

Day 8

Time Check

Have you checked your watch lately? Does it tell you the right time? No? Not to worry because the precision of your timepiece isn't more important than the intangible value it measures.

If you haven't heard, there are at least two time dimensions worth checking out. "Chronos" and "Kairos" are dimensions, which are physical and metaphysical, respectively. To put it simply, the former is quantitative and the latter qualitative. Chronos refers to your clock time while Kairos means precious moments.

The value of time is a favorite topic of many stories—true or fictitious. Time is too valuable that people try to save or prolong it if possible. No matter how one spends it, there is no turning it back once it passes by. This is why the sense of meaning becomes significant when all is done and gone.

Composers and singers refer to finding time enough for love. The yesterdays, today's, and tomorrows are expressed in countless songs of old.

Lyricists try to capture time in a bottle. Romanticists consider little things to count so much, discovering time wasting unavoidable in the rituals of courtship.

For men forced to live away from loved ones forlorn, when they see their wives and children but for a moment, it is Kairos for them. It's not how long the visit lasts but how well spent the moments are with each other that matters.

Rich men in fables search for the Holy Grail or the Fountain of Youth, attempting to control Chronos time and stop their bodies from aging. Oh, how futile their vain quests end.

King Solomon, till today the richest man who ever walked the earth, said there is an appointed time for everything: a time to give birth and a time to die; a time to mourn and a time to dance. Continuing, he said, "What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils? I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men

with which to occupy themselves. He has made everything appropriate in its time.”

Man is just too busy, busy, busy. But with what?

Once there was a man who traveled far and wide, hoping to cross the rainbow to search for gold. He chose to leave his simple but happy life in exchange for the wealth he thought could make everyone happier. Years after, he gathered all the riches on earth, but lost his wife and children to vices, vanity, and misery. Old and dying, he reached the end of the rainbow and found no gold. Rather, he found a pot of dirt and ashes. Shattered, he wished he could turn back the hands of (Chronos) time, back to the simple and happy life he once had, lacking in material riches yet truly satisfied. But lo, there is merely the ticking of the clock forward. Worthless time behind him no longer can he change.

People’s lives are but a wink, like shafts in the wind. And so one hears this wisdom said on many occasions. Nevertheless, even if it’s a well-known reality, few have truly made use of it to make a difference, just because this world offers pleasures that deceive and wealth that blinds.

“If I could travel back in time and change things . . . ,” says the dying soul, the remorseful heart. “If time were my ally . . . ,” says the defeated warrior, the perennial pessimist. Even a cliché was made popular referring to time: Change is the only permanent thing in this world. This one certainly points to time, but Kairos rather than Chronos.

Would you believe that twice in the ancient past Kairos fused with Chronos and clock time literally stopped? The earth ceased orbiting and the moon stayed for close to a day. And for four scores of minutes, if it was not enough, evolution also moved backwards. If you’re interested in this, let me know. Only God could do all these, you bet. And though contested, legend says that science proved it to be true. Yet it was done for a purpose, a part of the Big Plan.

If use of time is man’s valuable privilege, why do people still scramble to live complicated lives? Why is there so much worrying about the future as if today does not have enough worries for itself? Maybe it’s because minds find it hard to look beyond self-centeredness. In the end, quality of life is measured by how it is spent and not by how many years squandered on this planet.

Enough with my babbling. What really matters most? If there is so much hullabaloo about the subject matter called Time, how does one make life worthwhile?

To solve this puzzle, there are as many options as there are billions of men alive. But there is this one little spark that shines amidst the immense blackness of the universe. This humble essayist wishes not to bring up the matter of religion, for the precept in focus has something to do with how one measures up when after-life has dawned.

Sure enough, those sweet words will be what matter most to the believer in a Creator, One who will utter to His follower: “Well done, good and faithful servant!” He refers to that particular walk in close personal relationship with the Divine One who gave Time to this carnal being.

Time. Are we wasting it? Then, let us use every second to make a difference. Seek that Kairos experience, that sparkling moment. It’s never too late!

STUDY GUIDE

Time Check

1. What is the significance of differentiating Chronos from Kairos?
2. Why is time being referred to as valuable by many artists and musicians?
3. Explain: "What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils? I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves. He has made everything appropriate in its time."
4. Read once again the story of the man who searched for gold at the end of the rainbow. What lesson do you learn from that story?
5. Quality of life is measured by how it is spent and not the number of years. Would you agree? Why? Or why not?
6. What is the moral of this essay?