

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION _____	5
WEEK 1: OUR TIME OR GOD'S TIME? _____	7
WEEK 2: TIME WITH GOD _____	13
WEEK 3: TIME WITH OTHERS _____	19
WEEK 4: TIME FOR SELF _____	26

 **Using the Material:**

This is a set of studies designed for a group setting, but can easily be adapted for individual use. Below is a list of suggestions which will help you to get the most from the material. These are only suggestions, so please use the material in a manner which is suitable for your group or for you as an individual.

- Set some ground rules in the group (or as an individual) about creating an honest and non-judgmental environment.
- In a small group setting, it is a good idea for each person to read through the material before the group meeting.
- It would be helpful for each person to keep a journal during the process of this study, in which to note down any key reflections, questions and learning.
- The thoughts and challenges that are presented in the studies are only guides. Please feel free to adapt these according to the needs of the group or individual.
- To help you to engage with the material, you might like to leave your watches off during the study time. This may help you to relax and enjoy the study – without thinking constantly about time!



WEEK ONE

OUR TIME OR GOD'S TIME?

☉ **Chill out**

A metronome is an aid to help musicians keep to time when they are rehearsing. There is a spectrum of speeds, varying from Largo (40 beats per minute) which is a slow speed to Prestissimo (208 BPM) which is the fastest speed. Ask each person to reflect back on the last week and then choose the speed on this scale at which they think they were living – and explain why.

☉ **Think through**

What drives us?

We all feel driven by certain aspects of our lives. Which aspects of your life do you feel driven by?



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Not only are we driven by the demands of others, but we also drive ourselves. Which of these best describes you?

Be Perfect Driver

Characteristics: These people will be purposeful, moral and have very high standards. They will be task-oriented, extremely logical and very good at seeing the best way of achieving the success or completion of a task.

Please Me/You Driver

Characteristics: These people love to spend time with other people and are comfortable in social situations. They are usually skilled at dealing with others and like to look after people. They are as pleasant as possible to everyone, are extremely law-abiding and helpful, and are concerned with doing the right thing.

Hurry Up Driver

Characteristics: These people will be lively, adventurous, excited and often described as ‘the life and soul of the party’. They will be enthusiastic, quick, with a capacity for doing lots of things at once.

Be Strong Driver

Characteristics: These people possess characteristics like self-sufficiency, helpfulness and reliability. People who believe they need to be strong may enjoy tasks which are repetitive and like working on their own. They are extremely stoical in the face of difficulties and will carry on regardless.

Try Hard Driver

Characteristics: These people are intense, committed to righting wrongs, are usually on the side of the underdog and often work for political or other causes. They are passionate, take on lots of tasks (which they often don’t complete), set high goals (again, often not achieved) and work very hard.

What we perceive to be driven by and how we drive ourselves will impact the way we choose to use our time. For example: Hurry Up types may rush around trying to fit too many things into their day. As a result, they put pressure on themselves and everyone around them. They need to be more realistic in their goals and take more time to be ‘in the moment’ with others.



Values	Result in Messages	Which Result in
Achievement, autonomy, success, being right	Don't: make a mistake, take risks, be natural or childlike	Be Perfect Drivers
Consideration, kindness, service	Don't: be assertive, important, different or say 'no'	Please Me/You Drivers
Speed, efficiency, responsiveness	Don't: take too long, relax or waste time	Hurry Up Drivers
Courage, strength, reliability	Don't: show your feelings, give in or ask for help	Be Strong Drivers
Persistence, patience, determination	Don't: stop trying, be satisfied or relax	Try Hard Drivers

There are danger signs for each of these drivers and we need to be aware when they are pushing us to use our time inappropriately.

TIME – FINITE OR INFINITE

C.S. Lewis, in his book *Mere Christianity*, devotes a whole chapter to time. Lewis says this:

Almost certainly God is not in Time. His life does not consist of moments following one another. If a million people are praying to Him at ten-thirty tonight, He need not listen to them all in that one little snippet which we call ten-thirty. Ten-thirty – and every other moment from the beginning of the world – is always the Present for Him. If you like to put it that way, He has all eternity in which to listen to the split second of prayer put up by a pilot as his plane crashes in flames.¹

On earth our time is finite, but in terms of the kingdom it is infinite. Which of these impacts the way to choose to use our time the most – finite or infinite?



⊙ **Read together**

Ecclesiastes 3:1–15

Psalm 90:12

2 Peter 3:8

⊙ **Reflect and discuss**

Reflecting on the passages from C.S. Lewis and Scripture, how do you think we should change how we view time?

ONE DAY AT A TIME

One of the benefits of attempting to view our time in God’s time instead of our own is that we will be less hurried and will also worry less. I wonder how much of our daily time is spent worrying about:

- how are we going to fit everything in today (as if there were no tomorrow)
- how the future will work out for us

My mother and brother are both recovered alcoholics. One of the main themes of recovery is learning to live ‘one day at a time’. Over the years I have observed how this attitude has brought peace and stability into their lives. I have tried to learn from them, but have to admit that this is not an easy personal journey for me.

⊙ **Do not worry about tomorrow ...**

Read Matthew 6:25–34.

- What does this passage teach us about how not to spend our time?
- Does your personality type find this concept of not worrying about tomorrow easy or difficult?



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HIS PRIORITIES OR OUR PRIORITIES?

When I began my personal journey of attempting to establish a rhythm of life more in line with God's time than my own I had to challenge the way I had constructed my priorities in terms of finite time rather than God's infinite time.

I had the privilege of attending a training course on Steven Covey's model called 'First Things First'. One especially helpful principle was the following: to be clear, each week, of what my priorities needed to be in relation to tasks and people. There were so many things I could do with my time: I needed to constantly evaluate what was most important to 1) people and 2) task. It didn't take long to recognise that I'd got it wrong many times in the past. By ensuring that I constantly review how I am spending my time, through personal evaluation and accountability to others, I have found it much easier to be clear about my priorities. A positive outcome has also been that it is much easier for me to say no to requests that would be a distraction to the identified priorities.

Along this journey I have also learned that having a conversation with God about priorities is key to establishing a rhythm of time that brings peace rather than strife. A great example of this is the day that I decided I would begin my preparation for writing this material.

My husband and I were at our home in Wyoming, which is where I originate from. We were in for a very busy few weeks with various family commitments. I had just one day to myself, because my husband was going off to indulge in his favourite pastime – fishing.

At 5am the alarm goes off. I think 'Great – early start!' and, in my head, start planning how the day is going to go:

1. God time; 2. Planning for writing – reading, writing, thinking;
3. Catch up on e-mails; 4. Exercise; 5. Eat.

In the middle of all this planning, God zaps me back to sleep. He knows what I really need is a bit more rest. A couple of hours later I get up and decide to allow God to make the schedule. To my surprise, the first activity I feel compelled to do is my e-mails. On reflection I realise, once again, that God knows me. He knows that if I do not deal with the urgency of my work e-mails this will distract me from my key priority: preparation for writing this material.

I am then free to spend time in worship and prayer, followed by a quick bite to eat. I am then fully prepared to start reading and writing down my thoughts. As, by this time, I am so prepared mentally and spiritually this takes much