

## Monday Manner

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### 'TIS THE SEASON TO GET DISTRACTED

By Robert J. Tamasy

As each calendar begins drawing to a close, we often find a curious paradox. On one hand our desire is to focus these final weeks on attaining annual goals, quotas and deadlines. At the same time, with the many holiday festivities getting underway as seasonal holidays approach, it becomes very easy to lose our concentration on the tasks that need to be done. We could call this “the season of distraction.”

With this in mind, I came across a fitting quote from Tom DeMarco and Timothy Lister, software engineers, consultants and co-authors of *Peopleware: Productive Projects and Teams*. They observed, “There are a million ways to lose a day of work, but not even a single way to get one back.”

What they say is true. Time continually moves forward, and when a minute, an hour, or a day has passed, there is no reclaiming it. It is similar to trying to put toothpaste back into the tube after we have squeezed it out. It may be human nature to want to hit the “Pause” button at the end of a busy and demanding year. We have worked hard and feel we deserve a chance to catch our breath. At the same time, opportunities that present themselves in these last weeks of the year might not be there after the New Year.

So we confront the need for balance: Celebrating the fact we have survived another year, with its successes, failures and challenges. But also recognising there is work that remains to be done; as the Latin adage states, “Tempus fugit.” Time flies.

The Bible speaks to the importance of seeing ourselves as stewards of the time and opportunities being afforded to us. For instance, Ephesians 5:16 talks about “redeeming the time (making the most of every opportunity), because the days are evil.” This passage admonishes us to be wise in how we invest our time each day, not squandering it foolishly on empty, meaningless or unprofitable pursuits.

For those that profess to be followers of Jesus Christ in the workplace, Colossians 4:5 says we are to, “Act wisely toward outsiders, redeeming the time.” A different translation also tells us to “make the most of every opportunity.” Perhaps this is especially important in the midst of the Christmas season, when the emphasis seems on everything except the true reason for the season, celebrating the birth of Jesus.

With all the frenetic activity surrounding the conclusion of the business calendar, on wrapping up projects and closing sales, along with the planning of holiday parties and buying gifts, are we serving as effective “marketplace ambassadors for Christ”? Is the presence and power of Jesus Christ being displayed in us despite the stresses and pressures of this season of the year? Here is another look at one of the passages above:

**Speak and act with wisdom.** This time of year could be the ideal time of all for exhibiting and explaining what our faith means to us – and what it could mean for others. “And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (Colossians 4:3-6).

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## Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How does the holiday season usually affect you at work? Do you find yourself distracted by the various activities going on, or are you able to remain as productive as you usually are?
2. What is the most common way for you to “lose a day of work,” or even a short bit of time? How can you try to avoid having that happen too often?
3. Do you agree about the importance of “redeeming time,” or do you think there is too much emphasis on jamming as much activity as possible into a specific span of time? Explain your answer.
4. What is the difference, in your opinion, between **what** we do with our time, and **how** we use our time? What is the role of wisdom in effective use or stewardship of time, and responding to opportunities?

### NOTE:

*If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:*

- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8,
- Ecclesiastes 8:5-6,
- Ecclesiastes 9:11-12;
- Luke 12:54-56;
- Galatians 4:4;
- 1 John 2:18-19

© 2016. Robert J. Tamasy is vice president of communications for Leaders Legacy, Inc., a non-profit based in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. Bob has written *Business At Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Tufting Legacies*; and co-authored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, as well as other books. His biweekly blog is: [www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com](http://www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com).