

Book Review

Time Warped

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Time Warped takes a look at our culture's rampant busyness and invites the reader to evaluate how they are using their time, offering an excellent group discussion guide with reflection questions and practical charts.

Strengths:

- * The organization of this "stewardship of time" book is very straight-forward and easy to follow: 21st century living is contrasted with 1st century living throughout the book within 6 major headings (what we believe, how we live, whom we serve, how we renew, when we die, and what we change).
- * The book does an excellent job of weaving scriptural themes and insights into the readings as well as in the reflection questions at the end of each chapter.
- * Time Warped is an MMA publication (Mennonite Mutual Aid/Stewardship Solutions) and is well researched, laced with a variety of credible sources, many of whom are well-respected in the stewardship world (ie. the Bible, John Ortberg, Forbes magazine, Rick Warren, Lynn Miller, Bill Bennett, Craig Blomberg, Barna, etc.)
- * The 21st/1st century comparison used throughout the book was helpful in that it sharpened the contrast between differing time management approaches and made them easily understandable.
- * Although the book could be read individually, it is intended for group reflection and discussion - a great approach for mutual encouragement and accountability, and much more likely to produce behavior modification in this challenging area.
- * The book is a good starting point for those interested in time stewardship - providing perspective, inspiration, and help for the Time Warped. If the book convinces people to manage their time better, they may need to follow up with other resources (ie. Purpose Driven Life) to discern more fully *how* to better use their time.
- * The book is action-oriented, culminating in a Personal Time Plan and Time Chart to help people be very specific and intentional in assessing their priorities and budgeting their time.

Potential Concerns:

- * It may be true that the people who would benefit most from this book may also be the least likely to read it (namely overly busy, out-of-breath, Americans running late to soccer practice as they dash through Starbucks at the mall). The book has an intentional and reflective style (which may appeal most to intentional, reflective people who are perhaps already making an effort to plan their priorities and time), and so the challenge would be to get on-the-go impulsive folks to stop and take the time to go through this thought-provoking material (possibilities could include a retreat, existing small group, etc.).
- * The 21st/1st century labels, though helpful for comparison, are perhaps misnomers. For example, although the intended audience appears to be North Americans, "21st Century" is not necessarily synonymous with a fast-paced, American middle-class lifestyle (much if not most of the world does not live as we do in America). Additionally, living in the "1st Century" did not necessarily equate with a world of harmonious, selfless time-managers, as the contrast in chapters such as 5 and 6 would imply (Me, Myself, and I vs. God, Church, and Others).

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