Everybody cheats. We have to. You have several important calls on your life. You have career potential to fulfill, a spouse to love, a family to raise, a ministry to perform. The list goes on. Each of these things has tremendous merit in your life and for the world at large. None of them should be neglected.

However, when you consider the limited number of hours in a day, there’s no way you can reach your full potential in all those areas. There’s just not enough time.

Your situation isn’t that different from mine. If you stayed at work until everything was finished . . . if you took advantage of every opportunity that came your way . . . if you sought out every angle to maximize your abilities, improve your skills, and advance your career . . . you would never go home.

Likewise, if you stayed at home until every ounce of affection was poured out in all the appropriate places . . . if you kept giving until every emotional need was met . . . if you did every chore, finished the “honey do” list, and did everything necessary to ensure that everyone felt loved . . . you would never make it work.

In fact, if you are a parent, you know that your kids alone could command every waking hour if you let them. Add to that your fitness goals, your hobbies and friendships. The list is endless and so are the time requirements.

So let me take some pressure off you. Your problem is not discipline. Your problem is not organization. Your problem is not that you have yet to stumble onto the perfect schedule. And your problem is not that the folks at home demand too much of your time. The problem is there is not enough time to get everything done that you are convinced—or others have convinced you—needs to get done.

As a result, someone or something is not going to get what they want from you . . . what they need from you . . . what they deserve from you . . . certainly not what they expect from you. There is no way around it. There is just not enough time in your day to be all things to all people. You are going to have to cheat somewhere. Our knee-jerk reaction to this dilemma is to answer the call of the squeakiest wheel. Whoever creates the biggest mess ends up with the lion’s share of our time and attention. We run from fire to fire, troubleshooting our way through life, rescuing the needy and rewarding those who can’t seem to stay out of trouble.

But that certainly isn’t strategic and it doesn’t solve anything. Over time, our families learn that the only way to get our attention is to create a crisis. And let’s face it, it is amazing how much time we can steal from work when our kids are in crisis. Men and women become incredibly bold with their managers, company presidents, and boards when there is a crisis at home. What was unthinkable becomes non-negotiable.

I know a CEO who just spent twenty-nine days with his wife at a detox center six hundred miles from their home. Twenty-nine
days. Yet over the past three years he has done almost nothing in terms of investing in what he would tell you now is his most important relationship. And if anyone had suggested he take a twenty-nine day vacation in order to invest in his marriage, he would have laughed. But he did—only when he had to.

Wouldn’t you do the same for your wife, or your husband, and your kids? Of course you would. So why wait? Why cheat at work when you have no choice? Instead of allowing the most recent crisis to dictate where you cheat, why not allow your cheating to be governed by the greatest purpose?

Let’s face it. One day you will come home from the office for the last time. Nobody retires from his or her family to spend his or her final days in the office. Your last day may be at sixty-five when you retire or at thirty-five when you are laid off. Either way, you are coming home. What and who you come home to will be determined by what and who you choose to cheat between now and then.

If you are like most, one person stands between you and the end of your current employment. Tomorrow, you could be called into someone’s office and told that your services are not needed anymore. Perhaps a decision like that would require the vote of a board. Either way, somebody has the power to send you home with the contents of your office in the trunk of your car.

I have seen too many men and women cheat their family only to find that the companies they worked for were not nearly as loyal to them as they were to the companies.

Loyalty in the marketplace is rarely reciprocated. It is sad when a man or woman is forced out of an organization they bled for to return home to the family they have neglected.

Why give your ultimate loyalty to an organization where your value is conditional upon your ability to perform? Why betray those whose loyalty is unconditional? Why devote so much of yourself to something you know will leave, and so little time to those you will eventually come home to? It doesn’t make any sense, does it? Yet without a conscious decision to do otherwise, that is exactly what most of us are prone to do.

For thirty days, instead of leaving the office when you are finished with everything, leave in time to get home when you have committed to be home. For thirty days, say “no” to anything that has the potential to pull you away from your decision. Decide now to say “no” to those times. In doing so, you place your career and finances squarely in the capable hands of your heavenly Father.

As you drive away from the office, ask for God to fill the gaps at the office while you attend to your unique responsibilities at home—being a husband, a wife, a father, a mother. At the end of thirty days, sit down and evaluate what has happened at home, in your finances and to your productivity at work. You will be surprised.

Everybody cheats. Don’t cheat the people who love you most. Don’t cheat the people who love you most. Don’t cheat the person who is looking forward to spending the rest of his or her life with you. Don’t cheat yourself of the peace that comes with knowing you are squarely in the will of the One who created you. Don’t cheat your kids of the security that comes with knowing that they are Mommy and Daddy’s priority.

It has been said before. It is worth saying again. Nobody gets to the end of his life and wishes he had spent more time at the office.

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