

## **Weird: *Time and Money***

Biblical Text: Matthew 6:24-34

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For two weeks, I want us to consider four critical areas of our daily lives: our **time, money, relationships** and **values**. Let me tell you why.

About six months ago, I found Craig Groeschel's book, [WEIRD: Because normal isn't working](#). He looks at our overcommitted, frazzled, debt-ridden, divorce-prone lives and says, "***Normal isn't working.***" I sent a copy to our adult children. Buy it! \$8 on Kindle, \$10 in paperback, or \$15 in hardback.

Craig keys on two verses from Matthew 7: "***Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.***" (Matt. 7: 13-14)

Jesus' words are hard. Many travel the wide path called "normal" - looking like the rest, spending money like the rest, keeping up with the rest. He says that road leads to a dead end. And Jesus says only few find the right road, the narrow road, what I might call the "weird" path that leads to life.

The problem is the last thing we want to be is different or "weird." We'd rather be "normal," even if it is killing us, which it often is. "Normal" doesn't work very well for a lot of us. We are often overextended, overstressed, out of harmony in our own homes. ***But it doesn't have to be that way.***

I know - according to a lot of people, Christians are already weird, but Craig says: "***What if being the "Christian kind of weird" did not mean the bad-weird, freak-show, embarrassing, weird-for-no-reason kind of Christian we see on late-night TV? What if the Bible is talking about a different-than-what-everyone-else-does, good type of Jesus weird?***"<sup>1</sup>

Craig's words ring true for me. In thirty years of ministry, I've seen a lot of "normal" people who are living pretty stressed out and unhappy lives. Families and marriages suffer. Health wanes. Priorities fade. Joy evaporates. For those with children - there aren't enough hours in the day.

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<sup>1</sup> Groeschel, Craig. [WEIRD: Because Normal Isn't Working](#), Copyright © 2011. Zondervan Press. (p. 15-17)

We work, drive, cook, clean, shop, exercise, eat, get to the kid's activities, or later pay their tuition, and follow through on everything. Most of us live overwhelmed, overloaded, and exhausted lives.

For our older members, by the time we do all those things except working for a living, and add medical care, worry about having enough to take care of us in our golden years – wow, did they get it wrong when they called it that!

But we can choose a different way. It IS possible. Imagine living...

- Where our time is our own, and spent in ways that matter.
- Where we are not drowning in debt, or failing to enjoy what we have.
- Where our relationships are full of intimacy and harmony.
- Where our values are not compromised every day.

We taught our children this verse in VBS this week: ***“Don't be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds.”*** (Romans 12: 2) In order to restore some sanity to our lives, we have to learn to think differently. We have to stop being normal and *“get weird.”*

### **FIRST BIG TOPIC – We have to “get weird” about how we spend our time.**

“Normal” people allow average or even barely adequate things to become the enemy of the most important things. Listen to Matthew 6:25-27:

***“...do not be anxious.<sup>25</sup> ... about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup>....Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit (extra time) to his life?”<sup>2</sup>*** (Matthew 6:25-27)

We push ourselves to “get it all done,” cramming our lives full that we don't have time for what really matters, for those we love or for ourselves.

**Look at how we work:** How many of us work like crazy to make a living but fail to make a life? How many of us have worked to build a stellar 401(k) but don't know our kid's or grandkid's GPA?

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 6:25-27. *New Revised Standard Version*, Copyright © 1989, National Council of the Churches. All rights reserved.

Don't do what I did. I spent the first several years of ministry being absent from my family a lot! No one told me what I'm going to tell you. *"You will not always work. You'll be a husband, dad and granddad forever – unless you mess up. Stop being a big dummy!"*

In case you wondered it also applies to being a wife, a mom, and grandma.

Craig tells a great story about a guy who finally came to his senses when his daughter was a sophomore in high school. He did something that changed his life and his family's. He counted out 143 marbles and put them in a jar. Why? By his calculation, he had 143 Saturdays left before his daughter graduated high school and left home. Each Saturday he took one out as a reminder of what really mattered. **Here's the truth!** *"We're all losing our marbles. It's just a matter of how we'll spend each one."*<sup>3</sup>

**There are things that get in the way - like the amount of time we are "plugged in" to something.** I am the world's worst. iPhone, iPad, iPod, Facebook, Twitter, email, television, Netflix – and I'm grateful for the technology. But I sometimes wonder, *"Am I using it, or is it using me?"*

And for you who are thinking with pride, *"At least I don't do that."* Ever calculate the amount of time you watch television, or surf the net?

Craig says his family has three "technology days" a week and three days where they "unplug" from everything except each other. He says his kids hate him for it. But they also know who he is and he knows who they are.

Can't see yourself being that weird? How about one or two days or even unplugging while you are on vacation. I'm going to do that this year – really!

If you counted - that's what Craig does with 6 days – can you guess about the 7th? **The last area of time I want to talk about is taking a true Sabbath.**

Knowing how to rest, to unplug, to unwind is as much a spiritual discipline as going to worship or prayer. As weird as it may sound, God commands us to rest, and to spend one day a week with him. That's not easy for most of us. In fact, I want to be very pointed this morning. Most of us don't do that.

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<sup>3</sup> Op. Cit. Groeschel, Craig. WEIRD: Because Normal Isn't Working, (p. 46-48).

Many of us live out of that “normal” rhythm where we only get to worship when we don’t have other plans. Those differ along the life cycle.

Sometimes it is ball games, music programs or a swim meet on Sunday. Sometimes it is a family gathering. Sometimes, it is going to our Sunday School class, skipping worship or meeting for brunch. **What are we doing?** How can you live your life in a Godly way, if you don’t worship. You can’t!

And a day of true rest? What is that? I get it. We can’t entirely drop out of Sunday activities. OK. Keep your Sabbath time another day. There’s a reason that from the beginning in the Book of Genesis, that God created us for rest and renewal every seventh day. Some of us are long overdue!

## **SECOND BIG TOPIC – We need to “get weird” about how we spend money.**

When it comes to finances, here’s what passes for “normal” - going into debt so deep that you can’t see the way out. Money becomes a dark pit of worry, fear, anxiety, tension, and fighting. When you finally live long enough, as some of you have, to have paid your debts, you still worry about having enough to meet your bills and get you through until you die. True.

Most younger adults I know are living paycheck to paycheck. We did. Our kids do. Most make more money today than they ever have, but it’s never enough. It’s expensive to be “normal” — to want a bigger house, newer cars, the “normal” stuff you want your family to have. It’s hard to enjoy any of it when the financial noose tightens each month. Listen to Jesus.

Matthew 6:24: ***“<sup>24</sup> No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”***<sup>4</sup>

Matthew 6:31-32: ***“<sup>31</sup> Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.”***<sup>5</sup>

There is a better way. There is a way that makes sense. It’s not “rocket science.” But it isn’t easy. It’s weird. I learned it from Dave Ramsey, the author of Financial Peace University, which we’ll offer again in the Fall.

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<sup>4</sup> Op. Cit. Matthew 6:24. *New Revised Standard Version.*

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Matthew 6:31-32. *New Revised Standard Version.*

**#1) Make a plan.** Then work the plan. Here's a "budget for dummies." Spend less than you make, every month. Ann was after me for thirty years to do that. Finally, we got there. Don't wait. Feel the pain. Fight with your spouse, and *blame it on me!* You know what the #1 cause of divorce is in the first seven years of marriage? Adultery? Not even close. Finances.

**#2) Save some money.** Have an emergency fund in case you lose your job or you deal with a major illness. Trust me, it will happen. In January I had over \$3,000 in medical deductibles to pay. You know what we did? Took some savings and paid cash. Even a decade ago, it would have crippled us. Saving is something you can do. It means saying "no" today to be able to say "yes" later. That's definitely not normal. It's weird. Listen – if you saved \$100 a week from age 30 until age 65 and put it a nice mutual fund – you'll have a million dollars. Do the math. Can't do \$100? Start where you can.

**#3) Get out of debt.** If you are in debt – don't add to it - for any reason. Postpone gratification. Cut up your credit cards. Pay cash. Pay it down. Pay it off. A number of years ago, Ann and I got out of debt for the first time in our lives. We had help. But, you know what we feel? **Free. It's wonderful!**

**#4) It's the hardest for us. Honor God.** Give God 10% of all he gives you. In this case do the spiritual math. The rest of the steps do not work nearly so well until we give 10% to acknowledge our first commitment to the one we pray to ask for help doing all the rest! It's in the text. *"<sup>33</sup> ...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."*<sup>6</sup>

**That's it? Yes it is. I know, it's weird. But trust me, it works!**

Before I close I want to ask you to do two things.

First - plan to come back next week. I'll be talking about "getting weird" with our relationships - including our intimacy – and our values.

Second - get out your watches, cell phones, calendars, however you measure time. I'll wait. And then get out your wallets, purses, money clips, checkbooks. I'm serious! I want to pray over them and pray for you today.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Matthew 6:33. *New Revised Standard Version.*