the back of the toilet. You can read that in five-minute segments and you'll be just fine. You'll be able to cover it. In fact, you can read a book every quarter. Just put it on the back of your toilet. That's just the facts.

My books, for example, you could read those just a little bit at a time as it might be. You schedule this in. A lot of directions I could go here. How many of you have been on the *How to Read More* webinar with me? Okay, good. I'm going to turn that into a resource so you don't have to wait for the webinar.

Every time there has been a recording problem. I do it and something goes bad or I get off on a tangent like I do sometimes and I don't like it. I'm just going to go into the studio one day and do it, so we have it as a three-hour resource.

I read a book a day, basically. I'm a little off-track. Last year, I got all slacked and I only read a couple of hundred. I think I finished around 227 last year, but who's counting?

I had some other stuff I was doing. I wrote two books. I started the Renegade Pastors Network, stuff like that.

I read one hour every day. I read an hour a day. I can read a book in an hour a day. A 240- to 250-page book, not a massive book. If you read bigger books give yourself two days, okay? Take them on your vacation with you, whatever.

What would that look like if you read an hour a day? Say, "Okay, I can't do that." How about a half hour? Could you give me a half hour a day, fifteen minutes? Could I just get fifteen minutes a day? Could you read fifteen minutes a day? You work your muscles. You can go from falling asleep reading five pages to being able to read a page in a minute.

One page, one minute, that's a pretty good place to get to. Now you're reading fifteen minutes a day, you read fifteen pages. Now you're finishing a 200-page book in about half a month, approximately, a little longer time maybe on Sunday. But you schedule it in. You say, "Well, okay. That might be a little hard to do." How about this? Stop listening to talk radio and listen to books on tape.

I'm fanatical about it. I don't expect you to be. I'm weird about stuff. I'm your rod. If Kimberly was here, she could tell you. She takes all of the books on tape that I buy and she speeds them up 133%. I listen to everything at 133%. In fact, I can't even listen to a sermon at regular rate anymore, because it seems so slow.

If you think I talk fast sometimes, it's because I'm used to listening to stuff at 133%. The key, by the way, on 133% is you just can't speed it up, you also got to lower the treble. "Because if you speed it up, it sounds like this."

Then you lower the treble and it sounds normal. Some people sound normal at 133%, because they talk so slow. She speeds them up to 150%. Now you're listening to a thirty-minute sermon or a thirty-minute talk in twenty-two minutes. It's like TV without the commercials. Then if they talk really slow, you can also do a thirty-minute sermon in fifteen minutes. You got to find your comfort level, but I find the comfort level.

You spend fifteen minutes in the car every day? You're closer to a thirty-minute sermon. You spend thirty minutes in a car every day? You can also do a thirty-minute sermon and you can also listen to the first thirty

minutes of *Good to Great*. If you do that over the course of the week, you've finished a bunch of sermons and you've finished *Good to Great*. Then if you're in the car longer than that, you can just listen to it again, listen to it again, and listen to it again.

I listen to books on tape every day when I shave and shower. It doesn't take me a lot of time. A shave and shower. What is that, 15 minutes? Maybe, if I'm a little slow or if I've got to put a tie on, it takes me an hour to remember how to tie it. Then maybe it's a little bit longer or something like that. But that's fifteen to twenty minutes. It's amazing what you can go through.

In fact, just this week I realized, in my downtime, just since I got here on Sunday night, I listened to the equivalent of six hours of audio. Just when my hands were busy, but my mind was free. Maybe you're doing a little ironing. Contrary to how I dress, I actually do iron my stuff. Doing little things that I have to do, because you're living out of a suitcase. You just put in on to play.

Did I get six hours of learning? I'm not going to get six hours of credit at Myola, because I was busy. I'm not ready to take a test on that, but I picked up something. Something went in. Something stayed. I gathered a few things from just a little bit a day. Start with fifteen minutes. Then take your lunch break once a week, eat at your desk and read. Don't surf to sports.

I had a guy on my staff one time. He said, "I can't read. I can't read. I can't read." He finished number one in his fantasy football league, but he can't read, he can't read, he can't read.

I'm like, "Well, if you just spend the time you do on your fantasy football and you use that in reading time. Quit reading the Drudge Report and start reading something worthwhile." I found out other than the fifteen minutes I spend on the newspaper if anything else happens, somebody will tell me.

Some political leader gets shot somewhere, somebody tells me, "Hey, did you hear what happened in Israel?" I'm like, "No, I didn't. As a matter of fact, I was busy reading a book." Okay, so tell me about it.

For 15 minutes a day, I'll give myself 15 minutes a day to read the paper. But I've got a pretty advanced system, so every day.

Then, what about weekly growth? Could you use that Sabbath to do a little extra reading? Once a week, could you have an appointment to read? I can't meet with you at 3:00 on Friday, I'm booked. I've got an hour on my schedule to read, to study, to listen, and to take a class online. At this point, it's brought to you by Liberty University online. I should get a commission for that.

What could you do once a week to have an appointment? Say, "No, no. That's study time. That's reading time." Not for sermon prep, but something you need to study. You say, "Well, I don't know what it should be." What problem do you have in your life right now?

People have written books about that. You've got a time management problem? One hour a week read a book on time management. You got a staffing problem? One hour a week read a book on staffing. Have an appointment with that. Say, "I'm going to put it on my calendar." I've got that appointment. Not with those...What did Gary call them here, earlier...very draining people. Cancel that appointment and put an appointment to study once a week on your calendar.

How about monthly? Spend some time with somebody monthly who has figured some things out that you need to figure out. I used to call it measure monthly. Find somebody once a month who can help you measure, who can help you better sharpen your saw, and who can help you better grow.

That's why we do the coaching networks monthly. I tried to do them weekly, it was just too much. People didn't want to read a book every week, so we do them monthly.

Over the course of a year, I can teach you the eight systems of a church and how to implement those in your church. You say, "Well, I don't know if I have the time." The year is going to pass anyway, all right? One year from now, we're all going to be a year older. What if a year from now you had 10% of the assimilation system implemented in your church?

What if you were able to keep one more firsttime guest a week than you're keeping right now, by taking that monthly investment to be in the coaching network? You say, "Well, what does the coaching network involve?" In my network it involves about an hour and a half on the Web. It involves a queue a day that sometimes takes about another 30 minutes. Then it's one book a month and a resource a month.

You say, "Well, I don't think I'll be able to do all of that." How about if you just do 10% of it? Get 10% of the results. That's 10% more than you're getting now. A guy says, "Well, you gave seven tips on assimilation. I can only do two of them." Great, you're ahead of the curve. You take those two and do those two, early results that get you so excited that a year from now you go back and pick up the other four.

You got to have that plan. I used to say you should try to have lunch with somebody once a month. That's a pretty good thing to do. A lot of pastors around who are a little further along than you are, they'll have lunch with you once a month. They may not have the gift to coach you.

A lot of pastors I spend time with, they know how to do it. They just don't know how to tell you how to do it. Some of them have really big churches, but they don't know how to tell you how to do it. You can watch them. You can learn from observing, but they can't necessarily articulate it. They can't put it into a system.

Once a month, you need to have some kind of serious investment in your growth. Some of you, and I heard you say it. This is my second coaching network with you. It's my third coaching network. I just had somebody come back to advanced coaching for the third time. Why would you fly across the country for the third time? Why would you invest \$600 a month in advanced coaching for the third time?

Here's why, because he told me, "I only grow when I'm in coaching." You just keep doing it. You keep doing it. It's like the tapes you go back to. Do you have tapes anymore? It's like the messages you go back to. It's like the teachings you go back to. It's like the books that you go back to over and over and over. You need to have that investment. You say, "Well, what about you, Nelson? You do all this coaching." Yeah, I'm in a coaching network.

In 2009, when I got ready to pursue this new initiative of moving 1,500 miles away from our original campus, I got involved in a coaching network. Let me tell you how much I paid for that. It doesn't matter, because the return on that has been incredible.

I'll tell you how much I paid. I paid \$22,000 to be in that coaching network. But we started a new campus that two weeks ago celebrated the second anniversary in South Florida. On that Sunday, it had 407 people in attendance. What was that \$22,000 worth? It didn't cost me anything. We grew a church out of the midst of that.

I was with somebody who is the only person in America that I know that has launched multisites where the multisites are bigger than 20% of the main site. I will give you a chance to think about that.

The dirty little secret in multisite, by the way, is that rarely are the other sites 20% bigger than the original site. This is why I tell you don't do multisites. You get at least one church of 1,000. Because all your going to do is start all these other little baby churches.

There is one guy I know of in America who has got a main campus running 10,000 and he's got multisites running 2,000 and 3,000, and 4,000. Most people don't. I said, "How much is it for me to be a part of your coaching network?" He said, "It's \$2,000 a month." I said, "Is it a yearlong thing?" He's like, "No, I do 11 months." I don't know why he did 11 months, but I was glad to sign up for it.

I'm in one right now that is for business folks. It's people who've got ministries like we have here at Church Leader Insights. It's a different kind of coaching network. I'm in the room with people who have, just for rough terms, multimillion dollar ministries that are doing things like we're doing. They're doing stuff around the world. They're doing stuff internationally, not so much for the church side but for this.

I knew if this, what we're doing here at Church Leader Insights was going to go to the next level; I had to grow as part of that. I have to fly to the middle of nowhere for that network. Literally, I can't get a direct flight there.

I love to get there. I hate going, because it's just in the middle of nowhere. That just happens to be where this guy does it. There's a specific reason that they're there. People with organizations our size, like at Church Leader Insights, we come together with these other folks and I learn from them.

Like the monthly package you get, the monthly renegade package, I never thought about that. Another ministry here in Florida was doing that. I'm like, "Well, let me see that." I said, "You mean you still mail it?" They're like, "Yeah, because people want to get it in the mail."

It's not just enough to do it online. If they do it online, only half the people will use it. If you send it to them in the mail...Who does that for you? Where do you get that? What's your publishing schedule for that? How would that work? We begin to see that. The coaching hub that you logged into, we learned that at coaching network. How to do these interviews like I did with these authors, we learned that in the coaching network.

Whatever it is, there is somebody who is further along that can help you figure it out. By the way, the guy I learned some of this stuff from, his ministry is not as big of Church Leader Insights. He works with a very small group of church leaders, actually nonprofit executives, really.

He works with a very small group, but he had figured something out. Because here's what I've learned, you can learn with somebody who's further along, then you are and they just figured out some stuff. Just because somebody's church is smaller than yours doesn't mean you can't learn from them. Just because somebody's church is bigger than yours doesn't mean you can. It's about this network.

Some people are just really gifted. My gifts are limited. I'm not going to be the person that helps you figure out student ministries. It's not my thing. I'm not going to be the one that talks about your sex life. It's just not my thing.

But if you want to learn how to grow a church, if you want to know how to build healthy systems, then I'm your person. If you want to be around somebody that loves pastors that can help you structure your life so that you can fulfill your calling, I'm your person. You've got some deep psychological needs, I know somebody I can recommend.

You need to get your taxes done? Go see Clergy Advantage. You need to put the computer program behind the system? Go see Church Community Builder. I don't know how to do any of that. You've got to put yourself in that position. I think monthly is a good time.

This one network I'm in, we meet two days every other month. I took that idea and applied it to advanced coaching. If you're going to fly somewhere, why not do two meetings instead of one?

Advanced coaching, we don't meet monthly. We meet every other month, but then we do two meetings backtoback. Boy, I'm worn out by the time Tuesday comes or the second day comes, I'm worn out. But then I've got two months to implement.

I only have to go to this Godforsaken place for this coaching network every other month. As part of it, I signed up again. We got so much out of it last year; Scott and I are doing it again. He's putting me on a plane to nowhere again. But we go. I drag myself down to those meetings. I sit there, I listen, and I learn monthly.

Then, to go to the intermittent idea but yearly, there's a time for that. This is what I would say is the yearly conference that you go to. I've benefited over the years from going to annual...maybe one a year going to a Ken Blanchard training. Back when the leadership summit used to be all about leadership, many years ago when they actually talked about leadership. It's like the big church planning conference they do here in town.

I remember when they actually used to teach church planning at that thing. That's how I am. They still call it the largest gathering of church planners in the world. Try to find a church planning thing at that.

I'm a little on the church planning bit. Tomorrow, I'm teaching a church planning conference. I'd appreciate your prayers for that. As far as I can tell, I'm the only conference that actually still teaches somebody how to start a church.

Everybody else will bring in the cool authors and they'll bring in the cool speakers, but nobody will tell you how to start a church. You go to a large church planning conference, nobody talks about church planning. I don't understand that. You go to somebody with a website that has church planning in its name and nobody will talk to you about church planning. This just doesn't make any sense to me as it is.

You go to a church leadership conference; they don't talk about church leadership. They talk about social justice. I'm like, "Well, yeah, that's important. I'm glad that person is taking those old tarps and turning them into shoes for kids in Africa, but I'd really like to know how to lead my church right here."

I don't know, you know. If you come to the Renegade Pastor's Conference, we're going to talk about renegade pastors, okay? We'll talk about that stuff here.

Every once in a while you need to find that. Unfortunately, I have to go outside my own circle of competence to find it. I have to go to the business people to find it. I have to go to the nonprofit world to find some of this leadership.

It costs more out there. To go to a Pat Lencioni event, that costs you more money than to go to a Saddleback event or something like that. Sometimes it's worth it. You can't do it all, but you can do it. Then sometimes you can't go, but you can buy the resources on MP3. I almost said CD. But you can buy them on CD, or you can download them and get stuff there. The point is you have a plan, a plan for personal growth.

Now you've got these five elements in your calendar. On paper you look at your list. Five elements looks like a lot. One day a week for the Sabbath, three or four hours on a Wednesday night for your date night, 15 minutes a day for personal growth, an hour a week for reading, a day a month for the coaching network. But I added all that up.

The best I can add up, that still gives you close to 200 work days throughout the year. That's still a lot of time. That's still a lot of time to do ministry, and I was pretty generous in adding all that up. Most of pastors right now who have not heard this lecture, who've not heard these five pillars, are not working 200 days anyway. So the average pastor is not doing this nor are they working the 200 days that you have left over from this.

So I guess if we could just raise the water level and work the 200 days, that would be an improvement. But if you work the 200 days in between these five pillars, then you're a renegade pastor. Your life is healthy. You're growing. You're fulfilling your calling, and you're saying no to average. If that makes sense, say, "I got it."

**Audience member:** I got it.

**Nelson:** Got it. Got it? Good. All right. so that's my talk on the five pillars. Any questions about any of those five? I've got four or five words on my list from automate to systems to 90minute blocks to offpeak to reminders to don'tstarttheday'tilyoufinishtheday to that. Any of that of interest to you?

**Audience member:** Reminders.

**Nelson:** Yeah, reminders. A little thing in your calendar to do is if you've got something coming up that you need to remember, don't wait 'til it pops up to remind you, okay? Like in my calendar, for example, it gives me a 15minute warning. So I've got my sermon to run through this afternoon at 4:30, so that gives me plenty of time to finish up here with you, take a few photographs, sign some books and whatever.

Then at 4:15 it'll pop up that I need to get to the sermon runthrough. I didn't forget the sermon runthrough. I knew I had a sermon runthrough. I'm prepared for the sermon runthrough. I already went up there before lunch and got the room set up for the sermon runthrough, so I'm okay. But if this was Kelley's birthday, I would have put a reminder last week in the calendar. One week 'til Kelley's birthday. Then if I didn't have everything ready for her birthday one week out, I would have reset that to be five days before.

If I still didn't have everything ready, I would set that to be three days before because I don't want to just find out in the moment that I've got to do something that's going to take me longer than in the moment to prepare. See what I'm saying with that?

**Audience member:** Yeah. Right.

**Nelson:** How many of you have missed a birthday because of that? You remember that morning, but it's too late to send the card. So we go online. We send the ecard. "Oh, they didn't mind." We're going to post something on their Facebook. Hey, that's okay. But if it's your son or if it's your daughter or if it's your best friend, you might want to do a little better than that. If it's your wife or your spouse, you've got to do a little better than that. So whenever you put something on your calendar, think through the reminder schedule of that. In Church Leader Insight's language, Scott calls this intensification. So if you notice what we did with this event, there was a oneweekout reminder. There was a onemonthout reminder. When the hotel was almost done with the rooms, we sent you a reminder.

So we wanted to intensify that. It wasn't a big deal for this event because you paid to be here. But some of our free events, there's a four or fivestep intensification process because we really want you to be at the event. So that's what I'm talking about. You've got to think, "Is this one day before? Is it one week before? Is it one month before?" Whatever those reminders might be.

Your Sabbath will help you with that, that profection, when you look out over the upcoming week. Now if your Sabbath is on Friday and you've got a birthday on Sunday, it may be too late to get the present. You don't want to just rely on that, but that helps you. I found that to be really, really helpful in my own scheduling. Make sense? All right. Any of these others? You know what a system is, by the way, right? Yeah, go ahead.

**Audience member:** I have a question about Sabbath.

**Nelson:** Yeah.

**Audience member:** Give us your feelings on taking a Sabbatical. Are there special conditions in which you recommend that and how it can be done?

**Nelson:** Great question. The question is about Sabbaticals. Gary, if you want to jump in on this? Steve Reynolds, if you're back there? Yes, if you want to jump in and say anything about Sabbaticals. Sabbaticals can be very, very good. There is a time to do something that's like a study break. I never really call that a Sabbatical. But if the church gives you a week for a study break and it allows you to get ahead on some of your sermon planning and some of that, I think all that's good.

We asked this question of H. B. London on the Renegade Pastors' call the other day. It's in your hub if you missed it. He gave some great advice. He said the only time you can take a Sabbatical is if the church is healthy. That's pretty good. It's a pretty good start, if the church is healthy. Then there is some stuff out there. I don't know if it's Craig Groeschel or somebody like that, wrote something on the Sabbath. We're trying to track that down.

H. B. back in the day said that when he was at Focus on the Family he wrote something on how to take a Sabbatical, so we're trying to build that out, is what I'm saying. I took my first Sabbatical last year. I was supposed to take it two years ago, but that's when I made the move from New York to South Florida.

So I messed up my own Sabbatical probably because of the junk in my own heart because I didn't want to take it. But there is something to that. So we're trying to build out some resources in that area, so I appreciate you prompting that reminder. Reynolds, McIntosh, anything you want to add on Sabbaticals?

**Gary McIntosh:** What I'm seeing around the country right now is that churches are giving the pastor about two weeks a year towards a Sabbatical. Then in like the sixth year, give a two to threemonth Sabbatical. There has to be something that you're doing for your personal growth. So if you could travel to Turkey and visit the sites of the early church or something like that...

**Nelson:** Thank you, sir. You're a gentleman and a scholar.

**Gary:** ...or you could take your class there or something. But then the churches typically ask you to commit to staying at the church when you get back for two years. So they give you the Sabbatical. Your vacation's on top of that. But they're afraid that you will leave and come back to resign.

**Nelson:** Yeah.

**Gary:** So they're asking you, "If you do get a Sabbatical, would you commit to staying at the church for two years when you return?" So I can talk to you some more about it if you want to talk about it.

**Nelson:** Yeah, that's a good word. Steve, you have anything on that?

**Steve Reynolds:** Sounds good.

**Nelson:** Yup, okay. We're trying to find some more resources on that. It is a little area that I would like to explore, and it's something fairly new to me. I was at The Journey 10 years, and they tried to give me one at seven. I just couldn't get it worked out, so yeah. It took a little while to get that going. There's a difference between a time off and a Sabbatical that I think is there. I'm a big fan of taking more and more time off versus a Sabbatical. But we are looking for some resources, so I appreciate that reminder. Thank you.

I was going to say a word about systems, and then I'll go to your note back there. My definition of systems, most of you are familiar with the eight systems, but there's church systems and there's personal systems. In the lingo, the acronym for systems is the same. It's anything that Saves You Stress Time Energy Money. SYSTEM. Anything that Saves You Stress Time Energy Money.

So an assimilation system saves you stress time energy and money because there's a consistent followup process with all of your firsttime guests. A good stewardship system saves you stress time energy and money because there's an active system that cultivates regular givers, moves them to, moves them to extravagant givers, and on down the line. So there's all that.

But then you can apply those same systems into your life and have different systems related to that. I was reminded here. Did we pass these out, Scott? Okay, I need to pass these out. If you would like to be a part of my next senior pastor telecoaching network, this is your commitment sheet. So you would just fill this out, and you would give it here to Scott before you leave. So we're going to hand these out to you.

If you have any questions about that, I'll answer it here in a moment. But let's go to the back.

**Audience member:** Finishing the day before you start that.

**Nelson:** What's that?

**Audience member:** Finishing the day before you start the day.

**Nelson:** Oh, yeah. Finishing the day before you start the day. It's one of my favorite time management principles. In the time management resource that I have called "Time Management for Busy Pastors," which is not to be confused with an earlier version I did called "Time Management for Lazy Pastors"...

I intended to give you 31 time management tips, any one of which would save you an hour a month. So I thought, "Well, I could give you another work week if I do 31." Well, then I got in there, and I actually ended up having 34 because I can't count. It's like that list I gave at Activate. 10 Ways To Multiply Your Group, so actually it was 11. But I'm always trying to deliver more than I promise.

So there's 34 time management tips that relate to ministry life. One of my favorites is don't start the day 'til you finish the day. Don't start the month 'til you finish the month, and don't start the year 'til you finish the year. My brother who's the medical doctor says that the difference between a successful person and a failure...and an unsuccessful person, I'll say it not so colloquial like him.

The difference between a successful person and a notso successful person is that a successful person can tell you what they're going to be doing a year from now. The point is that you don't just calendar haphazardly. You don't just calendar as it comes up on the fly, but you have an intentional plan.

So I've tried to adopt that and said, "Okay, I'm not going to start Friday until I finish Friday on paper. So here's what I'm going to be doing at 8:00. Here's what I'm going to be doing at noon. Here's what I'm going to be doing at 3:00.

Now I was going to make this joke earlier, but the mood was so intense that I couldn't make it when Dr. McIntosh was talking about moral failures and things like that. I'll have to preference this by saying I have a serious pull toward sin. I mean I surprise myself sometimes with how dark that can be in my mind and how like a magnet I could be pulled in that direction.

I can be thinking such spiritual thoughts one moment and then I immediately go to this dark, nasty place. I'm totally surprised by that sometimes. But I did want to make the joke earlier that said I can't have an affair tomorrow, I'm booked.

I don't know when I would fit it in, okay?

I was part of a church planting team. We started a church in Vegas. Don't go Google this, okay? We started a church in Vegas, and the guy had a moral failure. We found out he'd been having a dual life. He's married. He's got these little kids, but then literally in the cul-de-sac around the corner, I mean in the cul-de-sac around the corner! He's living this other life.

So we had to fly in, you know. Oh, Terry. Man, it was horrible. Oh, it was just so agonizing, and his brother found it out. So we had to deal with this. It's been this tortuous weekend to try to deal with this, and the church is running like 600. It's not like a small church, too. So then I guess the stress just got the best of us. Finally, just somebody said, "How did he have the time for that?"

How do you have the time to do that? I'm thinking, "Ah! I couldn't pull this off," you know?

You've got to have some kind of energy that was like superb. I don't have the energy for that. I barely have the energy for one marriage much less like two...around the corner. I don't even know. So the sin I guess is so dark, and the drive is so strong, you can pull that off. But I don't travel alone. I don't even know that I have a minute in my day that somebody doesn't know what I'm doing. I mean some of that willfully. Some of it I'd like to have maybe a little more freedom than I have, but generally speaking I welcome that kind of thing. So I can tell you what I'm going to be doing. You want to know what I'm going to be doing at this time tomorrow? It'll be 3:37 tomorrow. I'll be sitting right here in this chair, and I'll be trying to land a church planting conference. You want to know what I'm going to be doing at 3:37 on Saturday? I'm going to be in the car listening to this thing called The A-to-Z Boot Camp on the way driving back to Boca.

For the previous two hours before that from one to three I'm going to be on the phone with New York during my annual Saturday call with the staff that work on Saturday. I mean I can just tell you. So I'm not going to start the day 'til I finish the say.

Now do I have any fun in the day? Of course I do. You heard my calendar, right? Yes, I've got fun in the day. Tomorrow night during my Sabbath we've already set up we're going to see this new movie with the rock. Those that are staying over, we're going to do that. We're going to go eat somewhere fun while we're downtown visiting tomorrow night.

You want to know where I'm going to be next week? I'm going to be in Nashville with my wife. She's got something. I've got something. I'm going to carry her bag one day. She's going to stay in the back and smile at me while I teach the next day.

We're going to go to the Grand Old Opry on Saturday. It's just like you know, so you don't start the week 'til you finish the week. When's your week start? Does it start on Sunday morning? Does it start on Monday morning? What's that schedule going to be like for you? Then don't start the year 'til you finish the year. We teach the preaching calendar. The preaching calendar drives a lot.

So to show up for the preaching calendar meeting, I have to show them my vacation dates because I've got to know when I'm going to be gone. We're not going to have a big day on the day I'm going to be gone. Not that I

would do that because I know when the big days are going to be. It's not perfect. It's not like every hour of my day is scheduled or every hour of my week's scheduled or every day of my year's scheduled.

There's plenty of freedom in there. I call them expansion joints. There's plenty of expansion joints in my calendar, and then there is margin, margin, margin. Richard Swenson wrote a book that, if he ever dies, I'm going to rewrite it right after I rewrite the Lyle Schauer stuff. I'd just like to go on record, Gary, that if Schauer dies, I'm rewriting all of his stuff. Yeah, and we can coauthor some of it because she...

I've been beating this drum. I'm a huge Schauer fan, and now I've got to go and dig out my old parish papers after you mentioned that at lunch and find all that stuff. But Schauer can sometimes say more in three pages than I'd say in a whole book. I've got a photocopy of two pages worth of text where he didn't even use a period. Said like a runon sentence for like two pages, just kept going as a part of that.

So anyway, but Richard Swenson wrote a book a number of years ago called "Margin." The problem is he made it hard to understand. Margin just simply means you don't schedule yourself so tight.

So see, it's the decompression zone thing, but you apply it to even meetings at the office. Don't ever schedule an hour meeting. Put that down. I said it. Don't ever schedule an hour meeting. Schedule a 50minute meeting, and then use the 10 minutes in between as margin.

Better yet, schedule a 45minute meeting. Better yet, schedule a 27minute meeting and just see if you can get it done. Then if you schedule a 27minute meeting, don't schedule your next one at a minute and 29. Give yourself some breathing room in there. Go eat an apple. Go take a walk around the block. Go get a library card. Tommy, how much are they out here, okay? So sometimes I do stuff to entertain my staff, all right? So don't schedule everything so tight.

If your spouse calls you at 5:00 in the afternoon and says, "I'm going to put dinner on. What time do you want me to start?" Don't give the minimum amount of time that you could possibly make it home. So like you're sitting there at 5:00 thinking, "Okay, I've got to get this done. I've got to get that done. If everything goes as planned, I can be home by 5:30." Resist with everything in your body to say 5:30 because if you walk in at 5:31, you are a zero.

But if you say 5:45, and get home at 5:44, you are a hero because you built margin in your life. Don't schedule your meetings across town so that you have to make every red light to get there, and don't leave home with just enough time to make it. I get some reading in because I arrived at meetings early.

I got here to this meeting. I didn't stay in this hotel because somebody lets me use their condo nearby. So I got here every morning early, and I was able to sit out in the car and read the USA Today, look over my notes, be able to walk in, ready to go. Margin, margin. Building that into your schedule. What that does, it does the same thing all this other stuff does. It forces you to be more effective in the time that you have. Okay.

Start the day, finish the day. Start the year, finish the year. Real quick about the seasons since I've just go to cover it. Are we talking about seasons or automation?

**Audience member:** Seasons.

**Nelson:** Okay. There are ministry seasons. There are God seasons spring, summer, fall and then there are personal seasons. You really need to understand the seasons. So you have to understand the seasons. I just gave a talk on this to our married staff on The Journey. We realized that we have to do more to help the staff that are married understand what's going on in the church and what's going on in ministry. As part of the top 10%

in some ways, I do these gatherings. Sometimes we just go out and have fun together, like we go to the Journey concert or whatever I was telling you about.

Other times I do talks, so I did a talk the other day if you're interested, I suppose we could put it in your hub where I talked about what happens when the seasons of ministry and the seasons of marriage collide. So you've got to understand where you are in this.

When a new couple gets married, they're in springtime. The seasons of marriage, it's springtime. Now that's really good if the season of ministry's springtime as well. But if the season of ministry is winter and the season of marriage is springtime, that creates a conflict. So just understanding where you are in these seasons.

So you need more time to rest when you're in a season of winter. God naturally wired it up that way. It gets darker earlier, okay? In God's season, it gets darker earlier in the winter. If you're in a season of winter, you might need to rest a little bit more. If you're in the season of spring, you've got a long day. You might need to work a little bit more. The period right now in my ministry leading up to Easter is a season of spring.

Now part of the reason I've got this little time off next week is because I finished the big day in February, but I'm not quite into the season of Easter yet. So I just planned a couple of days off next week. I've got a speaking engagement one day. Kelley happened to have something that she wanted to do one day, and then we've got a couple of extra days of vacation.

That will give me this rest and momentum I need to go into this crazy period that's going to lead up to Easter. So from March the 5th all the way to March 31st really in my season it's going to go up to about mid-April because of some other things that we've got going on and different speaking engagements I have. But I look at that and say, "Okay, this is the season."

I've got to communicate constantly to the people that I care about what season of ministry I'm in and what season we're in. I didn't say this, but one of the things Kelley and I do on our date night, and I had a couple one night at dinner chide me for this. I just thought, "Well, they just didn't know, and they probably are divorced now and don't even like each other anymore."

But they chided us because we had our calendars out at dinner on date night because in New York people who sit beside you think they can just talk to you because the tables are really close. I'm like, "Well, I don't even know you. Who are you?" "What do I care? You might have been divorced five times." Then that's when Rick Warren said to me, "No, it's me. It's me and Kay." No, I'm just kidding.

A little inside joke. I should have, if I'd been in New York, I would have used, like, Brooklyn tab, but anyway. It's neither here nor there. But on our date night, we sit down and look at our calendar. I mean, she's got my calendar, she has access to my calendar, and those there, but it's just good to go over it one more time. See if I've changed anything, see what it says. See what we've got lined up, put, look at that next day. It doesn't take long, 15 minutes. Sometimes we get to the restaurant early before our reservation, we just go over it in the car.

But then, if I know that I'm about to go into a particularly busy season, I let her know. "Hey, this is going to be a really busy season that I've got." She's like, "I know, I know, every time around Easter's a busy season." But hearing me say it somehow softens it.

Then sometimes things change. In New York, when I pastored up there, the season around Christmastime was the easiest time of my year because in Manhattan we don't even do Christmas Eve services. Everybody leaves the city.

But now I'm down here, and I'm pastoring this church in the suburbs. It's this wealthy suburban area where everybody comes home. Oh, good Lord! I was wore out come Christmas Day this year because we had all kinds of stuff going on leading up to Christmas Eve. So at the end of that Kelley and I were like, "Well, this is really different." It's like we had to adjust everything in our calendar.

So we said, "Okay, you know what? We're not going to be able to go see the grandparents. We're going to have to fly the grandparents to us next year" and some of that. So you know, you just have to have this constant conversation and awareness and alertness about what season you're in.

Also, if you find yourself going into a season of winter and you don't have that rest on your calendar, you may have to just change something. Doctors just go in and say, "Cancel all my appointments." You know, you may have to do that every once in a while. Best thing you can do is take an early afternoon off. Best thing to do, add a day off. So you get to know about the seasons. Make sense?

I could flush it out a little bit more, but for the general sake is awareness, conversation, adjustment to the seasons. If could get an A in the middle, I'd have awareness, conversation, and adjustment to the seasons is what you have to be. The other thing you can do to learn to save up a lot of time, I've just got to cover is because I'm neurotic and I've got to check everything off my list here, is automate.

Automate as much stuff in your calendar as you can. Automate your reminders. Don't spend time on stuff you can automate. I rarely ever go to a restaurant without a reservation just because I don't want to have to wait. Yeah, we do callahead seating. They do that at the Applebee's at our place. It's not that I go to nice restaurants. It's just I call and get the reservation.

I automate it. I don't want to have to show up and wait. You automate that. I don't ever go to the drug store anymore. I just automate it. I mean Amazon, subscribe and save. They'll send me three tubes of toothpaste every four months. I figured it out. That's about how much I go through over the four months. I'll leave one in a hotel somewhere, and they'll send me another pack. I mean it's just automated.

I don't pay any bills. Bill night at our house used to be stressful. Now I just don't pay them at all. I just move every 30 days. They can't find me.

No, I don't do that. I just automate those things. You can automate your power bill. You can automate your Internet bill. What else do you have? I got a cell phone. I don't have a lot of stuff. Just automate that. I'm not in debt. I live frugally. I can just automate. I used to sit out at my house on that bill night.

Kelly would read the bills. I'd write the checks. Kelly would read the bills. I'd write the check. By the time we were done writing four or five checks, the stress level was through the roof. The twominute kiss was...I don't even want to talk to you.

I said, "Yeah, there's got to be a better way than this." So I get my salary on the first and on the 15th, so I have certain bills go through on the 5th. I have other certain bills go through on the 20th, and it's just automated. So now it takes me five minutes. I log on, look at the account, make sure everything cleared just fine, and I'm good to go as part of that.

I automate the date night. We don't finish the date night before we put the next date night on the calendar. It's just automated. I can't mess it up. I have the Sabbath. It's already on there. I can't do anything about them anyway. They're on my calendar. It's just automated. I've got other stuff I could say about automation, but you have to listen to the resource.

Part of my automation is a little principle that I've got called "living off-peak," which means when everybody else is doing whatever it is you want to do, either do it before or after them. Don't do it with them. Everybody wants to go eat at the nice restaurants in your area at a certain time. Everybody wants to go see the dentist at the first appointment in the morning.

Everybody wants to do whatever at the same time. Don't do it at that time. For everything you want to do there is an off season. There is an off peak. Everybody wants to go on vacation on July 4th. Now I happen to actually be going on vacation this year on July 4th. You can't always do that, but this year I can't always live off peak. But I'm just driving down the street to something that we're doing. It's not like a big deal.

It's busy, so I go in to get my teeth cleaned. I'm a big fan of that. They say dental care solves heart problems, all that stuff. I put it on the calendar, put the three appointments or whatever they want me to have on the calendar, and I asked the little receptionist this, a nice lady. I say, "Hey, what time would give me the least wait time? I'm doing the Lord's business. I can't just be sitting out here reading old magazines. I got stuff to do, you know?"

I actually asked her this way. "What appointment has the least wait time?" She says, "The appointment coming back from lunch." I said, "Well, tell me about that." She's like, "Well, we always go to lunch late, but we always come back on time because, yeah, the morning gets backed up, so it just eats into the lunch time." So I take that first appointment right after lunch. I can adjust to that.

So I go to the dentist at 1:30. I don't have a lot of freedom in my schedule, but I can go to the dentist at 1:30. I can adjust to that. Kelly and I laugh that we didn't have to wait to get old to go eat at 6:00. We just go eat at 6:00. Or you go to the movie first, and then you go to eat later. You just figure it out. So you're not doing everything that everybody else does. If rush hour is at 8:00, go to work at 7:00.

You can adjust this kind of thing, and you have some freedom in that. Out of all the things that we don't have as pastors, we do have a little bit of freedom here and there to adjust that. Nobody says you have to go to the post office at lunchtime. You can adjust and go some other time. I don't even go to the bank anymore. Everything's automated.

I can take a picture of the thing. It's automated anyway. It goes right in there. Somebody gives me 50 bucks for doing a wedding, I don't handle that anyways. I give it to the accountant. They put it in the church fund, but that's different. You shouldn't do that. You should probably keep it, but whatever. You just automate it.

But this off-peak things, we have a lot of fun collecting stories and coaching of pastors who live off peak. Some of you were making jokes at me this week about living off peak or I'm standing in line up here to get coffee and Jamie's nudging me, "You're not living off peak."

That's how Jamie talks by the way. It's true, isn't it, Vic? In his sleep? Yeah, it's like, he's like Grumpy from, anyway.

We had a good couple days.

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It's possible...through Senior Pastor Coaching with Nelson Searcy! New network meets on Tuesdays, from 2:00pm – 3:30pm Eastern Time.

### Overview

Senior Pastor Coaching is the only pastor-led, LIVE training experience focused on the **Eight Systems of a Healthy Church®**, updated for today's ministry landscape.



### How It Works:

- You'll join Pastor Nelson Searcy monthly for LIVE 90-minute practical coaching sessions over Zoom. There is no other pastor-to-pastor LIVE coaching like this. You'll be in the Zoom room with other pastors like you (no you don't have to have your camera on but it is encouraged!). Each month is a different system training based on the time of the year and what you need to be focusing on that month. (\$4,788.00 value/year)

*\*continued on next page*

## Why Pastors Love Senior Pastor Coaching

You'll Grow Your Church and Grow as a Leader



"The biggest benefit is getting the systems in your church healthy. **We wouldn't be the church we are without Senior Pastor Coaching.** It also helped me as a leader: I'm a better pastor, better father, better husband because of coaching. So I encourage you to check out Senior Pastor Coaching. It'll do wonders not just for your church, but for you personally as you continue to grow as a pastor."

**Andy Rainey**  
Blue Ash Community Church  
Cincinnati, Ohio

You Have to Invest in Yourself so Your Church Can Grow



"I've been in Senior Pastor Coaching about 13 years and it's been phenomenal. **Nelson and the systems have been a phenomenal asset** to me personally growing as a person, but then also to my church. If you want to go to the next level, get involved in Senior Pastor Coaching. It's been an invaluable experience for me. You have to invest in yourself so your church can grow."

**Dexter Jenkins**  
Fellowship Christian Church  
Boston, MA

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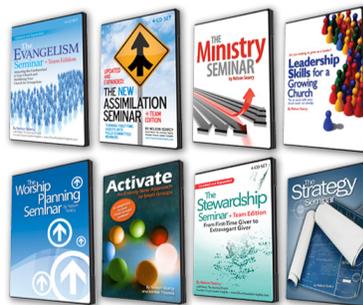
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## How It Works (cont.):

- **LIVE real-time feedback with interactive Q&A included.** After each lesson, you'll have plenty of time to ask Nelson questions. You can actively engage and ask questions or you can simply listen in and learn from other pastors' questions.
- **Receive the session recording plus FREE resources each month.** You'll receive an email when you can log in to **your exclusive member hub** and access that month's recording and assigned homework. You'll receive downloadable audio seminars, editable tools, planning guides and many support resources each month.

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- **You'll be part of a supportive group of fellow high-achieving pastors** who are also implementing these best practices. You'll also hear directly from pastors like you and what changes they made to grow their churches.



## A proven return:

- Comparable training through a one-year Doctor of Ministry program (and this coaching is far more practical) costs nearly \$4,000 and takes far more time and travel — yet doesn't deliver real-world, coach-led implementation!
- Talk to professionals you know from different industries — you'll discover that this **Senior Pastor Coaching** is one-third of the price most people pay for similar in-depth coaching!

## Why Pastors Love Senior Pastor Coaching

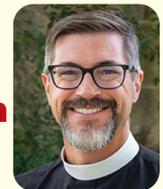
**Goes In-depth into the Various Systems to Help You Improve**



"This network has made a tremendous difference in my life, in our church's life, and for a number of pastors that I have had opportunity to influence. The Senior Pastor Coaching network is great, going in-depth into the various systems. **You can't go wrong with this.** I think there's a guarantee that you'll see success."

**Keith Merritt**  
Weaver CMC  
Weaver, AL

**Step-by-step Guidance for Implementation in Your Church**



"I love the Senior Pastor Coaching network because it's not just theories, it's practice too. Nelson gives you the nuts-and-bolts, step-by-step instructions on how to practically implement these changes in your church. Every month you need to log into the coaching sessions and you need to do the homework, and you need to submit it to Nelson, and that keeps you accountable moving along in the path. Is it worth it? Absolutely. It changed my ministry. **It has changed my church. It will change yours too.**"

**Eric Waters**  
St. John Lutheran Church  
Boerne, Texas  
(outside of San Antonio)

**Learn more and sign up here: [www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com/Growth](http://www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com/Growth)**

## In this Pastor-Led Coaching Network, You'll Learn from an Experienced Coach with a 20-Year Track Record

Meet Nelson Searcy...a Fellow Pastor Who is in the Trenches Every Day While Coaching Churches of All Sizes and Denominations.



Hi, I'm Nelson, and I'm passionate about helping churches like yours **grow and reach more people for Christ!** I'm also a pastor, leading a growing church in two of the most challenging places to reach the lost.

If your church isn't growing the way you know it could, you're not alone. Most pastors aren't short on passion — they're short on systems. **That's where this new coaching network can have a big impact.** I've helped pastors on the brink of closure turn things around and become a healthy, thriving church!

For over 4,000 churches, I've helped apply Biblical and proven Classic Church Growth principles to today's challenges through the **Eight Systems of a Healthy Church®**. These systems are practical, easy-to-implement and proven to work in real churches — just like yours.

### My Personal Commitment to You:

If you will simply give this a "try," I will do everything I can, every month of this coaching network, to help you grow a healthy church and lead as a healthy pastor.

**Let's proceed together to grow your church and achieve your maximum potential...as part of my NEW Senior Pastor Coaching Network!**

Dr. Nelson Searcy  
Lead Pastor, The Journey Church  
Founder, [www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com](http://www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com)

## Why Pastors Love Senior Pastor Coaching

**Position Your Ministry for Success Using the Eight Systems**



"When I planted our church, and when I joined the network, we were around 125. Today I'm averaging over 500 – 600 on a weekly basis; we have over 700 members. The Senior Pastor Coaching network **positions your ministry for success**, especially with the eight systems. Connecting with this training at the senior pastor level **will change you and your ministry's life forever.**"

**Vincent Collins**

Agape Worship Center International  
Columbia, SC

### After training in Senior Pastor Coaching, you'll be ready to:

- **Raise** small-group participation, online & in-person
- **Assimilate** first-time guests into active followers
- **Mobilize** volunteers for mission and growth
- **Ignite** evangelism and stewardship culture
- **Build** a leadership team that sustains long-term health
- And much more!

### As You Prepare to Join this New Network, Please Consider That:

- **ONE** new tither will pay for this network.
- The average increase in attendance is **25%**.
- The average increase in giving is **20%** of your overall budget.
- Nelson will be there **step-by-step** to help you implement.
- Unlike other coaching networks, you get **EVERYTHING** you need to work the systems.

**Get Essential Tools to GROW Like Never Before!**

# Get These Incredible Bonuses When You Join Senior Pastor Coaching Today!

**SPOTS ARE LIMITED!**

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### FREE Complete Sermon Series Each Month (\$2,759.40 Annual Value)

You can choose from our extensive library of sermons. **Save time and increase your preaching impact!** Each sermon series resource includes message audios, transcripts, notes, graphics and documents.



## SEMI-ANNUAL BONUSES

**\$250 Celebratory Gift for You and Your Spouse.** After you've completed 6 sessions of Senior Pastor Coaching, we'll reward you with a \$250 cash gift! Treat yourself and celebrate your accomplishments! **(\$250 Value)**

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