



# UNTANGLE HOLIDAY & STRESS

10 WAYS TO REDEEM TIME  
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

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# UNTANGLE HOLIDAY STRESS

Ahh, the end of the year is here.

Time for get-togethers, delicious dinners, and—

Stress?

Maybe you're looking forward to decorating your abode with symbols of the season. Or maybe you're enjoying the parade of leaves sporting brilliant colors.

Or perhaps you're visualizing a plump turkey, surrounded by savory sides and chatty relatives, chomping at the bit to sample your prize-worthy pumpkin pie.

But if your life resembles the rest of ours—overflowing with more tasks than time—the busy holiday season can feel intimidating.

How are you supposed to spruce up your home and craft all those delicious dishes when the kids need to be monitored and the groceries bought and the laundry sorted while your to-do list multiplies itself with each passing day?

If making time is a must, here are ten ways to help you redeem the time.

## 1. TARRY WITH GOD

Have you read [Malachi 3](#) recently? The concept of tithing comes from this famous passage: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,’ says the Lord Almighty” ([Malachi 3:10–11](#)).

Malachi’s original audience relied on agriculture for survival. Therefore, God’s promise to protect their produce from pests guaranteed their livelihood.

Tithing unlocked this benefit.

But if giving God 10% of our assets assures His protection for the rest, might the same principle work with time? That is if we daily designate a chunk of our time for God, might He protect the rest of it from time thieves like traffic jams, silly squabbles, or getting stuck in long check-out lines?

One thing is certain: seeking His presence never hurts ([Deuteronomy 4:29](#), [Psalm 16:11](#), [Matthew 6:33](#)).

## 2. WHERE’S WISDOM?

When there are too many things to do, you might feel tempted to panic or rush into tackling as much as you

can. However, attacking things hurriedly often translates into unnecessary expenditures of time.

The Bible offers a superior strategy. Seek wisdom first: “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding” ([Proverbs 4:7](#), NKJV).

[Proverbs 8:1–3](#) make it clear that when you need to make decisions, wisdom is present to voice its counsel. Therefore, the busier you are, the more you ought to say to wisdom, “you’re my sister” ([Proverbs 7:4](#), ESV).

That is, consult with wisdom frequently. Ask God for the wisdom to tackle your to-do list efficiently. Check in with wisdom throughout the day to see if you’re on the right track.

### **3. ASK FOR ACCELERATION**

Even when you’re wise with your time, petitioning God to expedite things can still help. If He could suspend time—as recorded in [Joshua 10:12](#) and corroborated by today’s [researchers](#)—He can also eliminate time from the equation.

The Almighty is an expert at this. For instance, Jesus sped up time so that the wine-making process, which would’ve ordinarily taken years, transpired within seconds instead ([John 2:1–11](#)). The Holy Spirit plucked Philip from one place and dropped him off elsewhere ([Acts 8:39–40](#)). Jesus promised that in the end, time

will be shortened: “If God doesn’t make the time shorter, no one will be left alive. But because of God’s chosen ones, he will make the time shorter” ([Matthew 24:22](#), CEV).

Perhaps you don’t need God to compress years into seconds. But if need be, ask Him to shrink time so what would’ve naturally taken you longer can now occupy a fraction of the time, freeing you up for other things.

Is there anything too hard for God? ([Jeremiah 32:27](#)).

#### **4. NO TIME TRAPS**

Praying for God to expedite things will only work if you steward time wisely. Why would He create more time only to see you squander it by complaining, gossiping, or engaging in any other futile activity?

This doesn’t mean canceling Netflix or Kindle Unlimited. Living on our conflict-ridden earth dictates the regular need to rest and relax. However, while a quick social media run might alleviate the pressure after a full day of catering to everyone else’s needs, it’s not relaxing to lose track of time by mindlessly scrolling post after TikTok post.

If you’re accustomed to coping with stress by killing time, here’s a better way:

#### **5. LISTEN TO YOURSELF**

What is going on? Why am I stressed out? What do I need

to destress? Asking yourself these diagnostic questions can discover the root causes of your restlessness, which can then develop more contentment with your world.

Trained professionals are available to help lower your anxiety and overall stress level. Whether or not you decide to involve a therapist for your individual needs (or a couples therapist for your relationship), it's best to actively work on lowering your stress rather than avoiding it by resorting to time traps above.

## **6. MINIMIZE MULTITASKING**

Many consider multitasking as an effective way to save time. However, this is a myth. Research shows how shifting between tasks—the actual definition of multitasking—can cost up to 40% of time. That's because focusing on one task, stopping, and shifting our focus to the second task—before stopping and resuming our focus on the first task—add up to one massive waste of time.

Instead, plan ahead. Start with an overview of all the tasks which await you and design a stepwise system to accomplish them one by one.

## **7. DELEGATE**

If you're used to being independent, or if you pride yourself in eschewing help, this point might stretch your comfort zone. However, being wise with time can mean delegating. This might mean it's appropriate to

peel your teen daughter from her phone so she can assist you for Thanksgiving. Show her your favorite green bean casserole recipe, demonstrate how to do it, and empower her to prepare the dish.

Don't hesitate to recruit her middle-school brother to wash and chop the vegetables.

## **8. MANAGE PERFECTIONISM**

Perfectionism costs time. There's the tendency to work and rework (and re-rework) your sweet potato soufflé because the first ten tries didn't emerge fluffy enough. Then there's procrastination, as in putting things off for fear that if you dare to try the recipe again, the eleventh time still won't satisfy.

There's also the possibility of being so perfectionistic that the moment you spot the soggy casserole your daughter created, your immediate response is to criticize—which, as you'll see, is another time killer.

Unclench perfectionism's grip by exploring where this tendency came from and what it accomplishes for you.

## **9. SKIP THE FIGHTS**

Have you noticed how much time fighting requires? A juicy fight can consume any number of hours (if not days). Consider how the original incident triggers your defense mechanisms, such as doubling your heartbeat and flustering you. As though the ensuing yelling match

or silence treatment doesn't already tax enough time, there's also the recovery period to contend with.

It takes up to an hour for your body to recover from this heightened state.

That's not to mention the follow-up period of patching things up with the other person, which can also take considerable time.

Living with an open heart can help. This means giving the other person the automatic assumption that he or she harbors no agenda to ruin your happiness. This way, instead of harping on your daughter for her demoralizing casserole, you can present it to the family sans shame and save yourself hours of bickering.

## **10. BOUNDARY-SETTING**

Saying no isn't a sin. Some invitations, requests, and projects can wait until after the holiday season, while others don't need your yes at all. But if boundary-setting is difficult, [browse these tips](#).

Reading the article might demand a few of your precious minutes.

But what's this investment compared to the oodles of time you'll gain by boundary-setting?





### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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