

Fil-Am Community Church

Pastor Chris Ireland

May 8th 2011 (Mothers Day)

God's Antidote to Busyness

Stressbusters – Part 2

Busyness...

Today is Mothers' Day, a day to honor our mothers. We are in part 2 of a series called "Stressbusters," and today's sermon is on busyness. I wanted to preach a message that would honor our mothers, and as I prepared, it came to me that this is a great message for mothers...and wives second...and women next and...sorry, guys...the rest of us. Women are the ones who take care of the house, take care for the family, see to the social calendar, make the food, shop...and pick up the slack for us guys when we fail in our responsibilities. Now men, we are certainly busy with work and around the house, but ours is a different kind of busyness. I think this describes a lot of us:

I have recently been diagnosed with AAADD: Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder. This is how it goes...

I decide to wash the car, start toward the garage and notice the mail on the table. Okay, I'm going to wash the car...

BUT FIRST I'm going to go through the mail. I lay my car keys down on the desk. After discarding the junk mail, I notice the trashcan is full. Okay, I'll just put the bills on my desk...

BUT FIRST I'll take the trash out. Since I'm going to be near the mailbox, I decide I'll address a few bills...

Yes, now where is the checkbook? Oops, there's only one check left. Now where did I put the extra checks? Oh, there's my empty cup from last night on my desk. I'm going to look for those checks...

BUT FIRST I need to put that cup back in the kitchen. I head for the kitchen, look out the window and notice the flowers need a drink of water. I put the cup on the counter and, Hey! There's my extra pair of glasses on the kitchen counter. What are they doing here? I'll just put them away...

BUT FIRST I need to water those plants. I head for the door and...Aaaagh! Someone left the TV remote in the wrong spot. Okay, I'll put the remote away and water the plants...

BUT FIRST I need to find those checks.

END OF DAY: Car not washed, bills still unpaid, cup still in the sink, checkbook still has only one check left, lost my car keys; and when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I'm baffled because...

I KNOW I WAS BUSY ALL DAY!!!

I realize this condition is serious...I'd get help...
BUT FIRST I think I'll check my email.

(Author Unknown)

The point is all of us our busy. A Harris poll found that in 2008, we had 10 hours less leisure time per WEEK than we did in 1973 when tracking began. We are working more and enjoying it less.

Here's a quiz to find out if you're a workaholic;

1. Are you always in a hurry?
2. Is your "To do" list always unrealistically long?
3. Do you use days off to catch up with unfinished work?
4. Has more than one person ever told you to slow down?
5. Do you feel guilty when you relax?
6. Do you have to get sick to take time off?

This is not the kind of life God wants you to live. Psalm 127:2 says, reading from The Message "*It's useless to rise early and go to bed late, and work your worried fingers to the bone. Don't you know He enjoys giving rest to those He loves?*" Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is go home and go to bed.

Many people think, if I give my life to God...if I really sell-out to Jesus Christ, He's going to put too much on my plate and I won't be able to handle it. Psalm 23:2 reads "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters"(KJV). If you were a sheep, you would understand this because it is a perfect picture of paradise. He's referring to rest and refreshment. God is interested in your rest and recreation. He wants you to live a whole, balanced and complete life. He wants you to not be working all the time. If you really give your life to Jesus Christ, He's probably not going to add more on, as much as He's going to take some things out of it to slow you down.

Those in the military and government love acronyms...and today we have an acronym and a prescription for busy people—God's way to RELAX.

1. R—Ralize my worth
2. E—Enjoy what I already have
3. L—Limit my labor
4. A—Aadjust my values
5. X—eXchange my pressure for God's peace

Realize My Worth

I see this one prevalent among guys. A lot of people confuse their jobs, their work, their position with their worth. People think if they work a lot, achieve a lot, they're worth a lot. We confuse who we are with what we do. We get our primary identity from what we do. When we meet someone, after we find out their name, our next question is usually "What do you do?"

The Bible doesn't teach this. It says our worth is regardless of what our work is. Many of us grew up with a little phrase in our minds that says "You're a nobody." Maybe it was a teacher

who told you that, or a brother, or a sister, or a former friend. Maybe a parent said “You’re never going to amount to much.” Therefore you say to yourself “I’ll show them. I’ll prove my worth by my accomplishments, my achievements, my job, my position.” Remember that grade school rhyme “sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me.” That’s not true. Names do hurt. Names last far longer than broken bones.

The antidote is to realize what God says about you. James 1:18 says in the New Century Version “*God decided to give us life through the word of truth so we might be the most important of all the things He made.*” God says you matter more than the rest of creation. You don’t have to prove your worth because God don’t make no junk! If you understand this...not just know, but feel and believe it...it will change you life. If God likes me, and I like me, and you don’t like me...well, that’s your problem.

1. You will never understand how much God loves you here and now.
2. There is nothing you can ever do that will make God love you more than He already does.
3. There is nothing you can ever do that will make God love you any less.

His love is unconditional, it’s not based on your performance, it’s based on who He is...

Enjoy What I Already Have

Ecclesiastes 3:13 says in The Good News Version “*All of us should eat and drink and enjoy what we have worked for. It is God’s gift.*” Can you get so preoccupied with getting more that you don’t enjoy what you have? Sure. We have a nice house, but my (brother, sister, friend, co-worker) just got a nicer, bigger house; now we have to have one. It’s like a disease, the desire to acquire. “I have to work all these hours because I’m suffering from desire to acquire.” Look again at that verse, “It is God’s gift.” It’s interesting to think of enjoying what we have as a gift from God...it’s worse to think of not enjoying what we have as rejecting God’s gift to us.

Ecclesiastes 4:6 reads again from The Good News Version “*...it is better to have only a little, with peace of mind, than be busy all the time...*” The greatest things in life aren’t things. I don’t know if you have noticed, but we are reading a lot from Ecclesiastes. I once heard that Solomon wrote three books in The Bible; Song of Solomon was written in his youth, Proverbs was written when he was middle-aged, and Ecclesiastes was written at the end of his life. Ecclesiastes looks at the best we can get in life apart from God. For years I have wanted to do a study on Ecclesiastes, because the truth God reveals in this book is so relevant to all of us, but especially college aged and young adults who are starting on the road to success in their careers. See, God through Solomon as he was reflecting on his life, found the truth of enjoying what we have... whether a lot or a little...because peace of mind is God’s gift to us that we cannot get apart from God.

Limit My Labor

I must make a conscious decision to make time for other things besides work. I need to schedule time with God alone and with my family. This is especially important for two groups:

1. Those of us who are self-employed. If you're self-employed, your tendency is to never stop working. I have my own company and boy, do I know this one. I go on vacation and my phone and computer come with me. It is vital to schedule down-time away from the business.
2. Those of you who are single parents. I don't know how you do it, work and manage a family at the same time. All of us need to set perimeters for ourselves. Our best requires rest.

Ecclesiastes 10:15 reads from The Good News Version "*Only someone too stupid to find his way home would wear himself out with work!*" Very direct...I do like Ecclesiastes.

A lady called a pastor one day upset. She said, "I called all day Monday and couldn't get through to you." The pastor said "Monday is my day off." The lady responded "The devil never takes a day off." To which the pastor replied "Yes, and if I didn't take a day off, I'd be just like the devil!"

The 10 Commandments are found in Exodus 20. The 4th commandment says in Exodus 20:9-10, reading from The Good News Version "*You have six days in which to do your work, but the 7th day is to be a day of rest dedicated to Me.*" It's above don't murder, don't commit adultery...it's that important to God.

Why? The Bible calls it the Sabbath. Sabbath means a day of rest. In Mark 2:27 Jesus says "*The Sabbath was made for man*" (KJV). The Sabbath is not a day to catch up on work we have neglected...or to put it another way, continue our cycle of busyness. There are three things we should do on our Sabbath.

1. Rest my body. If we don't take time to rest our body, our bodies will make time to rest themselves; either in the hospital, or with a cold or the flu. During the French Revolution, they outlawed Sunday as a day of rest. Within a few years they had to reinstate it. Not for religious reasons, but because the health of the nation had collapsed.
2. Recharge your emotions. You need quietness, you need recreation, you need relationships. This is the time to take time for yourself enjoying what you like. Catching up with friends, crafting, sewing, playing basketball, taking a walk. This is your me time.
3. Refocus your spirit. The Bible calls this worship. Worship brings things into perspective. Worship gives you more energy and understanding for the things you face. We need alone time with God daily. Every day, as I drive to work, I tell God good morning and talk with Him. It's my alone time. If you're too busy for God, you're too busy. You're missing out on the very thing you were created for.

Do you feel guilty when you relax? Jesus didn't. He took time off. In Mark 1:35 we read from the Contemporary English Version "*Very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went to a place where he could be alone and pray.*" Are you busier than Jesus? Is what you're doing more important than what Jesus did?

Adjust My Values

In order to reduce the busyness in our lives, we must change our thinking about what is important. Ecclesiastes 4:4 reads from the Good News Version “*I’ve learned why people work so hard to succeed; it is because they envy the thing their neighbors have.*” There are things more important than getting more, and God tells us what those things are and how to get them. In Psalm 46:10 God says “*Be still, and know that I am God...*” (KJV) and in Matthew 6:33 He tells us “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” (KJV). When God is first, He adjusts our lives and our schedules to give us “*the peace that passeth all understanding*” (Philippians 4:7 KJV).

Exchange My Pressure For God’s Peace

This gets to the very root of our stress. This is how we don’t let schedules rule us. This is where we give our stress, our lack of time, our busyness and our confusion to God and let Him show us His peace. A little child does not like to lie down and take a nap. As grownups, we know that rest is important for kids. We know that if little kids don’t get rest, it will not be good for them. Resistance to rest is a mark of immaturity. Sheep are prey animals and are instinctive herders. They will run and flee when stressed or threatened. Psalm 23:2 says “*He makes me lie down.*” Has God ever made you lie down? If we don’t slow down, sometimes God will just make you lie down and rest. He cares about you; you matter to Him.

When we have a relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ, He becomes the pacesetter for us. The only person wise enough to do this is Jesus, who knows us better than we know ourselves. When you let God rule your life, not only will you exchange your pressure for His peace, but it’s the right way, the healthy way, the whole way, the balanced way, the most relaxing way and the only way to fully live life to the fullest.

I love the way Matthew 11:28-29 reads from The Message where Jesus says “*Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep Company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.*”