

# **How to Keep the Elephants Off Your Air Hose**

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## Introduction.

A. Elijah saw the countryside covered with invading armies and told his servant to not fear.

1. Those with us are more than those with them.
2. Elijah prayed the Lord open the eyes of his servant.
3. We need the Lord to open our eyes.
4. In Christian work we need to be efficient and effective.
  - a. Efficiency means doing the right thin in the right way.
  - b. Effectiveness means doing the right thing.

B. I want to probe six areas of life.

1. Intellectual.
2. Social.
3. Emotional.
4. Physical.
5. Professional.
6. Spiritual.

C. In each area I want to bring out three areas for discussion then have discussion.

I. Three principles to get us started.

A. Cultivate the art of thinking.

1. Nothing is as easy as thinking but nothing is as difficult as thinking well.
  - a. Paul talks of the peace of God that passes understanding. (Philippians 4:7)
  - b. Thinking must be under the direction of the Spirit of God.
  - c. We are not what we think we are, what are what we think.
  - d. As a man thinks in h is heart so is he. (Jesus)

- e. This has nothing to do with age but with attitude.
- f. We are either growing or dying, regardless of our age.
- g. An interesting epitaph read, “Died age 28; buried age 64.” This is the story of many lives.
- g. I know a man 86 who loves to engage me in intellectual talk.
- h. Brains are meant to be used.
- i. What you feed your brain will determine how you think.
- j. Leaders are readers.
- k. It bothers me that some Navigators apologize for not having a degree.

- 1. Read wisely and widely.
- 2. I can tell the value of a book by how long it takes me to get through it.
- 3. If I can blow through it without stopping to think it’s not very good.
- c. We need think time in every day.
- d. Always have something cooking on the back burner of your brain.
- e. Feed your mind something every day to simmer on the back burner.

2. Learn to manage your time.

- a. This is our one common denominator.
- b. We don’t have the same IQ or spiritual gifts.
- c. Jesus had the same amount of time that we have.
- d. *The Tyranny of the Urgent* is a book that is worth reading.
- e. Scriptures I have been thinking on lately are interesting with respect to time.
  - 1. God foreordained good works we should be involved in. (Ephesians 2:5-10)
  - 2. Therefore if I have no time I am either doing the wrong things or things God has not ordained me to do.
  - 3. The context of the spirit filling section is interesting. We are to carefully walk, not as morons but as the spiritually insightful. (Ephesians 5:15-

4. Only the control of the Spirit can enable a man to redeem the time.

5. Walking in the flesh leaves us time for nothing.

6. Our lives pass quickly and we need to ask God to number our days that we may use them wisely. (Psalm 90:10-12)

i. A friend so convicted by this psalm he got a reverse calendar.

ii. Every day he wants to know about how much time he has left.

7. Time boils down to schedule, priorities, and discipline

i. Priorities determine schedule and schedule determines discipline of time.

ii. Students who want to preach must have schedules that allow for consistent time in the word.

iii. We need to evaluate activities in light of our priorities.

iv. This is not legalism but guidelines to help me become what I have prayerfully determined to do.

8. A great curse is reading biographies of great Christians because we intend to imitate them.

9. I have lulls in my day from 4:30 to 6:30 pm. So here I go home and play with the dog or wrestle with my kids or walk. By 6:30 I hit the books again.

10. We often eat the largest meal in the middle of the day, which puts us in a fog, so I eat lightly at lunch and stay awake.

11. When are you most efficient and least efficient?

i. I'm a morning person.

ii. My wife is a night owl.

3. Evaluate your performance.

a. Helpful Scriptures for this are in Proverbs. (Proverbs 13:7; 11:24)

b. Plan time for evaluation for periodic assessment.

1. A friend shared his business goals for this year and I asked him his spiritual goals for the New Year.

2. He went to the Holiday Inn and prayed with his wife, read the word, and asked God for goals.

3. Establish strengths and weaknesses.

i. What is going well for you?

ii. What do you need to work on?

c. Compare yourself with yourself, not with others.

1. You might be ahead of someone else yet behind in what god wants.

2. Get in line with God's plan for your life.

II. What are some things you want to talk about?

A. How does thinking differ from meditation?

1. Meditation is brainwashing the mind with God's truth, renewing the mind.

2. We need not human viewpoints but divine viewpoints.

3. Thinking includes this but is more than this.

B. If you and your wife are different as night owl and early birds you need to capitalize on the time you do have in common.

C. Reading widely includes reading books I disagree with.

1. If a book does not challenge me it doesn't help me.

2. We are sometimes afraid to be challenged by want our prejudices rearranged.

3. We need to dig new holes for new viewpoints.

4. I pick books based on authors, for if I have come to trust a writer I can trust his writing.

5. I look for a book that has been on the market for a sufficient period of time.

a. Herman Horne's *Jesus the Master Teacher* early 1900 is still in print.

b. Horn and Dewey both viewed the life of Jesus.

6. I look for books out of my field so I can grow.

a. I read on architecture.

b. I read on ornithology

c. I look for books on the best seller list, for example Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*.

d. I read three books per week and 35 journals per month.

e. To do this I read faster.

f. Norman Lewis' *How to Read Better and Faster*.

g. I have no study in my home but I read in airports during waiting times.

h. If you learn to read better and faster you will retain more.

7. I don't read journals entirely but selectively.

8. I rarely read novels though my wife says novels are significant.

D. We can analyze contemporary music to reach kids.

E. Do more snatch reading, when you have ten minutes here and there.

1. Everyone in my family reads so we discuss books over dinner.

2. This is constructive time, not wasted time.

F. I enjoy Christian writers that have original ideas.

1. I like Joe Bailey.

2. Chad Walsh, though he's not an evangelical wrote *Early Christians of the Twentieth Century*.

3. C. S. Lewis is excellent.

G. Getting depth and breath in reading is important.

1. The more exposure we get on a subject the better we are.

2. Shallow thinking is shoddy thinking.

H. Contemporary mentality is best summarized by Francis Shaffer.

1. Exploring contemporary music gets us behind contemporary thinking.

2. Everything is anti—anti government, anti religion, etc.

I. Self development.

1. Set goals and break them down into smaller units.

2. Ask myself what will happen when?
3. This qualifies things.
4. For example, if I want to disciple men I must first select a group of men, then the materials I need, etc.
5. I spend one hour each day in the word and only one month in a book so I cover twelve books a year.
6. My word is to master the word of God and this is a strategy.
  - a. Dr. Barnhouse created in my heart a desire to master the word.
  - b. I have long range goals but they are quantifiable.
  - c. Each month I begin a new book.

J. When I read significant articles I save them, though this is rare.

1. I do have a subject file on books of the Bible.
2. I have an illustration file.

K. I don't usually take notes but I underscore a little.

1. You cannot grasp a book all in one reading.
2. You cannot grasp a book all in one time of life because you grow.
3. John Milton Gregory's *The Laws of Teaching* should be read once every year.
4. I've been teaching seminary for 27 years and I read it every year.

L. Freewheeling and directive thinking are both necessary.

1. Creative thinkers are freewheeling.
2. The man who invented the flash cube is an evangelical who got his idea from a phenomenon in nature.

M. College students pay attention to a man not a course.

1. Ask kids to evaluate teachers.
2. Significant persons motivate others to succeed.
3. Huston Peterson's *Great Teaching* is worthwhile.

N. An important thing is to ask what I want to inculcate into my kids.

1. If only one thing what would it be?
2. I would inculcate honesty into a person.
3. Set up your life on this basis.
4. Your values show up in your home.
5. Look at a man's home to discover his value system.
6. Values are modeled.
7. Another thing we teach our kids is to be individuals.
8. We don't follow other people - we follow Christ.
9. We need to thank God for allowing us to be his representatives in this generation.