

Want to
increase your
productivity?
*Stop
working!*

That's right. To increase your productivity, stop working.

- You have 167 unanswered emails in your inbox? Stop answering email.
- You're planning 3 major projects? Stop planning projects.
- You're planning meetings with your team, your staff, and your clients? Stop planning meetings.
- You have 34 urgent tasks? Stop working on urgent tasks.
- You have 25 more reports to assess? Stop assessing reports.

Just stop. For 30 minutes. Each week. Yes, I know you were hoping to stop working. You can, if you want to. The choice is yours. But I recommend that you keep working and that you stop for a minimum of 30 minutes each week—30 minutes. That's 1.25% of a 40-hour workweek—1.25%.

Stop for a minimum 30 minutes each week. And do what? Reflect. Why? Well, reflection is like...

- Putting air in your bike tires so you can ride efficiently. (How efficiently can you ride on tires that don't have enough air in them?)
- Changing the oil in your car so the engine will run well. (How well will your engine run if you don't change the oil?)
- Using a filter when making coffee. Using a filter is an extra step, but using a filter means good coffee with no grounds in it. (Do you like drinking coffee that has grounds in it? I don't.)
- Taking a hot shower after a tough day. Afterward, you feel refreshed. (If you don't wind down after a tough day, what happens to you?)

So what can you do during your 30 minutes? You can pray, consider questions, find a better way to work, and get coaching. Let's take a look at each of these 4 options:

During your 30 minutes, you can pray:

1. Ask God what he wants you to do, how he wants you to do it, and by when. (Remember, it's God's work. He has the master plan. Your task is to join God in what he's already doing.)
2. After you ask, listen. Quietly. For God to speak.

During your 30 minutes, you can consider 5 questions:

1. What's the mission?
2. What's the definition of mission achievement?
3. What's my role in contributing to mission achievement?
4. What did I accomplish this week?
5. What do I need to keep doing? Start doing? Stop doing?

During your 30 minutes, you can find a better way to work:

1. Instead of responding to your 167 unanswered emails, define your communication system and the role email plays in it.
2. Instead of planning projects and meetings, check your goals. Define them more clearly. Then, decide which projects and meetings are pivotal. Plan these. Only these.
3. Instead of completing your 34 urgent tasks, assess your time allocation for good things (urgent tasks) and best things (non-urgent tasks). Build in time for non-urgent tasks. Even if it means not getting some of the urgent tasks done.
4. Instead of assessing your 25 reports, assess your goals. Then determine your system for assigning reports and your criteria for assessing reports_____.

During your 30 minutes, you can get coaching. Your coach can help you:

1. Think bigger and more clearly.
2. Think outside the box.
3. Get more focused and stay focused.
4. Get organized.
5. Get the support, encouragement, and accountability you need to reach your goals.

In summary, during your 30 minutes you can pray, consider questions, find a better way to work, and get coaching. What will you do during your 30 minutes each week?

You: But you don't know how busy I am. You don't know what my reality is like.

Me: The real reality is that you can't afford not to stop and reflect. If you don't stop and reflect, you increase the likelihood that:

- You'll feel that it's your work and it's God's privilege to join you. In reality, God is already at work, and it's your privilege to join him. Remember, God can do it without you.
- You'll overestimate what you can accomplish in 1 year, while underestimating what you can accomplish in 2 years. This means you will strive to get 2 years' worth of work done in 1 year. Not a good idea.
- You'll work hard, without maximizing your God-given strengths. This will make you tired.
- You'll finish developing a program, but it won't be sufficiently exemplary, sustainable, and replicable. Ouch.
- You'll plan forwards, instead of backwards—meaning, you won't plan with the end result in mind. Not good_____.

What do I do? I reflect on a daily and weekly basis. Each day, I reflect as I pray about God's work.

1. I ask God for guidance.
2. Then I go for about a 15-minute walk. During my walk, I listen for God's voice. I listen for God to tell me whom he wants me to talk with, what he wants me to write about, and what projects he wants me to

keep doing, start doing, or stop doing.

In addition to reflecting daily, I reflect weekly for up to 2 hours.

1. I use up to 75 minutes to process ideas, determine progress toward key goals, and identify and schedule tasks for the coming week.

2. I use 30 minutes to meet with my coach.

3. I use up to 15 minutes to review my schedule of tasks in light of my coaching session.

What happens during my coaching session? My coach asks me crucial questions like:

1. How are you doing on your goals?
2. Are you staying within your goals?
3. How's your life balance?
4. How did you equip people this week?
5. How can you more effectively equip people?

My daily and weekly reflection times help me stay focused, organized, encouraged, supported, and accountable. My daily and weekly reflection times definitely increase my productivity. To accomplish my God-given mission, I can't afford not to reflect on a daily and weekly basis.

Imagine if you and everyone on your church staff, tentmaking staff, mission staff, or school staff spent 30 minutes each week in quiet, focused reflection. How would this impact the achievement of your mission?

Work smart. Stop working and start reflecting for a minimum of 30 minutes each week. Increase your productivity. Start today.

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