

# Cyber Truths By E-mail

## **18. Our Gift To You (December 13, 2005)**



## Restoration Ministries International

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Dear Friends,

Many of you will have family or special guests in your home for the holidays. It's been our experience as we've heard from so many over the years that, along with the nostalgia of the season, there is also considerable apprehension when certain family members and guests get together.

Please last three pages for two tools that can help you clear up interpersonal tension!

The first has to do with time accountability. So many who call themselves Christians fail to be godly stewards of their time. How we use our time is a direct reflection of how intense and purposeful our relationship with Jesus is. We've so often observed that people who handle their time poorly are habitually beset by sin, grumble frequently, or even question their faith. They live as if time is their own to use, rather than regarding their time as the opportunity to represent Jesus in the flesh to the world around them.

If you have one of these people in for the holidays, they tend to darken the atmosphere. They don't find a lot of joy in their relationship with Jesus, nor have they grateful testimony of serving Jesus by serving others.

The second tool is one we learned from Lyman Coleman at a Serendipity workshop in 1973. It helps family members clear up interpersonal problems they may have with each other. Rather than having us describe it, just download the attachment.

Some suggestions for a Christ-like outcome as you use this tool (from our book, ***Growing Relationships Through Confrontation***):

Remember that your genuine care for others calls for you to give the one with

whom you may differ the right to his own stance or perspective. Think of the emphasis our Lord placed on treating others as you want to be treated: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). Support brings encouragement to the other person, while confrontation allows you to express a stance or position that differs from that of the other person.

Interpersonal tensions are normally founded on one or more of four areas of difference:

- **goals** The purpose of your relationship; answers the question of "where" the relationship is going.
- **methods** The manner and practice by which aspects of your relationship are carried out; answers the question of "how" the relationship should function.
- **values** The significant elements esteemed by the partners in the relationship; answers the question of "why" you think and/or act as you do.
- **facts** Circumstances of certainty which can be proven by investigation; answers the question of "what" is facing the relationship.

In any interpersonal difference, you should always take the time to confirm the area(s) of your disagreement or misunderstanding. If you can identify the differences you have and the basis for them, a resolution is then at least possible.

Identifying the area(s) of difference is like getting all the cards dealt before you begin the game. Too often people attempt resolutions but skip the step of identifying their differences. They then fail to grasp what they're trying to

resolve, which results in the same difference(s) arising again later.

#### **SUPPORT (Done on their behalf)**

- Support encourages the other person.

#### **What to support:**

- The other person's anxiety, fear, doubt.
- The right for him or her to feel or think differently.
- The reality of his or her perceptions.

#### **How to support:**

- Pray together for wisdom and truth.
- Let the other person speak his or her case.
- Listen! Listen! Listen!
- Restate back what he or she is saying.
- Verbalize his or her feelings.
- Ask for his or her preferred solution.

#### **Don'ts:**

- Don't rush in too quickly with solutions.
- Don't tell him how he shouldn't feel.
- Don't cut him or her off too soon.
- Don't judge his perception — describe instead what you're hearing.
- Don't give unsolicited advice that is irrelevant to the present issue.

#### **CONFRONT (Done on your behalf)**

- Confronting encourages you (and that's good!).

#### **What to confront:**

- Problems that are not being solved.
- Differences that hamper the relationship.
- Sins, attitudes, behaviors that are detrimental.

#### **How to confront:**

- Treat issue as a situation you both need to solve.
- Acknowledge the other person's position.
- State your differences clearly and succinctly.
- Check to see if you are being understood.
- Be responsible for your own feelings.
- Fully explore the differences.

#### **Don'ts:**

- Don't attack his or her character or imply motives.
- Don't railroad your own solution, even if you are in a position to do that.
- Don't problem-solve until you have both discussed the issues to one another's satisfaction.

To Support and Confront Someone is a Simple Concept...

**DIFFICULT TO DO CONSISTENTLY  
WITHOUT LOVING AWARENESS,  
PATIENT PRACTICE,  
AND FERVENT PRAYER**

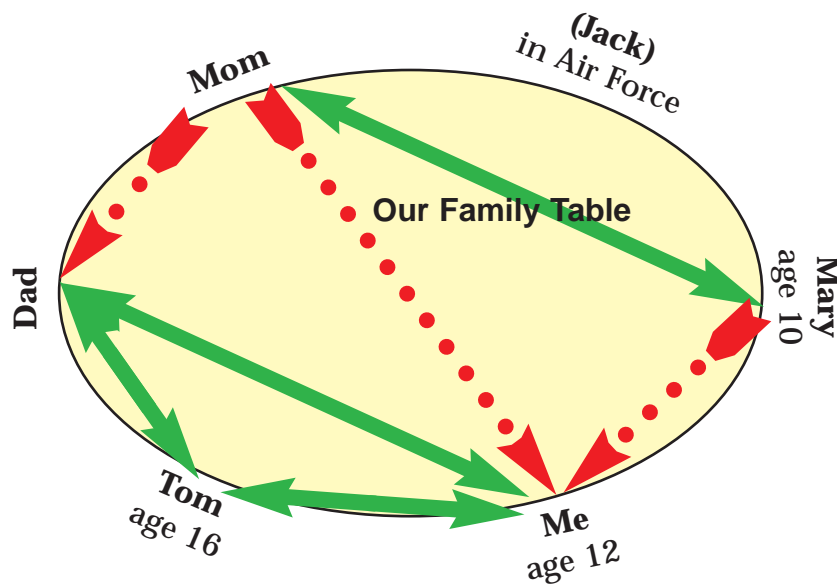
We trust you'll be blessed as you take the time to have a Christ-like holiday with those you spend that time with.

***Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz***

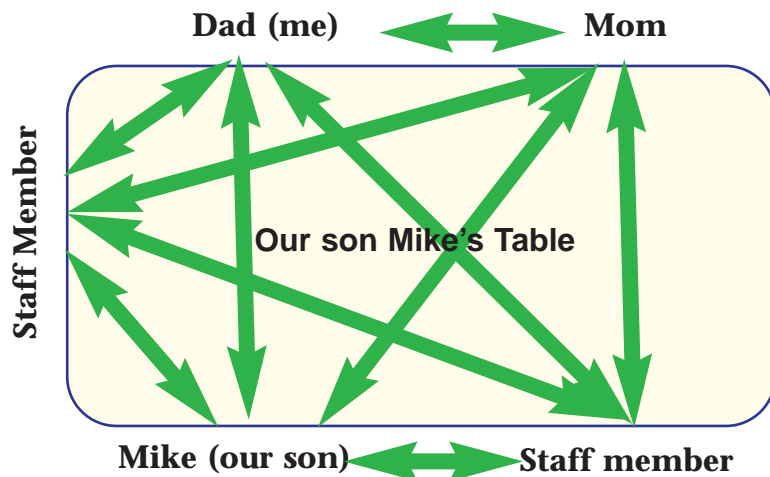
## What Is *Your* Dinner Table Like? *Would Jesus feel comfortable sitting with your family?*

At a Serendipity Seminar in 1973, we were asked to draw our dining room table as we remembered it at age 12. Then we were asked to draw *lines of communication* to and from each person at the table. Arrows indicated who talked. *Two-way green arrows* indicated positive communication with each other. *Red arrows* indicated arguments, criticism, or a person who dominated conversations. *Absence of arrows* indicated silence. (Below is Mike's table at age 12 as an example.)

We've used this tool with thousands of people on retreats. Families have been helped greatly as each person drew *their own perception* of their dinner table. We encourage *you* to try this! After everyone has drawn their table, discuss each drawing, respecting their views as they share. If you do this candidly without accusation, you'll bless each other!



Another example: When our son, Mike, was 12, we were living at a church retreat center. I asked a men's retreat to draw their dining room table when they were 12, and then as adults. After we discussed the tables, one of the men asked our son to draw *our* table. Below is what he drew. I remember his words: "My Dad likes to have everyone talk and share. It's a happy time!"



Give each person a piece of paper and ask them to draw their table, as a child of 12 and currently, using the criteria we mentioned above.

Be patient as you discuss each other's tables. Invite Jesus into your discussion.

# Rendering Account To God For Your Time

Few of us think much about a particular important responsibility we have before God: to render account to Him for our use of the time He daily gives each of us. We are commanded:

*“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil”* (Ephesians 5:15,16).

*“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him”* (Colossians 3:17).

Time is more than a passage of minutes and hours. How we use our time is a direct reflection of how intense and purposeful our relationship with Jesus is. We’ve so often observed that people who handle their time poorly are habitually beset by sin, grumble frequently, or even question their faith. They live as if time is *their own* to use, rather than regarding their time as the opportunity to represent Jesus in the flesh to the world around them.

## Instructions for Filling In *Your Week’s Use of Time* Chart

This is great to do with others! On the next page is a chart by which you’ll be able to examine a "typical week" in your life. At first, the instructions may seem complicated. But as you fill in the spaces, you’ll begin to evaluate your life with a greater degree of objectivity. (BE SURE TO USE A PENCIL AS YOU FILL IN THE SHEET!)

1. Begin by blocking off periods of time in each day when you know that you are normally involved with a specific activity, *i.e.*, midnight-6AM: sleep. Other blocks of time might be: work, caring for your children, shopping, etc. If you must travel as part of a block of time, include the travel time to and from as part of that time slot.
2. After you’ve blocked out your week, go back over each block of time coding each block with either the code **ND** or **D**.

### CODE

### DEFINITION

**ND** *Non-discretionary time* is that portion of your day that *has to take place*. Include time for sleep, care for children, work, cooking, Sunday worship, etc.

**D** *Discretionary time* is that portion of your day when you have a chance to *choose what you want to do*. Included in this time could be reading, watching TV, taking a walk, Bible study, sports, etc.

Next: after the code **D**, go back and write in one of the following codes:

**BO** *Bless Others* time is when you choose to do something that *directly blesses others*. Included in this time might be intercessory prayer, calling someone to encourage them, visiting widows, volunteering in some way to help others, etc.

**BM** *Bless Me* time is when you choose to do something that is *solely for yourself*. Included in this time might be a walk, watching TV, reading, etc.

	12A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12A
Sunday																									
Monday																									
Tuesday																									
Wednesday																									
Thursday																									
Friday																									
Saturday																									

Now total how you use your time. Using the box to the right, sum up your **ND** (non-discretionary) and **D** (discretionary time). When you total these times together, they should equal 168 hours.

	<u>Time</u>
<b>ND</b>	_____
<b>D</b>	_____
<b>Total Time:</b>	_____ = 168 hours
<b>BO</b>	_____
<b>BM</b>	_____
<b>Total BO/BM:</b>	_____ = D

Next, break down your **D** (discretionary time) into **BO** (bless others) time, and **BM** (bless me) time. When you total these times together, they should equal your **D** (discretionary time).

**Now that you see how your week is spent, what is your initial reaction?**

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**When you evaluate your discretionary time and how you use it, are you *sinning* in how it is spent? (Yes) or (No). Describe your Christian life. Is it the type of life Jesus would commend you for?**

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**Is there anything you'd like to change in how you use your time? Be specific. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how *Jesus* would use your discretionary time if He were you. What specific changes do you plan to put into practice?**

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