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What's Best Next: How The Gospel Transforms The Way You Get Things Done



Synopsis

Do Work That Matters Productivity isn't just about getting more things done. It's about getting the right things done---the things that count, make a difference, and move the world forward. In our current era of massive overload, this is harder than ever before. So how do you get more of the right things done without confusing mere activity for actual productivity? When we take God's purposes into account, a revolutionary insight emerges. Surprisingly, we see that the way to be productive is to put others first---to make the welfare of other people our motive and criteria in determining what to do (what's best next). As both the Scriptures and the best business thinkers show, generosity is the key to unlocking our productivity. It is also the key to finding meaning and fulfillment in our work. What's Best Next offers a practical approach for improving your productivity in all areas of life. It will help you better understand: Why good works are not just rare and special things like going to Africa, but anything you do in faith even tying your shoes. How to create a mission statement for your life that actually works. How to delegate to people in a way that actually empowers them. How to overcome time killers like procrastination, interruptions, and multitasking by turning them around and making them work for you. How to process workflow efficiently and get your email inbox to zero every day. How your work and life can transform the world socially, economically, and spiritually, and connect to God's global purposes. By anchoring your understanding of productivity in God's purposes and plan, What's Best Next will give you a practical approach for increasing your effectiveness in everything you do.

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Customer Reviews

I just finished: What's Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done by Matt Perman. This is the book I imagine John Piper would write on productivity; its Christian hedonism/Jonathon Edwards mixed with a good dose of the best secular authors on productivity. This shouldn't surprise us since Perman worked for Desiring God for some time, and Piper writes the forward. As the title implies, this book is not just a collection of productivity hacks; instead, it articulates a Christian theology of why we should prize efficiency, well also explaining why we sometimes shouldn't. This may be the book's most important contribution, given that much of what matters in the information age is intangible, and often feels incredibly unproductive (i.e., writing a book, networking). Like most New Testament epistles, the book begins with theology, and only then moves toward practice. As a New Testament professor, my favorite part was the theology of productivity section. The rest feels familiar, covering skills like speed reading and task management (an expanded and updated version of Getting Things Done by David Allen mixed with First Things First by Covey). I don't feel like I learned much from the skills section, but I loved the incredible selection of quotes from Christian history about productivity, especially from Jonathon Edwards, which will sparkle in future sets of class notes! Along with this, Perman has also included interviews with a variety of Christian and secular influencers on their own habits of productivity. The interviews range from Seth Godin to my favorite Christian blogger, Tim Challies. To be honest, I was hoping for more from these interviews, given the way they were hyped in the introduction.

Disclosure: Matthew Perman generously provided an advance PDF copy of this book. I'm so very happy he did! Perman candidly testifies that his hope of achieving a "mind like water" was very rarely ever achieved through GTD practices. Instead, he found his state of mind of being one of "mind like a tsunami" (15). Mine, too. "Getting Things Done" (GTD, Allen), "Zen to Done" (ZTD, Babauta), and "Getting Results the Agile Way" (GRAW, Meier) are brilliant and practical authors whose methodologies have helped me in becoming more efficient and productive. Yet, too many good things have been left undone, too many people have not been loved and served as I would want to be loved and served, and too many opportunities to do great things of eternal impact have been wasted. These facts have left me heartsick. What have I been doing wrong in implementation? Was there a better tool than OmniFocus that I needed to find? Should I switch from Moleskine to Rhodia? Was there no hope? I'm a full-time pastor of a small but thriving country church in rural Washington. My wife's chronic, debilitating and incurable disease is ever worsening. My own recently diagnosed Polycystic Kidney and Liver disease, according to the exceedingly caring and

thorough docs at the VA, will continue to degrade my energy level. Could it ever be true that there was a system that would adapt to not only a "mind like tsunami" but a "life like tsunami"? Brother Matthew has helped me to see that I've been first looking for a system that would enable productivity when I should have been first looking for a person--the Savior! Perman writes, "Productivity is specifically about doing 'the will of the Lord.

My desire to read Matt Perman's "What's Best Next" came from my own need. Having tried many ways at time management, nothing has ever really clicked into place for me. I've heard popular bloggers talk about Perman's advice on effectiveness for years and was excited when I saw this book was coming out. The book begins by busting up common myths about productivity. Many of the myths he listed were things I had previously believed. Thus, the introduction alone hooked me. Perman then goes on to say that his "aim in this book is to reshape the way you think about productivity and then present a practical approach to help you become more effective in your life with less stress and frustration, whatever you are doing" (20). This is what I need and you probably do too. The rest of the book is broken up into seven parts. That sounds like a lot but they move fast. Perman is an engaging writer who doesn't waste word in bringing his message to his readers. Over those seven parts, Perman explains why it's hard to get things done but why just getting things done isn't enough. He presents a better--more realistic and purposeful--approach to effectiveness and productivity. This involves figuring out what's most important and clarifying your roles. For Perman, the gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a key factor in this part of his productivity. Trusting God, knowing his calling, and glorifying Christ all bring focus to his life and planning. From here, Perman gives practical direction and resources for putting these principles into practice. Here he covers setting up routines, planning out weeks, eliminating wasted time, managing projects, and handling email. All of this information comes together in ways that make sense and seem doable.

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