

session 10 study guide

frazzled families

starter

TICK TOCK: Ever wondered where your day went? Read through this data about where your time goes.

In a lifetime, the average American will:

- Spend six months sitting at traffic lights waiting for them to change.
- Spend one year searching through desk clutter looking for misplaced objects.
- Spend eight months opening junk mail.
- Spend two years trying to call people who aren't in or whose lines are busy.
- Spend five years waiting in lines.
- Spend three years in meetings.
- Learn how to operate 20,000 different things, from pop machines to can openers to digital radio controls.

In addition, the average person will:

- Commute 45 minutes every day.
- Be interrupted 73 times every day. (The average manager is interrupted every 8 minutes.)
- Receive 600 advertising messages every day (television, newspapers, magazines, radio, billboards).
- Travel 7,700 miles every year.
- Watch 1,700 hours of television every year.¹

What takes up your time? For each activity, estimate how much time you spend on it each week.

Activity	Hours per week
Sleeping	
Eating	
At school	
Doing homework	
At a job	
On the computer	
On the phone/texting	
Watching TV	
Exercising	
Spending time with friends	
Spending time with family	
Doing sports	
Practicing music	
Reading the Bible	
Worshiping God	
Praying	

message

Life is busy. Between school and activities and family and friends, day-to-day life can seem dizzying. It can be hard to find time to fit anything else in. The important question to consider is where God is in your schedule. Do you ever feel like you are trying to fit time with God into your already busy life?

The reality is that God doesn't want to be fit in. He doesn't want to be given our leftover minutes. He wants our all, our everything. God wants to be the most important thing in our lives.

In this passage from Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus explains the answer to simplifying our frazzled lives. As you read this passage, consider the following questions: (1) What does Jesus say is the most important thing in life? (2) How successful are you at keeping this the most important thing in your life?

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

dig

1. What does it mean to put God first in your life?

2. Using the following scale, rate how often you spend regular time alone with God.

Often	Sometimes	Never
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3. Using the following scale, rate how often your family spends time together in prayer.

Often	Sometimes	Never
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4. Using the following scale, rate how often you and your family worship at a church service.

Often	Sometimes	Never
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5. How can putting God first in your life also help in your family life?

6. How can putting God first help with your priorities and time commitments?

7. What do you think it means to love your neighbor as you love yourself?

8. What happens if you are too busy to love your neighbors?

9. What are the benefits of loving your neighbor?

10. Think of someone you know who takes care of himself or herself in a positive and healthy manner. What attitudes or actions does this person do that demonstrate he or she has a balanced love of God, others and self?

11. What does it mean to love yourself?

12. How can you keep a healthy balance between loving God, others and self?

apply

1. Let's face it: life sometimes gets too busy and our lives go into "overload syndrome." This means we take on more than we can handle. What are the biggest overload factors in your life right now? Check off the biggest three in the following list.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too many activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Competition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> Expectations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hurrying | <input type="checkbox"/> Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Pollution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schoolwork/work | <input type="checkbox"/> Changes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commitments | <input type="checkbox"/> Money/debt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent pressures | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People | <input type="checkbox"/> Church activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

2. In Colossians 3:17, Paul writes, "Whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." What does this tell us we need to do when setting priorities?

3. What do you need to do to live a more balanced life?

4. Life is full of stressful moments, but knowing how to reduce and manage your stress can help you feel less frazzled. How would you rate the level of stress in your life right now?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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5. How do you typically handle stress?

6. Read Matthew 6:33 and James 1:5. How do these verses relate to the subject of reducing stress in your life?

7. God is infinitely bigger than any problem we have. Therefore, our first line of defense against stress should always be to *bring our requests to God*. Read 1 Peter 5:7. Why should we go to God with our problems?

8. Read Philippians 4:6. How should we go to God with our problems?

9. Does your family have a regularly scheduled time for family devotions and prayer? If not, what prevents you from spending a specified time with God?

10. One important stress reducer is *talking with one another*. Does your family have a regular daily time of connecting with one another in conversation, such as at dinnertime or bedtime? What are some of the benefits of having such a time established?

10. Another great stress reducer is *rest and relaxation*. Constantly being busy—even busy with good things—isn't healthy. Remember, God values rest. Even He rested (see Genesis 2:3), and the Bible depicts Jesus resting as well (see Mark 4:36-38). Read Matthew 11:28-30. What promises about rest can we learn from these verses?

11. What in your life is restful?

12. Is it difficult for you to rest? If so, why?

13. What are the benefits of resting?

14. Do you regularly schedule time each week for family fun and relaxation? If not, why not?

15. Ultimately, the key to managing stress is in relying on the Lord to help us manage it properly. Read Isaiah 40:29-31 and Philippians 4:13. What do these verses have to say about how we can handle anything that life throws at us?

reflect

1. Imagine for a moment that the gears on a car represent how busy you are in your life. Each gear would represent an increasing level of busyness, as follows:
- **Park:** This gear would represent the time you take for rest and renewal and to recharge your batteries. Such times of relaxation soothe, heal and give you perspective.
 - **Low:** The low gear represents the quality time you spend for building relationships with family, friends and God.
 - **Drive:** “Drive” represents those times in your life that use lots of energy but are extremely productive. This gear is needed to perform your usual daily tasks.
 - **Overdrive:** This gear is reserved for times when you need to exert a lot of effort. You can’t always stay in overdrive or you’ll run out of gas quickly and eventually burn up the engine.

Which gear do you usually find yourself in?

Which gear is your family usually in?

2. When life spins out of control, what do you do to get it back in perspective?

3. What advice would you give to someone who is struggling with putting God first in his or her life?

4. What is one thing you can do to make life less frazzled?

5. What is one change your family can make to make your life less frazzled?

6. How would God adjust the balance of your life? What things would He remove, add, decrease or increase?

meditation



Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him.

PSALM 62:5

Note

1. Richard A. Swenson, M.D., *Margin* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992), pp. 149-150.