



Time Management

How to Steward the Time God Has Given You

Why Time Management Matters

One of the greatest hindrances to our walks with God is poor time management. Many of us genuinely want to spend scheduled alone time with Jesus each day, but we don't. We plan to read Scripture, pray, and listen for what God is speaking, but somehow the day gets away from us.

Does this sound familiar? You intended to start your day with Jesus... but you stayed up late hanging out with friends, scrolling TikTok or Instagram, or maybe studying into the early morning. You sleep through your alarm, roll out of bed at the last possible second, and rush to class. When you make it back home, you're either exhausted and need a nap or jumping straight into homework. Your mind is racing with everything on your to-do list, and stopping to be still with God feels almost impossible.

It's not that you don't care and don't want to spend time with Jesus. The problem is that your schedule (or lack thereof) has taken control of your life. But imagine this: you start each day unhurried, grounded in God's Word. You show up to class present and peaceful. You don't feel behind all the time. You're able to attend Core Group and MNL without guilt. You take a Sabbath on the weekend and truly feel rested.

That's what we want for you. This resource will give you a few simple tools and frameworks that you can use to help you build that kind of life!

Quadrants of Time Management

Before we get practical with some tools for time management, it helps to understand *why* our time often feels out of control. One simple framework, the Quadrants of Time Management, divides everything we do into four categories: urgent and important, not urgent but important, urgent but not important, and neither urgent nor important.

Most of us live in the extremes—either in crisis mode, constantly reacting to what's due next (urgent and important), or in escape mode, numbing out with social media or distractions (not urgent, not important). But the goal is to build our lives around the important but not urgent—things like spending time with Jesus, planning ahead, resting well, and growing intentionally. Below are descriptions of each of the four quadrants. As you read over them, take a moment to reflect and consider which quadrants you spend the most time in.

Quadrant 1: Tasks that demand immediate attention and truly matter, like crises that may come up or a project that is due tomorrow. Many important activities become urgent as a result of procrastination or poor planning. This quadrant creates a ton of stress, saps your energy, and leads to burnout.



	<u>Urgent</u>	<u>Not Urgent</u>
<u>Important</u>	Quadrant 1 Crises, pressing problems, deadline-driven projects, health issues, etc.	Quadrant 2 Preparation, advance study, prevention, exercise, planning, clarification of values, relationship-building, true recreation, rest, etc.
<u>Not Important</u>	Quadrant 3 Interruptions, phone calls, drop-in visits, etc.	Quadrant 4 Excessive time online, social media scrolling, TV, video games, vegging out, etc.

Quadrant 2: This is where you build a healthy, purposeful life. It includes working on assignments ahead of time, resting well, spending time with Jesus, and investing in relationships. This quadrant increases your peace, productivity, and long-term fruitfulness, but it's often the most neglected.

Quadrant 3: Things that feel urgent but don't really matter. These distractions, like responding to group texts or unimportant requests, steal your focus. Learning to say "no" here allows you to prioritize what matters more.

Quadrant 4: Mindless time-wasters like endless scrolling, binge-watching, or lying in bed "rotting." These activities offer short-term relief, especially when you're overwhelmed, but too much time here leads to feeling disconnected, discouraged, and stuck.

The goal for our time management is to live in Quadrant 2! Living here will:

1. Make your life much less stressful
2. Enable you to thrive as a student, friend, leader, etc.
3. Help your walk with God be more consistent. You'll no longer be trying to squeeze God in, but able to intentionally walk with Him daily, allowing Him to shape your entire life!

But if your time management is a mess, you will struggle to live that kind of life, *no matter how much you would like to*. So how do we start living more consistently in Quadrant 2? Here are some tools!

Anchor Times

If you want to live an anchored life—with real devotion to Jesus, real community with others (where you're committed to Core Group and MNL), and real Kingdom responsibility—it won't happen by accident. You need anchor times: the fixed, pre-decided parts of your day that keep your schedule aligned with your priorities and keep you anchored in your rhythms.



Setting anchor times is what we call a pre-choice, a decision you make before the moment comes. Instead of waiting to see how you feel or what comes up, you've already decided what matters most. Pre-choices reflect your values ahead of time, so you're not constantly scrambling, reacting, or letting the urgent crowd out the important. Here are two of the most powerful (and neglected) anchors of your day:

1. Wake up time: I know, this one's tough, but your morning is one of the most important times in your entire day. It sets your mindset, your pace, and your spiritual posture. *To determine your wake up time, start by asking yourself:*

- When is my first class or meeting of the day? What time do I need to be there?
- How much time do I need to saturate in God's Word, presence, and love before I start my day?
- How long does it take to eat, shower, and commute before my first class/meeting?

Now, take those answers and build your morning backward. Start with the time you need to be out the door (or in class), and subtract the time it takes for each of those things: time with God, getting ready, eating, commuting, etc. The result? *That's your wake-up time!* Pro tip: make sure it's realistic. You might need to speed up your shower or simplify your breakfast to preserve unhurried time with Jesus without forcing yourself to wake up at an impossible hour.

2. Bedtime: The other most powerful anchor time is your bedtime. Sometimes people act like running on no sleep is impressive, but it's actually unsustainable. You might be able to run on empty for a day, but not for a week. Without sleep, your health, focus, relationships, and ability to hear from God all suffer. It has been said, "A great devotional time with the Lord starts the night before." If you want your mornings with Jesus to be consistent and unhurried, it begins with the choices you make the night before. *Ask yourself:*

- How much sleep do I need to feel well-rested?
- Based on when I need to wake up and how many hours of sleep I need, when should I go to bed?

Time Blocking

Setting anchor times creates a strong foundation, and our next tool, time blocking, fills in the rest of your schedule with intention and structure. Imagine this scenario: you get home from class in the afternoon and you're tired. You don't feel like studying and you don't have anything planned until dinner, so you spend the next three hours of "free time" taking a nap, going down the YouTube rabbit hole, or doom-scrolling on Instagram or TikTok. All the while, your assignments are piling up, and your anxiety is too!

Now imagine this: at the start of each week, you take some time to list out your upcoming homework, tests, papers, and problem sets. Then, you schedule specific times on your calendar to work on each one. When that time comes, you simply do the task—no last-minute scrambling, no wondering when you'll get it done.



Time blocking is a method of planning your day by assigning each hour to a specific task, activity, or category of work. *You're giving every hour a name before it arrives.* It's a practical way to make pre-choices. To do it, you'll need a calendar with hourly time slots. We strongly recommend using a **digital calendar**, like Google Calendar, to keep your week organized. A digital calendar makes it easy to drag and adjust time blocks as things change, it's always accessible, and you can set reminders so nothing slips through the cracks.

Once your digital calendar is ready, start by blocking out your anchor times, your fixed commitments that don't change — your wake-up time, bedtime, and devotional time, as well as things like classes, labs, work shifts, MNL, and Core Group. Next, look at what academic work is coming up: exams, papers, readings, problem sets, etc. Instead of just hoping you'll get to it, assign each task a specific block in your week. For example, if you have a test covering four chapters, you might schedule time to review one chapter a day, then assign time the day before to review them all. If a problem set usually takes six hours, break it into two-hour chunks across three days. If there are weekly office hours for a class you're struggling with, put those on your calendar and make sure you go and ask your professor for help.

Be sure to leave some margin in your schedule—time to get from place to place, take a short break, or adjust if something runs long. Time blocking removes the stress of last-minute work and gives you confidence that everything has its place.

Green, Yellow, and Red Hours

When you time block your week, it's smart to take your energy levels into account, not just your availability. That's where this next concept comes in. We all have green, yellow, and red hours.

- *Green* hours are when you're mentally sharp and productive. You'll want to use your green hours for your hardest tasks, like writing papers, studying for exams, or working on problem sets.
- *Yellow* hours are when you still have some fuel in the tank, but you aren't at your best. They are good for lighter work, like reading assignments, organizing your notes, or creating flashcards.
- *Red* hours are your lowest-energy times, when it's hard to focus and think clearly. Save those times for going to the gym, hanging with friends, or resting.

Putting It All Together

When you make pre-choices, set anchor times, and time block your week around your energy and priorities, you are going to notice a big difference! These tips won't fix all your problems, but you'll likely feel less stressed and more present in your classes, relationships, and with the Lord. We want you to be able to live your life in Quadrant 2! At first, planning like this may feel rigid and limiting. It is true that you may have to say "no" to some things, but planning ahead can give you more freedom. When you're disciplined during the day, you can say a confident "yes" to rest, spontaneity, and time with your community in the evenings. *By choosing to manage your time well, you're choosing to live fully — present with God, stewarding your studies well, engaged in your community, and investing in your spiritual formation.*



Questions for Discussion

- What's one part of your current schedule that feels out of control or misaligned with your priorities?
- Which quadrant do you spend most of your time in, and how can you live more in Quadrant 2?
- Will you take 30 minutes to time block your calendar this week? When? What do you want to make sure gets scheduled first?
- Who in your life could help you stay accountable to the rhythms you want to build (wake up time, bedtime, devotional time, etc.?)

