

What Time is It?

How to overcome doubt, fear and crippling religiosity



Introduction

How do you become personally inspired?

It's easy to read the Bible, listen to a sermon or [podcast](#), or [watch a spiritual video](#) and generally agree with or appreciate the sentiment being communicated: we should live lives that make God happy and make the lives better of the people we interact with everyday. However, agreement with a concept doesn't always translate to personal inspiration. I speak from personal experience; as a churchgoer for almost my entire life, I regularly feel burnout because of my insistence to try and do the "right" things without actually wanting to embrace God's plan for my life. I want to have my cake and eat it too: salvation without having to give up what I want.

It's one thing to be excited, it's another thing to be personally inspired. Everyone needs a personal belief and understanding of how they fit into God's big plan to save the world if

they're going to be committed for the long run. Without an emotional connection to how God is moving, the Christian life can feel monotonous or burdensome, leading us to settle for religiosity as a coping mechanism. We can overcome this attitude by grasping in our hearts the urgency of times we live in, and how our placement in the world is not an accident, but rather destiny.

Understanding MY times

[14] But I trust in you, Lord; I say, "You are my God." [15] **My times are in your hands**; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me.

- Psalm 31:14-15 NIV

- Trusting God means believing that everything in our lives is happening for a reason; there's a purpose to everything we go through, be it a hardship or period of relief.
- Do you have this attitude towards God influencing you and your decisions in life? Are your times in his hands, or do you resist changing what you want?

"[11] Then the LORD asked Moses, "Who makes a person's mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the LORD? [12] Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say." [13] But Moses again pleaded, "Lord, please! Send anyone else."

- Exodus 4:11-13 NLT

- Despite assurances from God, Moses still managed to be resistant to what God had in

mind for him. He was fearful and insecure, and he didn't believe God would be enough for his weaknesses not to be an issue

- How do you see the events in your life unfolding? Do you view your circumstances with faith, viewing the possibilities and asking God for wisdom? What negative views about your life do you have that could be the result of doubts or unbelief?

[16] Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" [17] "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." [18] "Which ones?" the man inquired. Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, [19] honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" [20] **"All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"** [21] Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." [22] When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. [23] Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. [24] Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." [25] When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" [26] Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

- **Matthew 19:16-26 NIV**

- The rich man heard a hard truth about himself here and did not want to accept it. We can be similar in that we have our own ideas as to what it means to be righteous, but get disgruntled when confronted with the realities in the scriptures.
- How have you seen religiosity (the exaggerated embodiment of certain aspects of religious activity) warp the truth of how God is really calling you to live? What opportunities are you missing to impact people around you because of your rigid outlook on the Christian life? What ways do you rebel against God?

Understanding THE times

...from Issachar, **men who understood the times** and knew what Israel should do---200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command;

I Chronicles 12:32 NIV

- How well do you understand what's going on around you?
- Current events, social and economic issues, political turmoil, environmental crisis, inequality and racism...all of these are issues that we need to be aware of if we are to understand why our role on earth is so important, and why our relationship with God is vital.

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, [16] making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. [17] Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. [18] Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:15-18 NIV84

- The temptation we face daily is to meet the dark realities of the world with foolishness - choosing to harden our hearts by indulging in pleasure instead of being mindful of what's at stake.
- What ways have you chosen to ignore the times by giving into worldly solutions or sin? What would it look like to be "filled with the Spirit"?

Understanding GOD'S time

[13] Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: "Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. [14] If you keep quiet **at a time like this**, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"

Esther 4:13-14 NLT

- God has a specific reason for us to be in the time and place we find ourselves in today.
- God uses what's happening in our lives personally, along with what's happening in the world around us, to make obvious to you that there's some action he wants you to take that will impact others. And whether we like it or not, rejecting this purpose will lead to others missing an opportunity to know God.

For I know **the plans I have for you,**” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. [12] Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. [13] You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 NIV84

- God promises that the plans he has for us will result in good for our lives. Obeying and living by the Bible, sacrificing for others, and walking in the light are all faith-based decisions that will lead to us being hopeful and confident of our future.
- Do you believe God cares about your life? Do you trust his motives, and believe his plans for your life will lead to prosperity? Or do you believe doing things God’s way will lead to harm?
- What plans of God’s do you most struggle to believe are truly from him, or want to embrace? What obstacles do you face that are stopping your faith from allowing you to trust God and take action?