

**The Early Morning Walk:
Setting Practical Priorities**
by Lynn Jackson

Two ladies dressed in walking clothes proceed around the room and through the crowd as they discuss how to make wise decisions on using their time.

ONE: It's a beautiful day. I'm so glad school is back in session. I've missed my early morning walks.

TWO: Thanks for inviting me to join you. I wasn't sure if I'd have the time, even though I know I need to make the time to exercise. It seems there are a lot of things I should do, but I'm not sure how to pick which ones to do. You seem to have it all figured out. What's your secret?

ONE: I felt the same way you do when I moved here. You have to get through all the moving stuff: packing and unpacking, registering for everything first. Then you're hit with all the volunteer opportunities. A wise woman told me you could volunteer yourself to exhaustion on this installation.

TWO: I knew you'd understand, but how did you decide what to invest your time in? Like everyone else, my time is limited.

ONE: Well, I'm a Christian, so that clarifies my first priorities. I spend time with God every day. I make time to minister to my family.

TWO: I can see those priorities plainly, but what about after that? How do you decide where to invest the remainder of your time?

ONE: Some things are easy to dismiss. Things I have no talent for, nor any desire to learn.

TWO: Yes, I was definitely not going to join the quilting club. I can hardly sew on a button. And hours of cutting and sewing fabric sounds like torture to me. But, even with the obvious eliminated, there are always more opportunities than time.

ONE: Yes, there are many good things and the challenge is to find the best thing to invest my time in. As in all things, I resort to prayer. Asking God what He wants to do in and through me at this time and in this place where He put me.

TWO: You really believe God put you here? It's not just an arbitrary military decision?

ONE: Yes, I believe He manages every aspect of my life. And I know He has a purpose for me in this place.

TWO: So, He tells you where to volunteer?

ONE: Yes and no. Sometimes my place of service is very plain. Since my spiritual gift is teaching, I always teach either Sunday School or a Lady's Bible Study. Then I consider volunteer opportunities on the basis of whether they will have eternal impact, bring glory to God, or prepare me to serve Him better.

TWO: So, walking fits in the last criteria. It prepares you to serve Him better because you need to be healthy.

ONE: Yes. The opposite is also true. I have a weakness for overeating, so the baking club is not for me. Mostly I rely on the peace or lack of it I feel when I consider an opportunity. For example, if I get an application for service and can't think of anyone to put as a reference, I'm probably not supposed to take the job.

TWO: Here we are back at my house. You've given me a lot to think about: God put me here; He has a plan for my time; I need to pray about any opportunity I consider. But, what if I don't get an answer?

ONE: Then wait. God isn't trying to keep His will a secret. He will reveal it in His time. I usually get into trouble when I jump into things using my own strength. Either I'm over extended or I fail. But, Christ's plan is that I have an abundant life!

TWO: That's exactly what I'm looking for! I'll see you tomorrow at the same time?

ONE: God willing.