

Pastoral Methods

**Ordering Your Private World:
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Outline of Chapters 1-10.**

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Scan.

Preface: The Day I Hit the Wall.

- MacDonalld contrasts two opposing types of busyness (the disposition of being constantly and completely occupied) which confront the leader:
- *Constructive busyness*, which reflects –
 - A plan of activity,
 - A pattern of priorities
 - A sense of purposefulness.
- *Destructive busyness*, being fully occupied by merely responding to the next person or thing that places a demand on one's time.

Chapter One: The Sinkhole Syndrome.

A **sinkhole** occurs when underground streams drain away during a drought, destabilizing the intact surface. At the point of maximum strain, the surface, seemingly strong and supporting whatever stands or moves on it, collapses, bringing destruction and chaos.

**The Outer life is all material; it may consist
of:**

- Academic Degrees,
- Work experiences
- Key relationships
- Physical strength and/or beauty

It can be easily evaluated in terms of:

- Success
- Popularity
 - Wealth
 - Beauty

By contrast, *the Inner Life is spiritual*. It is the center for:

- Determining choices and values.
- Pursuing solitude and reflection.
- Conducting worship and confession.

Some possible symptoms of its neglect may be:

- Numbing fatigue
 - A sense of failure or doom
- Disillusionment about purposes or goals.
 - A feeling of worthlessness

Chapter Two: A View from the Bridge.

The “**bridge**” is a metaphor for the *heart*. It is the “control-room” of our existence. The contention is that the condition of the “bridge” determines our stability as vessels and our ability to withstand the pressures and conflicts of life.

In the *heart* is found:

- The energy
- The insight
- The force

That overcome, rather than succumb to outer turbulence

Life acquires increasing order when:

- The heart is strengthened.
- The heart is developed.

*We must choose to protect and maintain the heart,
the “bridge”.*

*This choice or the failure to choose determines
the direction of influence in our lives-*

The heart will determine our responses to the outer
world, or

The external influences will shape us.

**Make the development and maintenance of a
strong inner world
the most important single function of existence.**

Chapter Three: Caught in a Golden cage.

We can fall into the category of the driven, or that of the called.

A driven person...

- 1. Is most often gratified only by accomplishment.**
- 2. Is preoccupied with the symbols of accomplishment.**
- 3. Is usually caught in the uncontrolled pursuit of expansion.**
- 4. Tends to have limited regard for integrity.**
- 5. Is not likely to purposefully develop people skills.**
- 6. Tends to be highly competitive.**
- 7. Often possesses explosive anger.**
- 8. Is usually abnormally busy, shuns recreation, and avoids spiritual worship.**

The called person:

1. *Listens intently* to God's voice;
2. *Watches carefully* at God's movement and actions in his sphere of existence;
3. *Responds seriously* when God asks questions of him through the circumstances of life.

Chapter Four: The Tragic Tale of a Successful Bum.

- The lack of acceptance and affirmation (by significant adults) in early life can lead to driven-ness (external symbols of success become proofs of worthiness).
 - The private world is neglected in the pursuit of public accomplishments.
- Early life experience of serious deprivation can also contribute to this disposition.
 - Compensatory experiences may be sought in the embrace of crowds (external) to fill the need for love (internal).

• A sense of great personal shame or embarrassment is a third possible factor in driven-ness. When possessions attract friendships, the *lack of possessions* may solicit loneliness, scorn and result in shame.

- This can lead to the drive to possess the tangible symbol of previously unobtainable ‘prizes’ or ‘toys’ or ‘fame’.

- it is usually done at the expense of one’s private world, which, when it collapses, is very publicly plain.

• An environment set in driven-ness may cause those raised in it to adopt the lifestyle of driven-ness. Here, this is regarded as normal, so that anything else is alien.

- An ordered private world is virtually meaningless-until the course of life demands something of it *that just is not there*.

Necessary steps toward change :

- 1. Admission:** one must be willing to admit that he is operating according to drives and not calls. This is usually hard to accomplish without Christ in the picture.
- 2.** There must be a ruthless appraisal of one's motives and values. Mentors and critics are a valuable resource in this step.
- 3.** Renunciation and surrender of inappropriate habits, motives, attitudes and actions. Action must follow appraisal.
- 4.** Forgiveness-especially for the major offenders in one's life is a non-negotiable if the private world is to be set in order.

Chapter Five: Living as a Called Person. (John the Baptist vs. King Saul)

- **Courage:** he did not care to be politically correct.
 - He spoke the truth regardless of its consequences.
 - He willingly deferred to Christ's increasing popularity, without injury to his ego.
- **Stewardship:** he was aware that he did not *own* the crowds (our claim to fame, popularity and validity), but merely *managed* them in the name of the One who owned them.
- **Certainty of one's identity:** he knew exactly who *he was not* (the Messiah) and who *he was* (the voice of one crying...
 - He knew the difference between who he was and what he did.

John...

• ***Unwavering sense of purpose:*** he was the *best-man*, not the *bridegroom*. He did not attempt to do the bridegroom's job nor assume his responsibility, because his purpose was to perform the duties of the best-man. He restricted himself to that, and did it well.

• ***Unswerving commitment:*** he understood the principle of seasons (Ecclesiastes 3:1-10) and was willing to *step back and let go* at the changing of the season.

-The reality of God's call stood between him and any suggestion of failure.

-He displayed a thorough appreciation for lessons learned in the desert.

-He possessed a heritage that testified of inward order.

Chapter Six: Has Anyone Seen My Time? I've Misplaced It!

It is necessary to command the time allotted us by God.

Symptoms of Disorganization:

- Cluttered, unkempt environment, void of maintenance.
- Diminution of Self-Esteem.
- Failed commitments, missed deadlines, and failed responses.
- Energies invested in unproductive tasks.
- Dissatisfaction with one's work.
- Little intimacy with God.
- Compromised and shallow personal relationships.

“time-budgeting”

Fixed use (what is necessary)

vs. discretionary use (what is desirable).

Jesus' example of time-management:

- He clearly understood his mission and *measured his use of time against that sense of mission.*
- He understood his own limits.
- He carefully guarded his time for gathering inner strength and reflection in preparation for spiritual warfare.
- He concentrated his time investment into a few key people.

Chapter Seven: Recapturing My Time.

“MacDonald’s Laws of Unmanaged Time”:

1. *Unmanaged time* flows toward my weaknesses.
2. *Unmanaged time* comes under the influence of dominant people in my world.
3. *Unmanaged time* surrenders to the demands of all emergencies.
4. *Unmanaged time* gets invested in things that gain public acclamation.

Recaptured time.

- 1. Know my rhythms of maximum effectiveness: i.e.**
 - When and under what conditions do I produce most effectively?
 - What are my cycles of operation?
 - Yearly, seasonal, monthly, weekly and daily?
- 2. Have thoughtful criteria for determining use of my time;**
 - Say no to what is merely good but not best.
 - Distinguish clearly between necessity and discretion.
- 3. Manage and command time by budgeting way in advance.**
 - Avoid incidental, momentary and sudden plan impositions.

Chapter Eight: The Better Man Lost.

Dominant culture shapes the non-thinker.

Valid Christianity requires the development of:

- The inner life of devotion,
- The outer life of service
- The intellectual life of rationality.

-Elton Trueblood

Consequences of failure to develop the mind:

- Mediocrity in personal living and mental activity.
- Non-procurement of God's benefits.
- Openness to ungodly antagonism.
- Stagnancy in life.

Chapter Nine: The Sadness of a Book Never Read.

- 1. *The mind must be disciplined to think Christianly.***
 - Our world is made and owned by God
 - We will be accountable for what God has made accessible to us.
 - Our choices must be in accordance with God's laws.
 - Christian thinking must be accompanied by a regular renewal of our commitment to Christ.

- 2. *The mind must be taught to observe and appreciate God's writing in Creation.***
 - Everything created is primarily to reflect God's glory.
 - The growing mind searches creation for God's messages.

- 3. *The mind must be trained to pursue information, ideas, and insights in order to serve the people of the public world.***
 - Intellectual development is not for selfish advancement.
 - The growth of one's mind, in service, leads to the growth of other minds.

How do we grow intellectually?

1. By becoming listeners.

- Learn to ask questions
- Visit people in their world
- Listen to mentors
- Listen to critics
- Observe the consequences of choices (*both yours and others'*)

2. By reading.

- Practice setting aside specific times for reading.

3. Through disciplined study.

- *Offensive study*: to gather reserve information and insight to be drawn from for future use.
 - Reading widely
 - Taking mind-stretching courses.
 - Challenging ourselves to learn new things and disciplines.
 - Be a consistent note-taker.

Chapter Ten: Order In The Garden.

The inner garden: one's spiritual center.

Failure to maintain the garden can result in:

- Missing the eternal and infinite perspective on reality intended by God.
- Absence of life-giving friendship with Christ.
- Loss of our fear of accountability to God.
- Loss of perspective (man-God) and severed relationship.
- No buffers for failure, humiliation, or other crises.

If my private world is in order, it will be because:

- 1.** I am convinced that the inner world of the spiritual must govern the outer world of activity.
- 2.** I make a daily choice to monitor its orderliness.
- 3.** I have courageously confronted the messiness of my ways of living and chosen to bring them under rigorous discipline.
- 4.** having faced up to what drives me, I listen quietly for the call of Christ.
- 5.** I respond to Christ's call to be a servant and form my life's purposes, my community roles, and my personal identity around His fondest wishes for me.

If my private world is in order, it will be because...

- 6. I have made a daily determination to see time as God's gift and worthy of careful investment.**
- 7. I have begun to seal the "time leaks" and allocate my productive hours in light of my capabilities, my limits and my priorities.**
- 8. I have determined that every day will be for me a day of growth in knowledge and wisdom.**
- 9. I seek to use all I learn in service to others, as Christ did.**
- 10. I regularly choose to enlarge the spiritual center of my life.**
- 11. I am unafraid to be alone and quiet before Christ.**

-Gordon MacDonald