

Steer Clear of Dangerous Destiny Detours With These 4 Wise Strategies

You're always on the go. Scrambling to find enough minutes in the day for everything you need to accomplish. When you're feeling maxed out, it's hard to live intentionally and set aside time for God. How do you make time for what matters most?

I remember one Sunday I had a dilemma that taught me the importance of finding balance in my life. We were a few minutes late for church, and we took a seat behind the children. In our church, pre-K through sixth-grade kids sit in the sanctuary during worship and then are released after worship to go to their children's program. We were barely seated when one of the sixth-grade girls jumped from her seat and rushed to John. "Would you be our teacher today? Our teacher isn't here."

It turns out there was a miscommunication between the children's director and the teacher, but that still meant someone was needed to help with the sixth-grade boys and girls. My husband was quick to respond, and another woman was too. And I just sat there. I forced myself not to follow. Why?

I knew I could get up to help. I was physically and mentally able to come up with a lesson on the fly. But deep down I knew I couldn't. I homeschool. I write and blog. I lead our teen mom support group. I didn't have one ounce of "extra" in me to give.

It's hard saying no. Really hard. The only easy way to do it is by understanding what we were called to say yes to. Here are a few ways to pursue what really matters in life:

Make a List of Your Life Themes

Life themes are the things that come from the core of us. Yet during different seasons of life they may look different. These are my eight priorities in this season of life. These are the things I choose to say yes to:

1. Being a child of God
2. Being a wife
3. Being a mom (adoption is a huge part of this now, as is homeschooling).
4. Mentoring teen moms
5. Writing books
6. Blogging
7. Keeping a home
8. Staying healthy

Knowing what is most important in your life will make the next step easier: saying no.

Know When to Say No

My husband loves children's church. It's his passion, and he took a break from it when we adopted our new kids, mostly because the adjustment was huge. If he were to create a list of his eight life themes, children's church would be on that list.

Because I love John and enjoy children, I've supported him in this. Before adopting our new kids, I spent most Sundays working by his side, but in this season of life, I just can't do it. I need Sundays to get filled up so I can pour out the rest of the week.

A time may come when I start helping John in children's ministry again. But now is not that time. And I'm OK with that. I know Jesus has created me for a purpose in this day. In this season.

If someone asks you to do something that doesn't fall under your life themes, take time to consider if you should commit. Know that it is okay to decline. Being picky with your commitments will give you the time, energy and passion to fully invest in what matters most to you.

Surrender Your Control and Plans to God

I'm a person who likes to handle things on my own. I take pride in doing a job well. I like to be organized and feel in control. Yet a busy schedule and kids is more than I can handle. I'm not always organized, and I'm rarely in control. I need God. Reminding myself of that and turning to Him changes everything.

I love marking things off my to-do list, but today I just sat down with my kids and played. We played blocks. We played toy animals, and I wondered why I don't do this more often. "Being" a mom is more important than doing things around the house.

Tricia Goyer *has written more than 35 books, including both novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as Guideposts, Thriving Family, Proverbs 31 and HomeLife Magazine.*