Making Time for the Lord

My name is John Lancaster, this is my last Sunday here as I fly out to the MTC on Wednesday morning in perpetration to go to the London England Mission. I am very excited and glad for the opportunity.

My topic today is about making time for the lord. Many of us would define or consider this largely the set of obligatory actions we often do and should do. Reading, praying, attending meetings, etc. However, many of us do not spare the time to do these and of the time we give, spend it ineffectively. There are also many other things we can do which could be considered making time for the lord which you may not realize but probably have done on occasion.

Time is a finite resource and so what you do with your time is therefore mutually exclusive of other things which you might do with that time instead. All time throughout a day, a month, a year, a lifetime is spent one way or another. Although it is limited, there is still plenty of time to be had which can be set aside for some of the most important things you can do in a day, but many do not do this and approach their resource of time fart too flexibly or whimsically. They excuse themselves by saying they don't have or can't find the time to do the relatively simple but profoundly important things like reading and pondering scriptures. The truth is that this excuse is a lie. There are many lies we tell ourselves and this one is characteristic of the kind of lie that it is. We know we have the time, we know we can make the time, but we don't because it takes a back seat in the mind and is thus forgotten, or we are aware of it but spend the time on distractions or things which need to be done but can be put off or are all not that important compared to reading scriptures. These sort of lies we tell ourselves only serve to comfort us for our obvious shortcomings and postpone any sort of action to actually fix the problem. There is absolutely no reason you can't find 5 to 30 minutes throughout a day to make time for the lord by reading your scriptures. Saying prayers should come at even less of an expense. These are relatively simple things we can do to make time for the lord and they don't have to take long, what is important is that they are done regularly and properly.

We've all gotten to a point late in the day where you realize you still need to read and make an effort, but end up spending less time than optimal and getting very little if anything out of it because of how tired you are. You need to sleep, your brain is shutting down for the day. It's hard to say a prayer that is contiguous and sense-full when you can hardly organize thoughts. These are important things and you should treat them as such. If you were to analyze an average day for yourself and look at what you spend time on, the quantity of time spent, and what kind of impact that has on your life, it would be very easy to point out certain things which can or should be either significantly reduced or eliminated completely. Distractions can and are often inherently harmless. Many of our favorite distractions can be good on occasion. They entertain us, inform us, can bring us momentary joy, but can become a large waste and drain on your life when compounded. Chances are there are many things you could probably do instead of these distractions which are far better ways to spend time, foremost of what you could do is making time for the lord.

Hypothetically speaking, lets say you make a list of things in your mind or on paper that you do during a typical day or week and rank them by importance. Anyone can do this, you probably have at some point. You know what you're spending time on and you know the important things but you're not allocating the time. You like to see the list you made as ranked by importance, but what your mind **has actually done** is make a list of things ranked by effort connected to immediate reward and reversed the order. You are naturally predisposed to see things this way, it is how most of us are wired. There is a definite and natural inclination in most if not all people to prefer things easier and to see their rewards and gratification in the short term, after all, this is exactly what is relevant and in the present. People tend to be naturally lazy and short-sighted this way.

*|Somewhat of a side note*, I find that the mind is like a car. There are different gears you shift into for different speeds just as your mind must effectively switch gears to do different tasks. This is not an abstract comparison, your mind literally must switch gears in a sense to fully access different areas and functionality. Once you get going in a certain gear, it's easy to stay there, the hard part, which can be made unnecessarily hard by ourselves is switching that gear to do something else. Things like sleep, good food, and excessive all assist in achieving higher more efficient gears and switching easier.|

It is important to take a step back and look at the bigger picture. Remember that you need time for the lord and to better yourself. This is important simply because without spending this time we forget many, many other things that are eternally significant and we let ourselves slip into sin without the daily influence of the spirit we can get through reading and praying. If we could at all times remember the eternal importance that daily scripture study and pray have, then it would be easier to do those very things. Just as how if you're paid an amount you consider fair to do something, you would do it. Save a certain chunk of time for this and do not let other less important things take or overlap that spot. If you do this enough it will become a habit and thus be far easier to maintain. This is not only true of things like reading and praying, but for anything else important you tell yourself you don't have the time for. This sounds very simple, and that's because it is. You just need to put the daily effort in and as soon as you do that is as soon as it will start to become as easy as it sounds.

There is also something to be said about the quality of time you spend. It's excellent to have a habitual chunk of time, but if you're reading but not absorbing anything or you're saying prayers with very little meaning then you are in a sense, wasting that time. Read earlier in the day when you're fresh. Pray for the spirit before you start. Take time to listen to the spirit, and pray not because you need to but because you want to and there are things in your life you want answers to, forgiveness of, help or comfort for. There is no one alive who has nothing to pray about. Thomas S Monson has said that “The lord is in the details of our lives.” He is like any parent in the regard he has a personal interest and investment in us and he wants to hear from us. Look for something in your life to share and ask about, and ask persistently in addition to the usual things we all pray for. Pray often, as we are told to pray always. Through prayer we can receive much, just because we ask sincerely and persistently. The lord knows what we need when we need it, he is just waiting for us to have the humility and trust to ask him.

Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall b opened unto you.

There are those who feel that god does not answer them. Perhaps it is that they aren't looking for any answer except the one they want and so they in a way ignore what they might hear. This sort of thing happens often in many other avenues when it comes to asking questions, nothing is good or acceptable except for that they expect or want, so it should come as no surprise that the same can and does happen when looking for an answer to a prayer. Perhaps there is a lack of faith, maybe you should pray for faith or be more humble. If you can believe in the many miracles described in the scriptures, why then should something for you be out of reach? In Jesus's time there was a man wanted his daughter healed but did not have the faith and so he asked the lord that he might have the faith, the desire and humility were there and that was enough to grow. Perhaps it is because they are not taking the time to listen for the answer. Most prayers do not receive answers in the form of enlightening definitive miraculous experiences. You must listen for the spirit, free of distraction. Let yourself be guided. This is an important part of prayer which is not as always mentioned. If you've called someone asking for or of something but hang up before they respond, what good was the call? You must tune yourself in, like a radio in a sense.

This more or less covers that aspect of making time, specifically the making of time, for the lord, but what are some other things we can do for the lord. Reading and praying are largely to the benefit of ourselves though not always. This matters because we are to be tools for the lord to progress his great plan and work, to bring us all back to be with him and to become like him with experience, knowledge, growth and progress only achievable through a mortal existence here. That is the perspective of this talk and the objective. This means that service to others in such a regard can also be considered making time for the lord.

“Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.”

Specifically fulfilling church callings, helping a struggling friend or neighbor, going to the temple and being a missionary. I have managed to find two years worth of time to go out and serve, so I think it's a pretty safe bet to say you can find a little time each day. Your calling is your involvement in the furthering of the work. Think about it, if you're trying to make time for the lord, what is it that the lord wants? He wants you to help in furthering his work and all of the mentioned things contribute to this in one way or another, weather personally or for others. Your calling is your specified avenue to make time for the lord and his work.

You must work with and toward these things, to be actively involved in the work. The more you work the easier it becomes; the harder you work the better you feel and the more difference you make. Making time for the lord can and does mean sacrifices of time and it can also be the sacrifice of other resources. As I said, time is finite and any spending of it is therefore mutually exclusive of anything else that might have occupied that time. Do not feel that you are losing out because of this. When you make time for the lord you are doing among the most important things you can do with your time and it does make a difference, either in you or for others. Because that time can not really be better spent, you actually gain by spending it this way. We like to be selfish with our time even if we waste large portions of it on too much distraction. It is well worth putting a relatively small portion and dedicating it to what matters most and you can lose nothing when there is a net gain on so many levels. The opportunity cost of anything else for that time can not even compare.

I bare my testimony that making time for the lord every day is how I manage to better myself bit by bit toward the goal of becoming like him. It is how I do my part in the work. I know the lord is aware of me and my efforts and that he loves me. My effort in making time for him is one way and a paramount way I can show my love and dedication towards him. The same is true for any of you. When we obediently sacrifice time for him we show that we care and that we want to do what we can. Lack of doing so really shows a lack of care, we set what is important aside for the trivial and meaningless and this is invariably a representation of priority. You dedicate time to what you care about... I know the church is true, I know the lord hears me and I know that because I have been given much I too must give. I would encourage any of you for which it is relevant to consider going on a mission. I can't say much as to what it would be like, only that I am fully committed and have found purpose for my life at this stage because I wish to serve the lord, and that I have never met anyone who regrets it or who does not look back on their mission as an important and significant experience.

I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ amen.