



EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

PRINCIPLES OF TIME MANAGEMENT

NOTES

Introduction

OATS is **not** something you feed a horse!

OATS is a simple time management plan. If you master the use of **OATS**, you can become proficient in managing any area of your life.

OATS stands for

Objectives

Activities

Timetable

Scheduling.



Objectives

Any action which is not based upon your objectives tends to be **activity** without **productivity**. We must learn to think, plan, and make every decision on the basis of our **Objectives**.

Always start your planning by asking this question:

What Is My Objective?

If you do not know what your objectives are, you have no basis for making decisions. Your objectives pinpoint exactly what your goals are, and once those goals are identified, you can make decisions that will help you reach those goals. Often we have a general idea of where we are going, but we have no specific objectives. Such poor understanding and ambiguity concerning our objectives are the causes of much ineffectiveness in our lives.

If a person wants to be proficient in the personal and spiritual management of his life, he must make time to define clear and measurable objectives. These objectives should be defined for both short-range goals and long-range goals. Once the individual has done this, his **objectives** will give **specific direction** for **planning** and **decision making**. The objectives will also give him a basis for **evaluating his activities** after he has done them. Without clear objectives, there is **no basis for objective evaluation** of what he does. His evaluation will tend to be **subjective, emotional, and unrealistic**.

What is Your Life Objective?

The first objective you need to determine is your long-range “life objective.” *You must define what your life’s ultimate objective is — your desires, your goals, and how this fits into God’s plan for your life.* Once you have done this, your long-range life objective will guide you in planning shorter-range objectives. Successful planning will propel you toward accomplishing your life objective. In conclusion, life objectives determine short-range objectives which make your life objective become reality.



Consider what the two spiritual dimensions in every believer’s life should be. Of the two dimensions, one is **vertical**—dealing with your own personal relationship to God. The second deals with the **horizontal** spiritual dimension as *God* relates us to the world for which Christ died. When we are involved in winning and discipling others we are fulfilling what the Scriptures call the Great Commission. One way of fulfilling the Great Commission is to love others as much as we love ourselves. *It was Jesus that commanded us to love our neighbors as much as ourselves.* Sometimes loving others as much as ourselves requires a great sacrifice. From *God’s perspective* there are two kinds of neighbors—those who are your brothers and sisters in Christ and those who are lost. As you write your life objective, please be aware that you need to keep the vertical and horizontal dimensions

in balance. If you are a born-again Christian who wants to invest your life for the eternal things of God rather than the temporal things of the earth, you might want to write a life objective something like this:

To walk in daily fellowship with God and to order my life and family (if married) according to the Word of God so that we are daily exchanging our lives for the fulfilling of Christ's Great Commission.

Since this is such a crucial objective for each Christian, you will probably want to take a few hours alone with God to discuss the matter with Him. Ask Him to guide you from His Word to write a personal life objective. *Throughout this book we will continue to help you as you write this very crucial life objective.*

The Two Spiritual Dimensions in a Believer's Life



If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:5

Activities

Activities are the events and actions you engage in to accomplish your objectives. After selecting an objective, you must ask yourself:

? What *Activities* must I engage in to accomplish the *Objectives*? ?

At this point you really need to get paper and pencil and actually list what priority activities you must do if you are going to accomplish your objective.

Life is meant to be filled with activities based upon objectives.

Illustrations

- In a certain university a student needs 128 hours of credit to graduate: 44 hours in the major subject, 24 in the minor subject, and the remainder in certain required courses. The student must divide the courses into four years and take the courses in their required order to graduate.
- If I want to take a trip, I find out where I am on the map and where I want to go. Then I begin to look at the various roads available to get me there. When I have made my decision, I mark the roads I want to take or write them down on a piece of paper. I also make note of the major cities I must go through on my way. They will be landmarks to guide me on my way.
- A woman cooking a meal must first decide upon the menu. That is the long-range objective. Then she must assemble the various recipes for the different dishes in the menu. Each of these is a short-range objective. She then sets about following the recipe step-by-step for each specific dish. These are the activities which lead to the accomplishment of the short-range goals which, in turn, lead to the completion of the long-range objective.

When you are working on activities for your life objective, you may want to sit down with a pastor or an older Christian who can help you determine some short-range goals and the best activities to accomplish them. The Bible tells us:

Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

Proverbs 15:22

Timetable

A *timetable* is simply a time-measuring tool that blocks out time according to minutes, hours, days, weeks, or months depending on the specific objective. It helps us to visualize the hours and days we have and assists us in fitting in the required priority activities necessary to accomplish the goal. By using a timetable, we begin to see our time in specifics rather than generalities, and we eliminate much wasted effort. If we are going to be effective in keeping track of our time, we need to select some kind of yearly diary system and begin to use it.

During this course you are supplied with a program called the PSMA (*Personal and Spiritual Management Aid*) to use to get you started programming both your spiritual and secular activities.

Scheduling

Scheduling is actively making use of the timetable by writing down various priority activities. Scheduling is very important and can mean the difference between success and failure in fulfilling the objective. Many activities never become airborne because they were never actually scheduled (written down) on the timetable chart. Perhaps your activities were scheduled too late so that adequate preparation time was not allowed. Each one of us could tell stories about the discouraging feeling of unfulfilled goals simply due to hurried or inadequate scheduling which caused us to overlook an important detail.

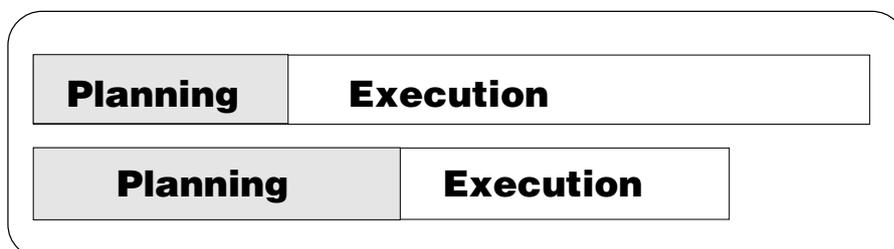
Much care must go into the actual scheduling of our activities. We need to make sure that our activities are given adequate time and that all the resources necessary are available and ready.

Note: A timetable is a tool.

- *Scheduling is the activity which uses the timetable or tool for planning our priority activities by specific details.*
- *Few projects fail because of a lack of timetables. Most fail because the scheduling of the priority activities never took place on the timetable.*

The secret of good time management is planning.

By using OATS we will discover the benefits of good planning. We will save *time* as well as improve performance. We will also be able to work at a relaxed pace rather than in a frantic rush.



A well-planned activity requires less time to execute.

In the *Personal and Spiritual Management Aid* you learn to plan your day with the basics of the Christian life included. In the next section you will learn to write some specific objectives for each area of your walk with Christ. You will also learn to plan and schedule activities that will lead to real advancement in your spiritual growth.