

MANAGING YOUR TIME

This week you've got to finish writing that chemistry lab report, plan the games for the youth group meeting, write two (overdue) letters to out-of-state friends, help clean the house, practice piano, take your little sister shopping . . . the list goes on.

How will you ever get it all done? You need help managing your time.

Time management isn't a magic formula. It does mean, however, that what you do finish will have been the most important to finish. And it does mean that you may have to say no to less important tasks that don't directly meet your goals.

Here are the three steps to managing your time:

1. SET GOALS

Setting goals is the first step to determining how you will best manage your time.

Each goal should be:

● **Specific.** Make sure it's detailed enough. For example, don't simply say, "I will improve in German class"; say, "I will study German 45 minutes each school night."

● **Concrete.** Make sure it's down-to-earth. For example, don't say, "I will love my parents more"; say, "I will show more love to my parents by cleaning my room without being asked this week, and volunteering to wash the dishes two nights this week."

● **Achievable.** Make sure it's realistic. For example, don't say, "I will never miss another youth group meeting as long as I'm a teenager"; say, "I will attend youth group meeting each week this month."

● **Measurable.** Make sure you have a specific time frame in which you'll want to have accomplished your goal. For example, don't say, "I will write six letters to my friend in Kansas"; say, "I will write one letter each month to my friend in Kansas."

Goal Checklist	
Write goal: _____	
Is your goal: (Check if "yes")	
specific? _____	
concrete? _____	
achievable? _____	
measurable? _____	
personal? _____	

● **Personal.** Make sure you're in control of the success or failure of the goal. For example, don't say, "I will get a part-time job before summer"; say, "I will apply for

a part-time job at McDonald's, Pizza Hut and Arby's before summer."

2. DETERMINE PRIORITIES

If you're feeling overwhelmed by the number of activities and tasks on your schedule, stop and prioritize. Analyze each item and decide whether it's really important.

List your activities and tasks according to:

● **Top priority.** These tasks are necessary to meet your goals. For example, if you've made a personal commitment to improve your spiritual life and you set a goal to have a 30-minute daily quiet time, then "daily quiet time" is a top-priority item for you.

● **So-so priority.** These tasks would be nice to accomplish, but you could do them later. For example, if you said you'd bake brownies for the youth group meeting on Sunday, but today's only Thursday, you could wait until tomorrow or Saturday.

● **Not-important priority.** These tasks do not contribute to your goals, and while you may want to do them, they do not *need* to be done now, tomorrow—or maybe ever. For example, if you'd like to rearrange your stamp collection, but you never take the time to do it, that's not a big problem.

Priority Worksheet		TOP PRIORITY	SO-SO PRIORITY	NOT-IMPORTANT PRIORITY
List tasks and activities:	Check one:			

3. PLAN YOUR SCHEDULE

Adjust your schedule by getting a planning calendar and writing on it weekly and monthly goals. Then also write on it your daily to-do lists with the top-priority items needed to accomplish those goals.

Commit yourself to completing as much as possible your daily top-priority tasks. You'll find that when you've carefully set your goals and determined your priorities, it will be easier for you to use your time wisely. ☐