



Leadership Through Discipleship

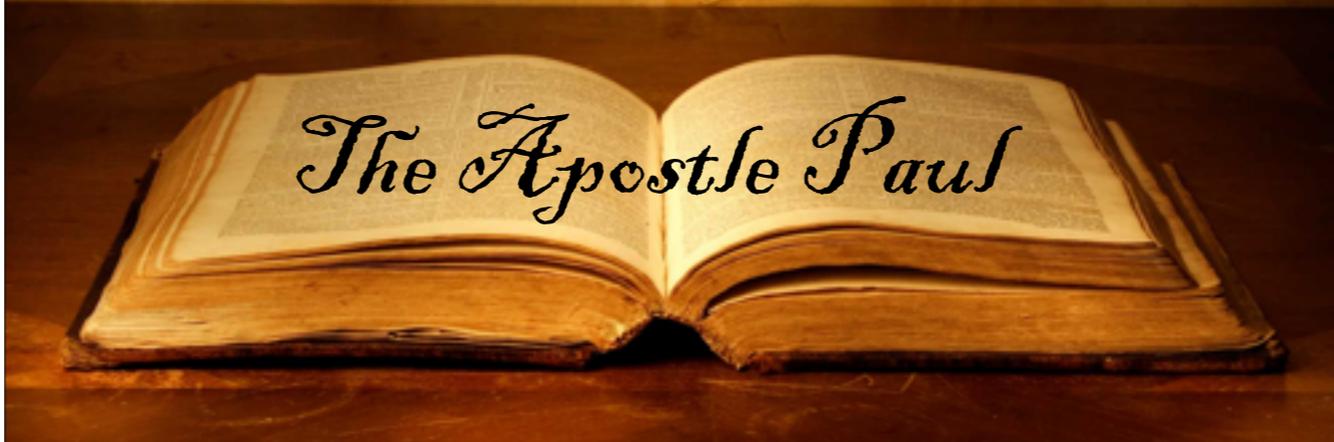
Learning to Lead
by Living to Follow

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Lead Pastor



“Then last of all He was seen by
me also, as by one born out of
due time”

—1 Corinthians 15:8



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PAUL

The Power of God's Timing

Late arrivals can have dramatic influence when given an opportunity for leadership



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Paul's late arrival on the apostolic scene was actually right on time. Late bloomers often surpass those who have been in the process of maturity for a long time. Discipleship leaders should recognize that growth and maturity in different individuals occur at various rates.

*God's
timing is always perfect.*

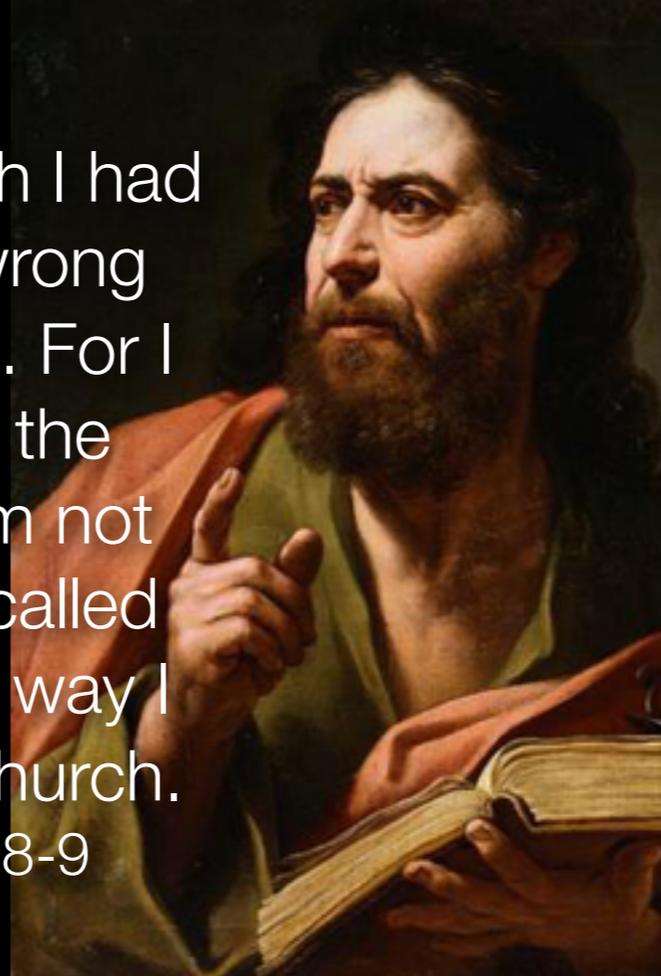


Our ways are vastly different from God's. We seldom see things the way God does. Have you ever questioned God? ... Why? Have you ever asked, "God, why did you let this happen now?"

[ADV]
His timing is always right; His ways are perfect!
Sometimes we live long enough to see it ... sometimes we will never understand it this side of eternity.

PAUL

“Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I’m not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God’s church.
—1 Corinthians 15:8-9



From Paul’s perspective he had come along late in the day.

Pentecost was past, the church was established, believers were being attracted, and miracles were being performed. In fact, the church grew so fast that the religious order of the day was desperate to stop it. They approved persecution of these new followers of Jesus and labeled them with a term of derision – “Christians!”

Paul (originally, Saul) was caught up in the religious zeal of stomping out this new movement before it contaminated even more of the masses.

[FIRST LESSON: Conversion — 2nd: Power of the Pen]

After Paul’s conversion to Christianity he realized how blinded he had been to the genuine move of God in the earth. He often regretted his past life as a persecutor of Christians and did not consider himself worthy to be called an apostle (1 Corinthians 15:9). From his writing it seemed that he felt he had come along too late, “one born out of due time” (vs. 8). Perhaps he felt he was always playing “catch up” after his late, however spectacular, introduction to Jesus.

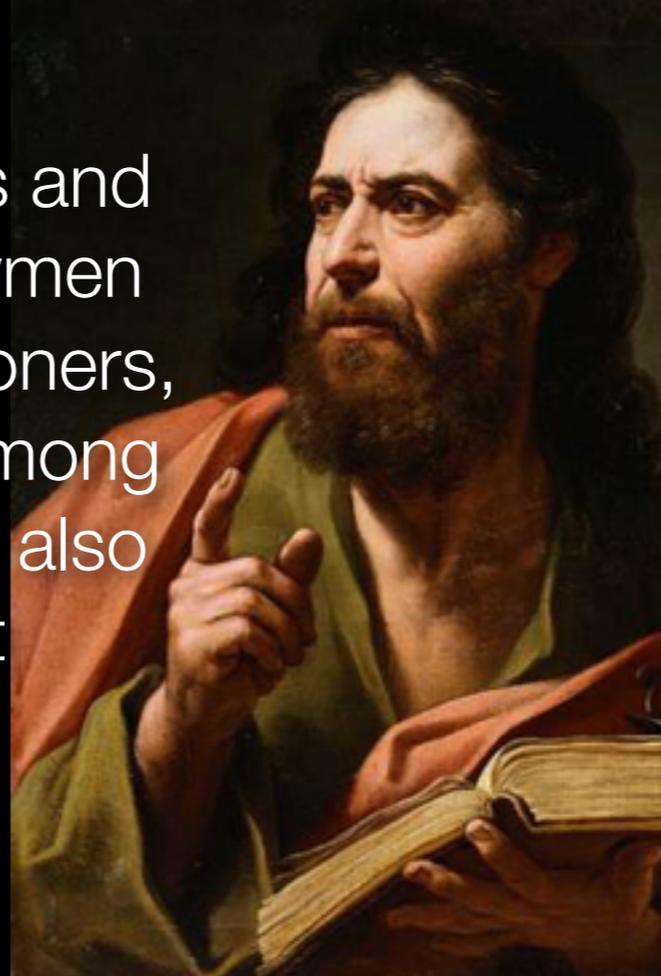
NLT — 1 Corinthians 15:3 I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. 4 He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. 5 He was seen by Peter[c] and then by the Twelve. 6 After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers[d] at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7 Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles.

8 Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. 9 For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I’m not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God’s church.

10 But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace.

PAUL

“Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.”
—Romans 16:7



Paul spoke of other apostles who “were in Christ before me” (Romans 16:7).

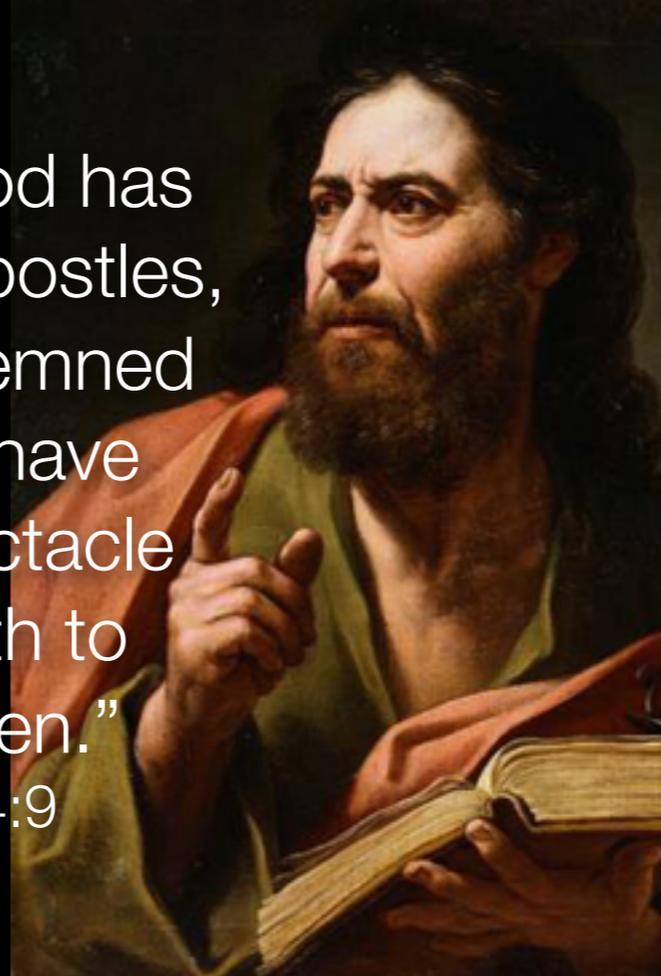
—NKJ 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

—NLT “They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did.”

PAUL

“For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.”

— 1 Corinthians 4:9



Paul saw himself as the “least of the apostles” (1 Corinthians 15:9, above).

“For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I’m not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God’s church.”

— He was also careful to bring proper perspective to the office of his calling, “God has displayed us, the apostles, last.” (1 Corinthians 4:9).

9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

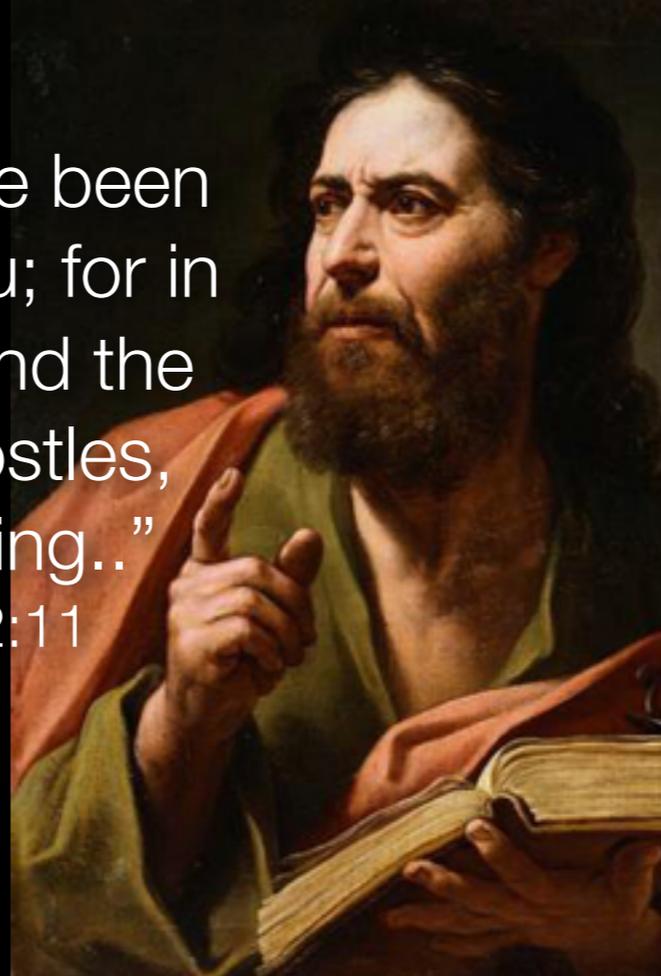
—Even when he had to defend his calling he quickly followed by acknowledging the grace of God working through him to perform the work of the Lord, “But by the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Corinthians 15:10 –above).

Paul said, “For in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing” (2 Corinthians 12:11).

PAUL

“For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing..”

—2 Corinthians 12:11



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Paul said, “For in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing” (2 Corinthians 12:11).

—11 I have become a fool in boasting;[b] you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.

PAUL'S SELF-DEFENSE

Paul defended his apostleship

— 1 Corinthians 9:19-27

Paul distinguished from the false apostles

— 2 Corinthians 11:3-6

Paul magnified his ministry

— Romans 11:1-4; 13-14

1—When Paul defended his apostleship to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 9),

— 1 Corinthians 9:19-27 (vs.1 “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

vs. 3 My defense to those who examine me is this:

26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

2—Paul distinguished himself from the false apostles (2 Corinthians 11),

– 2 Corinthians 11:3-6

5 For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6 Even though I am untrained in speech, yet I am not in knowledge. ...

3—or Paul magnified his ministry (Romans 11), it seemed he was always trying to compensate for a late start. He often spoke of his inadequacies.

– Romans 11:1-4; 13-14

1 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

GOD HAS PERFECT

timing; never early,

NEVER LATE.

It takes a little

PATIENCE AND A WHOLE LOT

of faith...

BUT IT'S WORTH THE WAIT.

While Paul may have felt inferior because of the error of his past, God's purpose was fulfilled in Paul. A late arrival became an on-time blessing! He may have seemed to come on the scene late, but in God's timing and purposes Paul was at the right place, at the right time.

Insight One



- God's timing is perfect. Accept it without question or in spite of the questions.
 - Ecclesiastes 9:12
"For man also does not know his time:
Like fish taken in a cruel net,
Like birds caught in a snare,
So the sons of men are snared in an evil time, When it falls suddenly upon them.

13

● God's timing is perfect. Accept it without question or in spite of the questions.

As much as we would like to rush the process of conversion and discipleship, there is the matter of timing that only God knows.

He does all things well.

—It is not given to man to know his own time therefore he must trust God who sees the whole picture. All at one time God is in the past, present, and the future. He is "the beginning and the end" (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13).

—8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,"[a] says the Lord,[b] "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

—6 And He said to me, "It is done![a] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

—13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."[a]

– Ecclesiastes 9:11–12

11 I returned and saw under the sun that—

The race is not to the swift,

Nor the battle to the strong,

Nor bread to the wise,

Nor riches to men of understanding,

Nor favor to men of skill;

But time and chance happen to them all.

12

For man also does not know his time:

Like fish taken in a cruel net,

Like birds caught in a snare,

So the sons of men are snared in an evil time,

Insight Two



- Accept the fact that God knows things we never will.
 - **Acts 1:6-7** — Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

14

- Accept the fact that God knows things we never will.

There are some things God has not permitted us to know when it comes to time.

We cannot know the “day nor the hour” of His return (Matthew 24:36). We may not be permitted know the time of His future plans for Israel or for the church.

– Acts 1:6–7

6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

Insight Three



- The Gospel is always preached in the present.
 - **2 Corinthians 6:2** For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

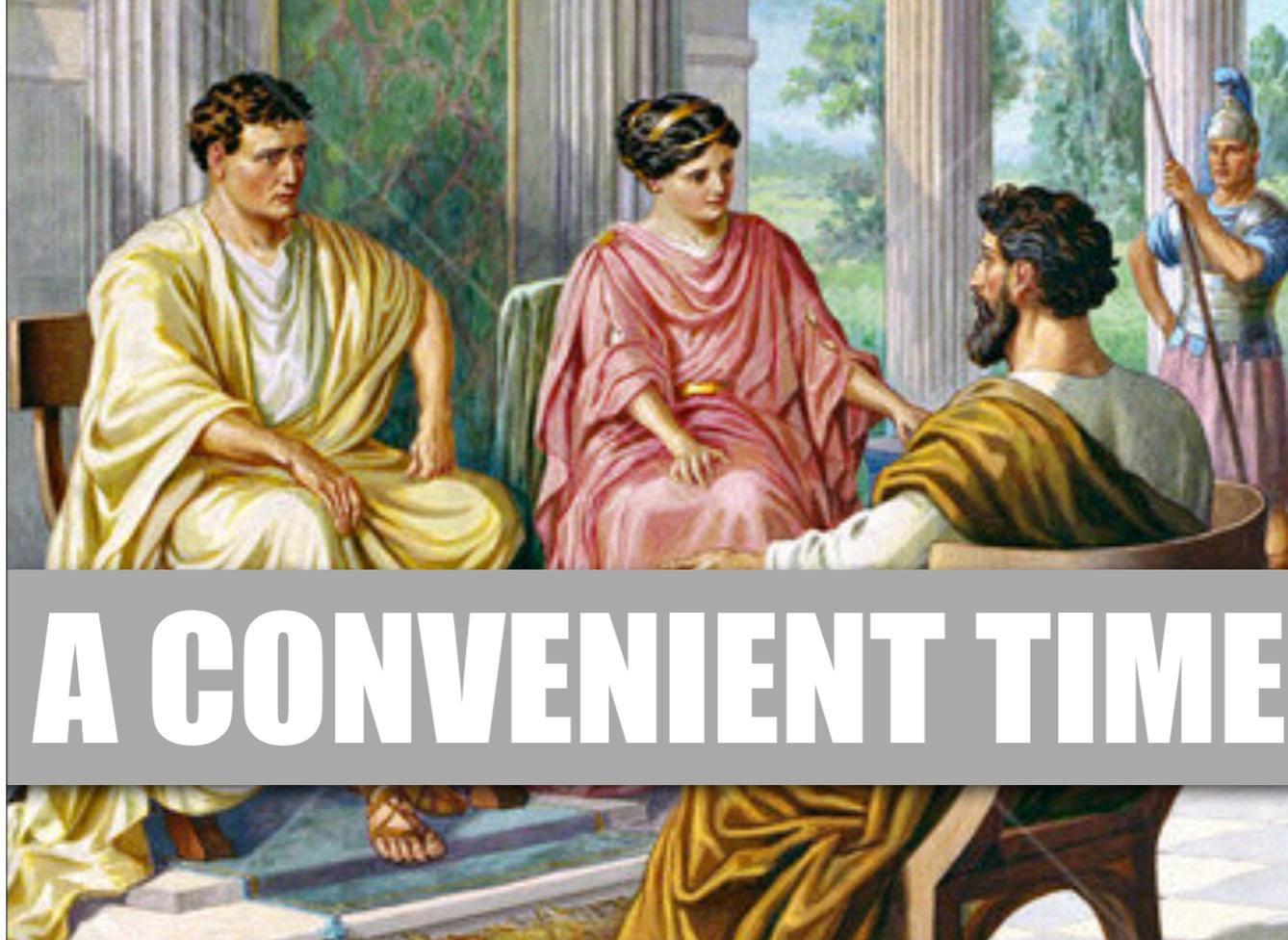
- The Gospel is always preached in the present.

We do not know the hour of God’s visitation on the lost. You cannot revisit the past to retrieve a moment of conviction. You cannot delay your response for a future hour. Now is the time to respond to the voice of the Spirit and to obey call of conviction.

- 2 Corinthians 6:2
- —2 For He says:
- “In an acceptable time I have heard you,
- And in the day of salvation I have helped you.”[a]
- Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

- Romans 13:11

11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.



A CONVENIENT TIME

In protective custody, Paul was brought before Felix, the Governor of Caesarea. Perhaps it was mere curiosity to know more about this controversial preacher, or the desire of his Jewish wife, Felix allowed Paul to express his views and share his message. Felix was not considering the power of the Gospel and its effect on him personally. He was fearful when he heard the message and sent Paul away. Though he spoke with Paul on other occasions we have no record of Felix again being so affected by the conviction of the Spirit. He never found a more convenient time to hear the Gospel message.

– Acts 24:25

Insight Four



- The Only God knows our destiny or the time of our death.
 - **Luke 12:20** But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

• Only God knows our destiny or the time of our death.

The foolish ignore the inevitability of their destiny. We don't know the length of our days or the moment of death.

– Luke 12:16–20

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

Insight Five



- God may reveal something specific about our time if He chooses.
 - **2 Timothy 4:6-7** For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

● God may reveal something specific about our time if He chooses.

Of our mortality there is no doubt, but we seldom know of the time of our death. Paul was made aware of the time of his departure and he included the statement in his last letter to Timothy.

– 2 Timothy 4:6–7

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Insight Six



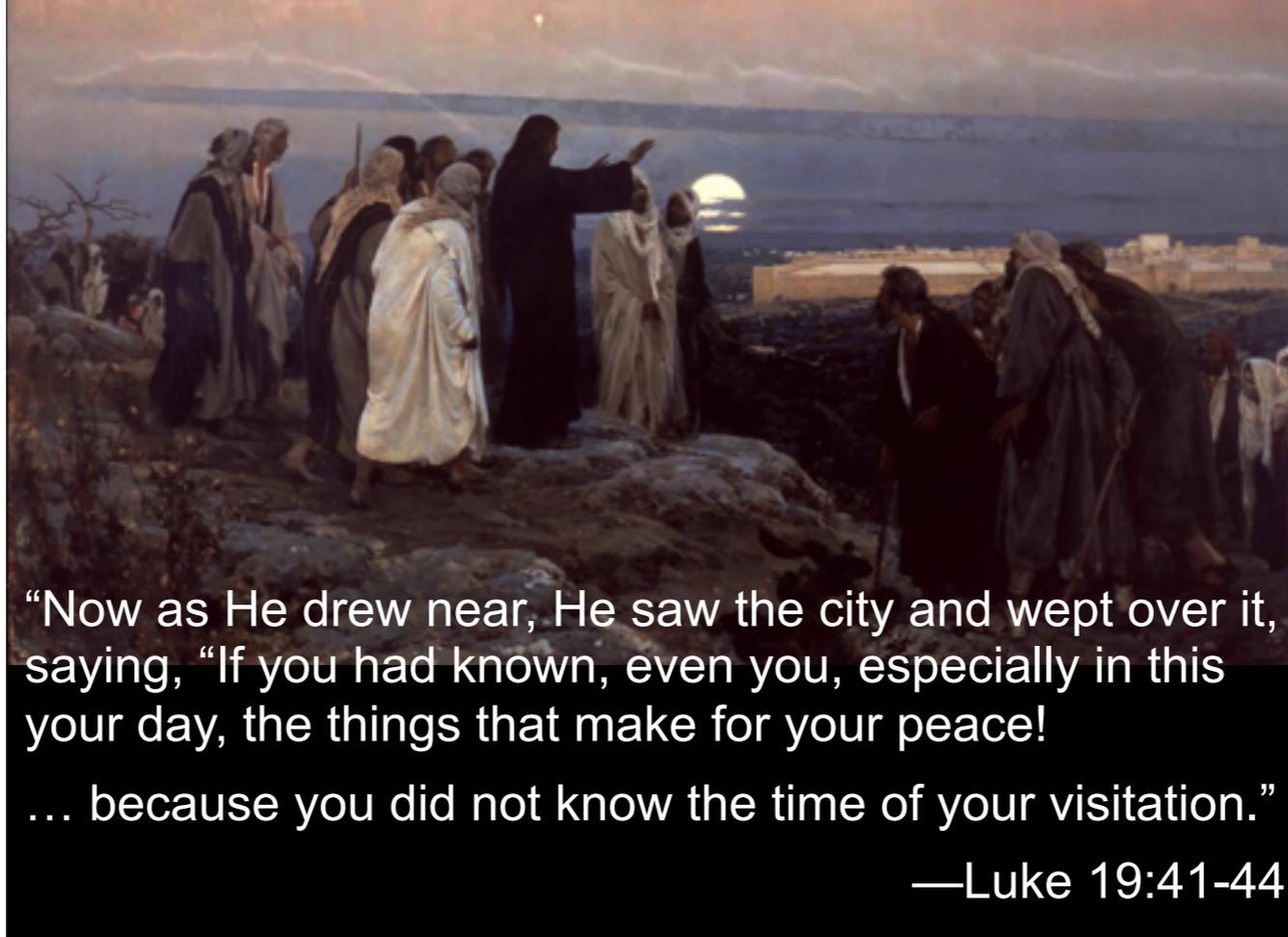
- Seek to understand the *times* rather than a specific time.
 - **1 Chronicles 12:32** “of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command;”

● Seek to understand the times rather than a specific time.

As discipleship leaders we must know the heartbeat of God and have knowledge of His purposes in the world. May we be like the sons of Issachar in Israel having an understanding of our times.

– 1 Chronicles 12:32

32 of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command;



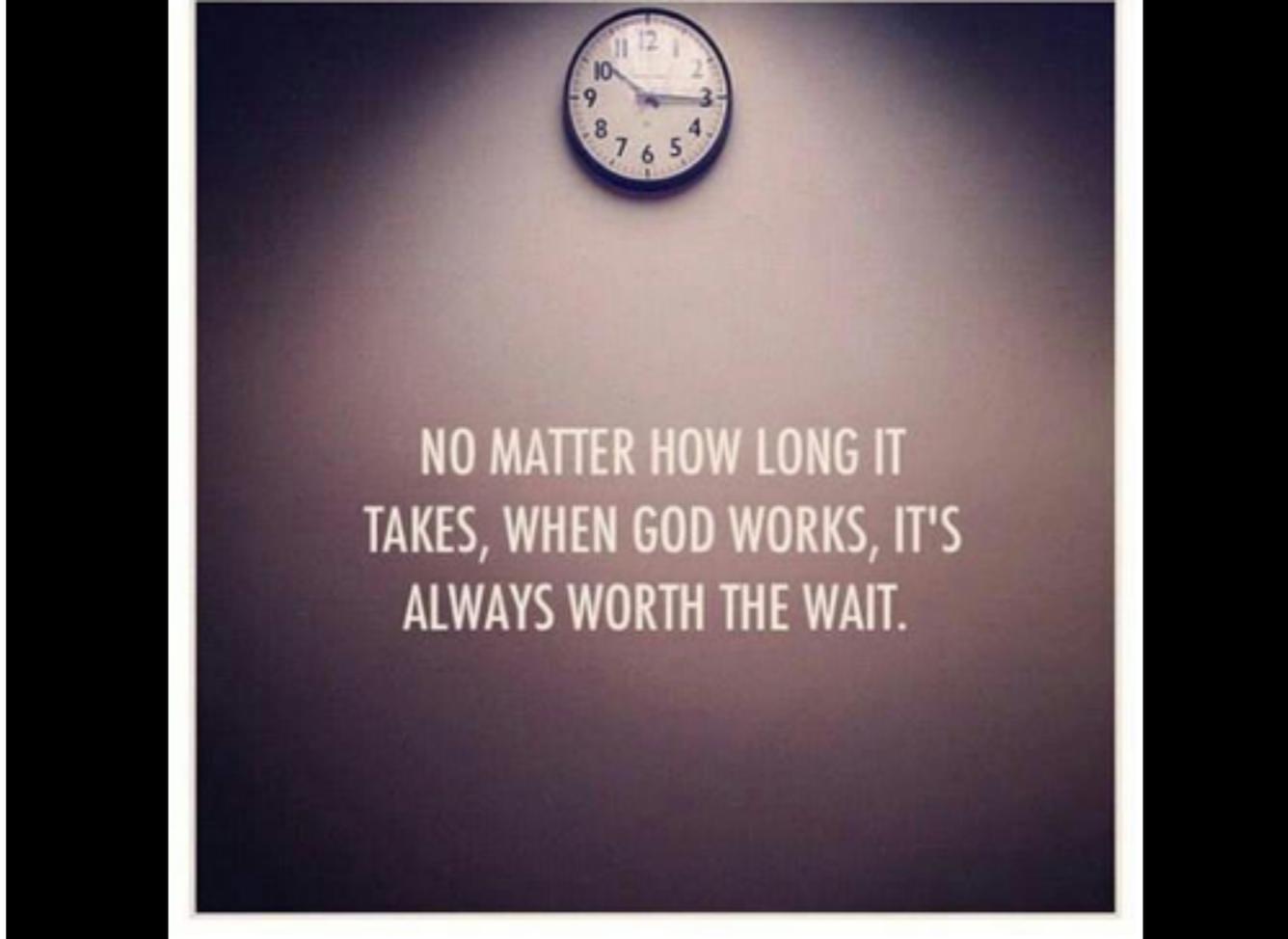
“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!
... because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

—Luke 19:41-44

Jesus wept over a generation who did not perceive its time of visitation. He saw their opportunity and the consequences of their blindness.

— Luke 19:41-44

41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”



We must trust the Master in our training for discipleship. He will bring us where we need to be at the time we need to be there. In God's perfect time may our lives bring glory to God the way Paul's did (Galatians 1:23-24). There are no mistakes with God. He is never late. He is always right on time!



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