

Wednesday's Wisdom

a weekly short note from Mike Minear

Budget Your Time Wisely

Part 2

WHEN WE ARE YOUNG AND imagine that we have a large balance in our life account, then time doesn't seem all that valuable. We perceive that we have so much of it; we don't think twice about idling it away or even wish fretfully that it would pass more quickly. It's only later, when our account has been drawn down a good bit and when we have seen other people's accounts closed, that in retrospect we sometimes regret the choices we made.

The samurai, that stern warrior class that ruled Japan for centuries, had a solution for the problem of discounting the value of time. The samurai would begin his day meditating on his own death. He would even visualize all the ways he could die on that very day.

That may sound morbid but it's really a jolly good idea. This crazy materialistic world is obsessed with planning - daily plans, weekly plans, five-year plans, retirement plans. The tricky thing about plans is that they lead you to assume that you will be around to complete them, though in fact, at any given moment, we don't know if the balance in our life account is five minutes or five years.

VISUALIZING OUR OWN death to start the day will clear away the false assumption that we have all the time in the world. It would help us appreciate the day we have. It spurs us to decide what is really important and what isn't. It's a reminder that sharing money is far less generous than sharing time, because money is replenishable, but time is not.

Funny thing is children know this while most adults do not.

How are you using your time units? Have you made preparation for the time when your account ends? Are you building up your treasure in heaven where neither thief's or rust will take it away?