

Thirty Minutes Faster

By Jesse Criss edited with Grammarly

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about leadership and the things I have learned over the years, partly because I'm working on a new ebook on leadership but also because I have lots of reflection time these days.

If you have been following along over the last few months then you know I'm currently in transition. For me, that means I don't now work for a church, and I spend most of my days being a Manny (according to my wife) as the new school year started. It's my responsibility to get my twins up, feed, make lunches, get dressed and be off to pre-school three days a week. That seems like a simple task, but they are a lot of work. For this, to work, everyone needs to be up and out of bed no later than 7:30 am. That's easy enough, but it also means that I have to be up and ready to go. Ya my wife is here, and we could tag team this thing, but she works from home and tries to get some time in before breakfast.

So really for this whole thing to work I need to be up, showered, dressed and ready to go well before the twins. But it's not just physically being prepared I need to be mentally prepared as well. So the plan right now is to try and be up by 6:30ish each morning. So that I'm downstairs and ready by no later than 7:00 am.

I tell you this because this is a leadership principle that has governed my life and ministry for as long as I can remember.

Leadership Principle: As the leader, you need to be 30min ahead of everyone else.

This fundamental principle has been the driving force behind much of how I have operated in ministry. My goal is to always at the minimum be ready to go 30min ahead of myself at any given time. To be clear, that means physically, mental, emotional and spiritual ahead. Here are some examples of how that works in the real world of ministry.

- **Physically:** If I have youth group on Wednesday night and have leaders meeting at 6:00 pm, then I want to have everything I need for youth group READY 30min before that meeting. That allows me to be not only ready for the meeting but gives my mind a chance to be clear so I can provide clear directions to my leaders.
- **Mentally:** Typically, youth nights are formed into chunks of time that are about 30min long, mentally, you need to always be about 30min faster than you physically are. So if your running games from 7:30-8:00 pm and then switching to worship. The band will need to know 15min before the switch so they can set-up when you want to start worship at 8:15 pm.
- **Emotionally:** Life and youth ministry get busy, especially on youth nights. However, when your 30min faster than your first scheduled task, it gives you 30min to REST. To pause and breath, take a moment to eat, grab a drink or be still. This rest has been a life-giving moment for me over the years, especially on big event nights.
- **Spiritually:** I genuinely believe that when you operate 30min ahead, you are learning to trust that Jesus is in control. Your youth night or retreat day is long, and there are all kinds of things coming you can't control But what you can control is about 30min of time. After that, you are trusting Jesus to show up in big and powerful ways.

Being 30min early is not always easy. Even today in my home, 30min was maybe 15min, but I entered my day rested and ready for what was to come. In ministry, if you can be 30min ahead of yourself and teach your leaders how to be 30min ahead as well, it will change everything. Because you will walk into activity/program/event physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually ready for whatever God brings.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

The easiest way to start is to set a small and simple goal this week. All I want you to do is pick one activity or moment in your schedule and be 30min early. Then with that extra time rest, take a break, pray, breath, or read your bible. Don't just go on your phone, though, rest and pause. If you keep this up over time, it will become natural.