

“2.4”

### **What will you do with your time?**

Occasionally something comes across the internet which I feel is of great value and contains an inherent message that needs to be passed on. This is one of those messages which made me pause, reflect and go into deep thought. The forward is entitled, “A Young Man Learns What is Most Important in Life to the Guy Next Door.”

Over the phone, his mother told [Jack], “Mr. Belser died last night. The funeral is Wednesday.” Memories flashed.

“You know, Jack, after your father died, Mr. Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man’s influence in your life,” she said.

Jack responded, “He’s the one who taught me carpentry. I wouldn’t be in this business if it weren’t for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important. Mom, I’ll be there for the funeral.”

As busy as he was, he kept his word. Jack caught the next flight to his hometown. Mr. Belser’s funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own, and most of his relatives had passed away.

The night before he had to return home, Jack and his Mom stopped by to see the old house next door one more time.

Standing in the doorway, Jack paused for a moment. It was like crossing over into another dimension: a leap through time and space. The house was exactly as he remembered. Every step held

memories. Every picture, every piece of furniture. Jack stopped suddenly...

“What’s wrong, Jack?” his mom asked.

“The box is gone,” he said.

“What box?” Mom asked.

“There was a small gold box that he kept locked on top of his desk. I must have asked him a thousand times what was inside. All he’d ever tell me was, ‘the thing I value most,’” Jack said.

[The box] was gone. Everything about the house was exactly how Jack remembered it, except for the box. He figured someone from the Belser family had taken it.

“Now I’ll never know what was so valuable to him,” Jack said. “I had better get some sleep. I have an early flight home, Mom.”

It had been about two weeks since Mr. Belser had died. Returning home from work one day, Jack discovered a note in his mail box: “Signature required on a package. No one home. Please stop by the main post office within the next three days.”

Early the next day, Jack retrieved the package. The handwriting was old and difficult to read, but the return address caught his attention: “Mr. Harold Belser,” it read. Jack took the box out to his car and ripped open the package. There inside was the gold box and an envelope. Jack’s hands shook as he read the note inside: “Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It’s the thing I valued most in my life.” A small key was taped to the letter. His heart racing, as tears filled his eyes, Jack

carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold watch.

Running his fingers over the finely etched casing, he unlatched the cover. Inside he found these words engraved: "Jack, thanks for your time! - Harold Belser."

"The thing he valued most was...my time."

Jack held the watch for a few minutes, then called his office and cleared his appointments for the next two days.

"Why?" Janet, his assistant, asked.

"I need some time to spend with my son," Jack said. "Oh, by the way, Janet, thanks for your time."

What will you do with your time?

Think about this list I recently found. You may not realize it, but it's 100% true:

- 1) At least 15 people in the world love you in some way.
- 2) A smile from you can bring happiness to anyone, even if they don't know you.
- 3) Every night, someone thinks about you before going to sleep.
- 4) You mean the world to someone.
- 5) If not for you, someone may not be living.
- 6) You are special and unique.
- 7) When you think you have no chance of getting what you want, you probably won't get it, but if you trust in God to do what's best and wait on His time, sooner or later you will get something better.



- 8) When you make the biggest mistake ever, something good will come of it.
- 9) When you think the world has turned its back on you, take a look. Most likely you turned your back on the world.
- 10) Someone, you don't even know exists, loves you.
- 11) Always remember the compliments you receive. Forget the rude remarks.
- 12) Always tell someone how you feel about them; you will feel much better when they know, and you'll both be happy.
- 13) If you have a great friend, take the time to let them know that they ARE great.

Most of all, we need to tell those close to us, "You gave me your time—the most thoughtful gift of all."

Another forward came to me shortly before Christmas. It began, "In the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, we get wound up in those things and just forget to say, "Thank you for your time."

My friends, I feel we should not limit this to just the holidays. Are we so busy with our lives that we neglect to thank one another for their time? I wonder if we should view our time differently and use it more wisely. After all, we are here for only a short duration, so should we not use the time given us to better things for all of the world?

On a personal note, I have an experience that I would like to share. Some time ago, my first wife told me that, after thirty years of marriage, she wanted a divorce. This was completely and utterly devastating to me. At

one point, I even considered suicide. But thanks to a counselor, who gave me his time, I am here to tell my story.

Shortly after my wife informed me of her decision, someone else gave me some of her time. She gave me a phone number to call about a support group. The support group was B.E. or Beginning Experience, a support group for divorced, widowed, and separated people. The lady on the other end of the phone gave me her time and said they would be glad to be of assistance to me.

I joined Beginning Experience where once again more people gave me their time. They listened to my story and helped me to love myself and others again. Looking back, for me this was a hard time and also a good time in my life. I was able to heal and go on with my life. And I have another complete family that I keep in touch with even after all this time: a family who gave of their time to help me and I gave of my time to help them.

#### WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR TIME?

Little did I realize though, that the best part of this experience was to come.

My friends, as I mentioned this is all about time. Well, now it was my time. My time, that is, to help others who were in the same situation I was. I was able to give of my time and help others to heal their hurts and resolve their grief. This was also a time of learning for me and I received as much or more from these people as I did when I went through the courses myself. The second greatest commandment of all is to "Love one another." This is from our scripture for today found in Matthew 22: verses 37-39. We also

find in 2 Corinthians 1, verse 4: "He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help we ourselves have received from God."

Perhaps you have merely held the door for someone to help him on his way. You gave of your time.

Maybe you sat and visited with a lonely person in a nursing home and brightened her day. You gave of your time.

You know, folks, there are thousands of ways we can help one another. It is simply a matter of giving our time to assist one another.

I call this ARK. That's short for Acts of Random Kindness. We need to practice this more often in order for the world to become a better place.

#### WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR TIME?

We need to remember Jesus in his time here on earth. His time was spent teaching us by example, by parables, healings, and spreading the word of the gospel. So you see that time is and has been a very valuable commodity over the centuries.

God gave us his time. For that matter, He gave us OUR time, so we need to give time back to him. By studying His word in the Bible, attending Sunday School, attending services, or even just enjoying fellowship over coffee, we can give some of our time back to the Lord. As I mentioned, Acts of Random Kindness are ways to give our time back to our Father.

We can also be more giving of our time to our friends, family, coworkers, or even complete strangers. Personally, looking back if I had given more of my time, maybe my ex-wife wouldn't have divorced me. But once again, time has a way of healing and changing things for the better.



Perhaps we could give more time to our parents who certainly gave of their time to nurture us to be the people we are today. And, certainly, we can still give of our time to our children, especially in their times of need.

Giving of our time and selves in work situations can go a long way toward a better work environment and better relationships with our coworkers.

We know we are all guilty of not giving enough of our time in a lot of circumstances. Using our time wisely would be pleasing to God.

God came to us in the flesh of Jesus Christ. Once again we were given time from God and His Son. Are we guilty of not returning the favor? Do we return enough of our time in worship, study, and living as Jesus desires? My friends, I believe the challenge before us is to give more time to God, give more time to family, friends, and strangers. In this way we can come closer to being the people God wants us to be.

A close friend sent me this reading:

“A few years ago a group of salesmen went to a regional sales convention in Chicago. They had assured their wives that they would be home in plenty of time for Friday night’s dinner.

“In their rush, with tickets and briefcases, one of these salesmen inadvertently kicked over a table which held a display of apples. Apples flew everywhere. Without stopping or looking back, they all managed to reach the plane in time for their nearly-missed boarding...ALL BUT ONE! He paused, took a deep breath, got in touch with his feelings and experienced a twinge of compassion for the girl whose apple stand had been overturned.

“He told his buddies to go on without him, waved good-bye, told one of them to call his wife when they arrived at their home destination and explain his taking a later flight. Then he returned to the terminal where the apples were all over the floor. He was glad he did.

“The 16-year-old girl was totally blind! She was softly crying, tears running down her cheeks in frustration, and at the same time helplessly groping for her spilled produce as the crowd swirled about her; no one stopping and no one to care for her plight.

“The salesman knelt on the floor with her, gathered up the apples, put them back on the table and helped organize her display. As he did this, he noticed that many of them had become battered and bruised; these he set aside in another basket.

“When he finished, he pulled out his wallet and said to the girl, ‘Here, please take this \$40 for the damage we did. Are you okay?’

“She nodded through her tears. He continued on with, ‘I hope we didn’t spoil your day too badly.’ As the salesman started to walk away, the bewildered blind girl called out to him, ‘Mister...’ He paused and turned to look back into those blind eyes. She continued, ‘...Are you Jesus?’

“He stopped in mid-stride...and he wondered. He gently went back and said, ‘No, I am nothing like Jesus - He is good, kind, caring, loving, and would never have bumped into your display in the first place.’

“The girl gently nodded: ‘I only asked because I prayed for Jesus to help me gather the apples. He sent you to help me, so you are like Him— only He knows who will do His will. Thank you for hearing His call, Mister.’



“Then slowly he made his way to catch the later flight with that question burning and bouncing in his soul: ‘Are you Jesus?’

“Do people mistake you for Jesus? That’s our destiny, is it not? To be so much like Jesus that people cannot tell the difference as we live and interact with a world that is blind to his love, life, and grace. If we claim to know Him, we should live, walk and act as He would. Knowing Him is more than simply living the Word as life unfolds day to day... You are the apple of His eye even though you, too, have been bruised by a fall. He stopped what He was doing and picked up you and me on a hill called Calvary and paid in full for our damaged fruit.”

#### WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR TIME?

I find it interesting how God works in our lives. I wrote this sermon sometime ago. For years, I have read the Upper Room. Reading the September 4, 2013, devotional, I knew I would use it for this sermon. Let me share it with you.

“Many people are sticklers about tithing a tenth of their income, but tithing includes more than just our money. Sometimes, when it comes to time, we aren’t so generous in giving to the Lord.

“A tenth of our day is just under two and one half hours—2.4 to be exact. When we think of all the things we already cram into our day, it may seem impossible to give that much time to God. The good news is that our tithe of time doesn’t have to be spent all at once. We can give more time on weekends, if necessary. We can do a variety of things as we tithe our time to God each day: study the Bible, pray for others, call someone, send an encouraging e-mail, send a card to brighten someone’s day, fix a meal

for the sick, visit the housebound, bake cookies for a neighbor, be a mentor to a young person who doesn't have both parents, bring groceries to a needy family, take a depressed friend out for coffee, or listen to a friend unload his problems."

Would you join with me in prayer.

Dear Lord, help us to devote time each day to serving you. Open our eyes to see where we are needed. AMEN