

# **BEATING THE ODDS**

## **WEEK 4: IN OUR TIME**

### **DAY 1: READ PROVERBS 6:6-11**

While we depend on the Lord for salvation and seek Him for purpose, provision and change, we are also responsible for our decisions and how we choose to steward our time. Do you find yourself avoiding certain responsibilities, important decisions or procrastinating? How is this affecting you, your family or those around you? How does it affect your relationships, finances, freedom, spiritual growth or relationship with the Lord? What decisions need to be made to better allow you, your family or those around you to grow, succeed, experience more freedom or grow closer to Jesus? Pray, but don't delay.

### **DAY 2: READ EPHESIANS 5:1-21**

When we focus on our Father and the things that please, honor and obey Him, our perspectives transform to better match Christ. By focusing on the Father, the sinful, wasteful things we used to do for fun, appetite or distraction are revealed to be the destructive, unhealthy things keeping us from enjoying and experiencing more of abundant life in Christ. We begin to see the bigger spiritual picture and the ways these things affect our relationship with and obedience to the Father. As verse 15 says, let's look carefully how we walk, making the best use of the time we have, striving to understand and obey the will of the Lord.

### **DAY 3: READ ECCLESIASTES 3**

Do you find yourself overwhelmed with things, seasons or expectations you can't control? It can be easy to slip further and further into the pit of existential dread, hopelessness and tragedy when we neglect our heavenly purpose on earth, obedience to His mission and refuse to intentionally steward our time, resources and efforts for His glory. In all your endeavors today, are you doing them for the glory of God? Are you striving to utilize the gifts, calling and favor the Lord has given you to accomplish His mission? If you find yourself ruminating on pointlessness, hopelessness or overwhelming frustration, stop and pray. Look to the Father. Speak to Him honestly; tell Him your fears, frustrations and sadness. Ask Him for clarity, purpose and favor. He always provides, but are you willing to utilize these things? Will you intentionally choose to labor and saturate your time, resources and energy with these gifts for His glory?

#### **DAY 4: READ COLOSSIANS 4:1-5**

The world notices the way we behave, the things we prioritize and the consistency with which we invest in them. Let the work of Christ be demonstrated in the world in the way you speak, the time you commit to praying, growing in relationship with Christ and studying His word. Let the world see the beautiful things that manifest because you, like Paul in verse 3, are prayerfully, vigilantly seeking opportunities to declare the mystery of Christ to world. Let your kindness, love and eagerness to look, act and speak like Christ be cause for His delight and a compelling witness to others who don't yet know the name above all names.

#### **DAY 5: READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5**

The earth is not our home. We groan, toil and are burdened with heavy things, but we abound in courage because, in knowing Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit to encourage, strengthen and prepare us to thrive and accomplish great things for Jesus while we wait for His return. Are you investing in the eternal things of Christ or focusing on the temporary conditions we must endure? Are you basing success, happiness, purpose or identity in these circumstantial things or is your purpose rooted in Christ and the things that matter to Him?

#### **DAY 6: READ MATTHEW 9**

So much of what Jesus focuses on deals with time; He speaks frequently about temporary things going away and the impending things sure to arrive in the future. In this chapter, Jesus deals with people whose focuses and perspectives were limited to their legalism, cultural norms and limited lifetimes; their reactions, questions and understandings were not based in the lasting, eternal truth that comes only from God, not His creation. Jesus is on a mission because He, as the Son of God, is the truth and knows what actually matters from God's eternal perspective. He does not waste His time in trivial pursuits; instead, He labors toward the work of the Father. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. There's work to be done, brothers and sisters. Will you go and do the will of the Father with the time you have been given or will you instead cling to a limited, temporary perspective that values dead, decaying things? The choice to go and do is yours.