



# THE SHADOW



## PREVIEW

It may not seem like it, but life passes you by very quickly. Some days it seems like History class will never end, while other times you might look back and think, Man, this year is just flying by. Just like morning and evening come and go, so does life. You have to make the most of every day God has given to you.

## PRAISE

Ask the students to solve the following riddles:

**Riddle #1**—Round and round I go never stopping in a continuous flow. I hang out with numbers each and every day and nothing ever gets in my way. What am I? (The hands of a clock)

**Riddle #2**—Can you name three consecutive days without using the words Wednesday, Friday, or Sunday? (Yesterday, today, and tomorrow)

**Riddle #3**—I am free yet priceless. You can't own me, but you can use me. You can't keep me, but you can spend me. Once you lose me, you can never have me back. (Time)

## PARABLE

Certainly, we all have wasted time at some point in our lives. Here are a few random facts about how people spend their time:

- The average woman spends a year deciding what to wear.
- The average American spends 2 hrs/day wasting time while at work.
- The average commuter spends 45 minutes in traffic each day.
- Americans spend a combined total of 233,000,000+ minutes on Facebook each month.

## PRESENT

Read Psalm 144:4. David wrote that life is like a disappearing shadow. The reality may come as a surprise, but you aren't going to live forever. The day you are born is the day you begin to die. What you do in the time span between birth and death defines who you really are.

Have you ever walked outside on a chilly morning and exhaled deeply? The water vapor in your breath comes in contact with the cold air outside and forms tiny water droplets, which look like a cloud. You see the cloud for a second, and then it disappears. That's life.

Read Ecclesiastes 1:8; 5:10.

An artist came across a beggar sitting by the roadside. He quickly sketched the man while thinking that since God created

him in His own image, he could make something of himself, even though at this stage he was a beggar. So the artist drew a picture of what the man could become, instead of what he was.

He called the beggar over to see the sketch. “Is that me?” the beggar asked. “Yes, that’s the man I see in you!” The beggar stated with new purpose in his eyes, “If that’s the man you see in me, then that’s the man I shall be!”

Realizing our true potential makes life new and exciting. We sense a mission awaits us, which generates the desire to make the most of the time God has given us. It’s a shame that some people see themselves as having little value. They feel that who they are and what they do doesn’t matter, with the result that they often waste time on meaningless tasks or activities.

God sees you as a person with value. He sees beyond your shortcomings and your sin, beyond your guilt and unworthiness. You have great worth and value to God.

Psalm 37:4 (Good News Translation) says, “Seek your happiness in the LORD, and he will give you your heart’s desire.” Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6:35, NIV © 2011). Jesus didn’t come and sacrifice His life so you could veg out on Netflix all weekend. He came that you might have life, and life more abundantly! You shouldn’t be living a boring life—you should be living an abundant life!

So what are you going to make of yourself? You’ve been given a unique mix of abilities, talents, gifts, and potential nobody else has. You’ve been given your own interests, desires, and dreams. God has given opportunities for you to develop your gifts. Consider how wonderful God is to love you so much that He would create you, love you unconditionally, and make you a unique individual. So don’t waste time; do something worthwhile with your life!

Many scholars believe David was reminiscing about his victory over Goliath as he wrote Psalm 37. It was as if he was encouraging the reader to never forget that every day, every age, every moment in life is an opportunity to step out in courage and put your name on the pages of history. You can do great things. Don’t waste your days sweating the small things; seize the day and slay that giant!

## PRACTICE

What are some things you can do to take back precious time God has given you?

How can you change your mindset that you are valuable and worth something to your Creator?

How are you going to spend your time more effectively this week?

## PRAY

Jesus, thank You for allowing us to gather together today. Thank you for allowing us to have the opportunity to spend our time today talking about You. God, every day is a gift. Let us not waste a single day but be good stewards of the precious time You have given to us. Thank You for the reminder that You have made us all unique, with our own giftings and abilities. Let us use what You have given us for Your glory and Your kingdom. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

## PLUS

If time allows, discuss these seven tips for making good use of your time:

1. Prioritize your day.
2. Create a list every morning. Write it down. And stick to it.
3. Value your time and learn to say no.
4. Take time to find out what you do well and what needs improvement.
5. Understand all ramifications of major decisions.
6. Keep your mind sharp ...
7. And your body fit.