

Making Time to Be Holy

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On the streets of Hong Kong, life rushes by at a frenetic pace. Day or night, the throng moves in an orderly but hurried race from place to place. People pour into the subway and spill out the other side on their way to work, the marketplace, or school.

In a culture that prizes hard work and accomplishment, it can seem like there aren't enough hours in the day to do it all.

"I need more time," sighs Ng Kathy Ka-Lai, while taking a break with some of her young single adult friends at the end of a busy Sunday.

The friends are learning from experience that the world can be both insistent and smothering. It can pull a person in a dozen directions at once while worming its way into whatever time he or she has left. The world's demands on us can leave little time for spiritual things. And if we're not careful, before we realize it we are at the mercy of the world rather than in a position to call upon the mercy of God.

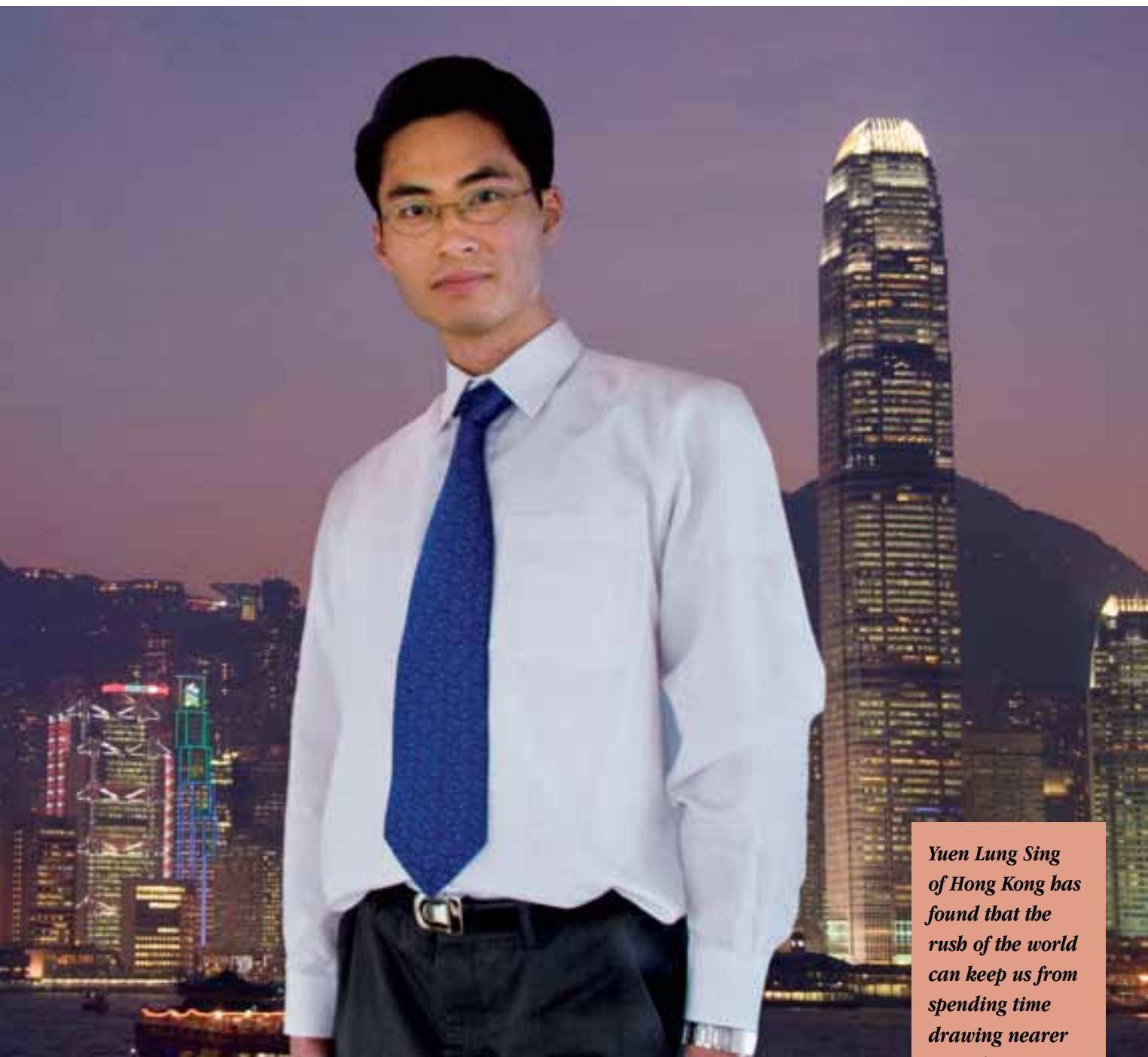
The World Rushes On

Kathy and her friends know how easy it is to get caught in the rush of the world.



Chow Shu Wai, 28, a manufacturing supervisor, works 70 hours a week. Yuen Lung Sing, 29, works more than 50 hours a week as a structural engineer. Kathy, 28, also works about 50 hours per week in sales and customer service. Chan Misty Lai Ming, a 27-year-old research assistant, and Tsang Dick Hing Leung, a 28-year-old mechanical engineer, both work about 45 hours.

And then these faithful young adult members accept



Yuen Lung Sing of Hong Kong has found that the rush of the world can keep us from spending time drawing nearer to God.

the added responsibilities that come with Church callings, in which they each spend 5 to 15 hours a week. The group includes a stake Young Women president, a counselor in the stake Young Men presidency, a counselor in the ward Sunday School presidency, a president of the region institute council, and a stake young single adult representative.

To find some time for personal spiritual renewal, the friends say one has to plan for it. That sometimes means

getting creative or sleeping less, including getting up earlier, going to bed later, and making use of commuting time and breaks at work.

“If we have the will to make time for things like scripture study, then it is easy to find time for them,” says Dick. “It’s when we don’t have a plan that we are more likely to waste any free time we find.”



NOT ENOUGH TIME?

“We will have to make some hard choices of how we use our time. But there should never be a conscious choice to let the spiritual become secondary as a pattern in our lives. Never. . . .

“ . . . When we put God’s purposes first, He will give us miracles. . . .

“ . . . Those apparent prison walls of ‘not enough time’ will begin to recede, even as you are called to do more.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Education for Real Life,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2002, 18, 20, 21.

Beware of Distractions

That’s because when the world isn’t demanding your attention with work and other responsibilities, it is usually trying to win your attention with other ways to fill your time.

“There are a lot of distractions in the world,” says Misty. For example, Misty mentions MP3 players, which allow you to take your favorite music with you wherever you go, but they can keep you from concentrating.

“I gave up my MP3 player almost a year ago,” she says. “It made it too hard to focus. I can’t think or ponder with my MP3 player going.”

Dick talks about TV. “If I have time for TV, I have time for scriptures,” he says. “We need to find a balance and do the right thing at the right time.”

For these young adults, the problem is not watching bad shows or listening to inappropriate music. The problem is letting entertainment take up what little time they have for spiritual things. Or as Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “When things of the world crowd in, all too often the wrong things take highest priority. . . . Satan has a powerful tool to use against good people. It is distraction. He would have good people fill life with ‘good things’ so there is no room for the essential ones.”¹

Sanctify Yourself

In trying to free themselves from the world, Dick, Kathy, Lung, Misty, and Shu are

learning their responsibility to do as the Lord says, “Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy” (Leviticus 20:7). The friends discussed how to seek sanctification.

1. By Faith

“They shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, that they may become sanctified in me” (Ether 4:7).

Faith leads to action, and these young adults believe that faith in Jesus Christ will lead to Christlike actions.



Throughout the day, Dick tries to think about Jesus as often as possible. “He is our example of holiness. What did Jesus do? What did He say?” he says.

He then tries to live that way.

Because of faith, the friends study the scriptures, attend institute, work with

the missionaries, and serve in the temple. They serve others and share their testimonies when possible. They also show that they are willing to sacrifice their desires in order to be obedient to the Lord.

“My mind *and* my actions must be focused on Jesus Christ,” says Kathy. “I can’t say I want to be more patient but then *do* nothing. If I believe Him and have faith in Him, I can become more like Him.”

2. By Study

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

“When we apply them, the scriptures



When there doesn't seem to be enough time to do everything, we need to give first priority to God, says Tsang Dick Hing Leung, Ng Kathy Ka-Lai, and Yuen Lung Sing.

become answers to help us face and solve our problems in life,” Dick says of his experience with scripture study.

Each of the friends agrees. And each of them reports trying to make time each day for scripture study, whether it's a half hour before work or bed or during their commutes.

Study, accompanied by prayerful pondering, opens us to inspiration, says Lung, and can even change our natures.²

“The scriptures deepen my understanding of the gospel,” Lung says. “I can feel the Spirit, and it draws me closer to God.”

3. By Sacrifice

“Sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God” (Helaman 3:35).

“The Savior asks us to be willing to sacrifice our own desires in order to follow God,” says Kathy.

“We must be willing to give up worldly things,” Misty agrees.

Lung, for example, talks about the young man in the Gospel of Luke who asked Jesus what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. The man had kept the commandments from a young age, but he was unwilling to give up his

riches when Jesus invited him to sell all that he had to follow the Savior (see Luke 18:18–23).

“He needed to sacrifice things he cared for to follow Christ,”

Lung explains. “We all have those things—not necessarily riches—but things that keep us from following Him.”

An example they discussed is King Lamoni's father being willing to give up all his sins to know God (see Alma 22:18).

“God wants to find out if we have faith to follow Him. He wants our hearts,” Misty says. “He wants to know what we love more. This is how we become His disciples.”

“To become holy, we must sacrifice our will, our desires,” says Shu.

4. By Obedience

“That which is governed by law is also preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same” (D&C 88:34).

Sacrificing our desires is sanctifying when we do it in order to do the Lord's will, live our covenants, and keep His commandments.

“God has given us laws,” says Dick. “Obedience to them sanctifies us.”



Being willing to sacrifice worldly pursuits in order to make time for God brings great blessings, according to Chow Shu Wai and Chan Misty Lai Ming.

“We would receive more blessings if we were more willing to obey,” says Kathy. “We can be happy keeping His law.”

5. By the Atonement

“We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10).

“To me, being holy means being worthy to be in the presence of God, to be pure,” says Lung. “This is possible only through the Atonement.”

“He has experienced all our difficulties already,” Misty says. “The feelings we have, He’s felt already. There is great power in the Atonement to make us holy as He is holy” (see Moroni 10:32–33).

Kathy says that part of allowing the Atonement to affect our lives is to “remember what the Savior has done” for us.

Dick says He feels the effects of the Atonement when he repents and keeps the commandments on a daily basis, allowing the Lord to make him clean—an example of how we can sanctify ourselves so the Lord can sanctify us (see Leviticus 20:7–8).

In the World, but Not of the World

These young adults are making time to be holy and freeing themselves from worldly things because the Lord has commanded us to “organize yourselves, and prepare yourselves, and sanctify yourselves; yea, purify your hearts, and cleanse your hands and your feet before me . . .”

But why He has commanded us to be holy is as important as understanding how to accomplish it.

“. . . that I may make you clean; that I may testify unto your Father, and your God, and my God, that you are clean from the blood of this wicked generation” (D&C 88:74–75).

“Life can be crazy,” says Dick, looking out over the endless bustle of Hong Kong at night. “When we make time for the Savior in life, we can have His help to overcome our challenges. Nothing in the world is as important to me as being able to return to my Father in Heaven.” ■

NOTES

1. “First Things First,” *Liabona*, July 2001, 7; *Ensign*, May 2001, 7.
2. See Boyd K. Packer, “Do Not Fear,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 77.