

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

Busy, Hurried or Harried?

Overview: We all lead busy lives. Busy is good. The Bible says, "idle hands are the devil's workshop..." (*Proverbs 16:27, Living Bible*). We are encouraged to "use our time wisely" (*Colossians 4:5*). But has your being busy turned into hurried or even harried? Our discussion will lead us towards asking some questions to help us assess where we are at. And offer some suggestions for how to help us stay away from hurry and harried.

Segment Questions:

- On the "busyness" scale of 1-10 (1=not busy, 10=very busy) where would you place yourself? Would you like to see this number change? If so, to what?
- What would you consider to be the warning signs that your busyness has crossed over into hurried?
- If you were one of the disciples traveling with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, what do you think that five-day trip was like?
- As you read that Jesus would often slip away from the crowds to pray, how do you respond?
- People have different comfort levels of what it means to be busy. How does that play into the various interactions we have with how busy we consider ourselves?

Action Questions:

- Who is someone that you feel exemplifies well this idea of 'busy' but not "hurried?" What would it take to become more like them? If it was hard to come up with someone, what does that say?
- When you slip into being hurried, even if for a short time, what helps you recover back to the simplicity of being busy? Is "simplicity of being busy" possible or is that an oxymoron?
- If someone asked you how scripture justifies the phrase to "ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life" what would you say?

Personal Prayer: Lord, as I look at the model of Jesus, I see someone who was busy but not in a hurry. May my life be lived first by being daily engaged with my Heavenly Father through prayer and the study of God's word. Then as I live my days in the power of the Holy Spirit, please guide me to use my time wisely and treating others well without hurry.

Proverbs 27:17 | As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

Matthew 11:28-29 | Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Introduction

In 1967, experts on time management believed that the speed of technology, satellites and robotics would present a big problem for the US workforce. They felt people would have too much free time. In the extreme they said*: “By 1985, people might have to choose between working 22 hours a week, 27 weeks a year or retiring at 38.”

In 1985, I was standing in a co-worker’s office. He pointed at a 12” high stack of papers and said, “In a couple of years, computers will make this all obsolete.” As one who has been in the workforce for many of those years since the 1967 report to the US Senate, I can unequivocally verify that those predictions have not come true. I find myself busier than ever, working harder than I did in 1985 and still buried in paperwork.

We all are very busy. Being busy is not bad. The Bible often talks about the danger of being idle or not using your time well. But what about when being busy turns into being hurried or even to the point of harried.

Busy: actively and attentively engaged in work or a pastime.

Hurried: moving or working rapidly, especially forced or required to move, proceed or act with haste as a person.

Harried: to harass, annoy, or prove a nuisance to or as if by repeated attacks; worry.

Do you see the dangerous progression? It is like moving from 1) in control of our destiny; 2) being controlled by outside forces; 3) out of control and aggravating others.

Jesus provides an interesting model for us along these lines. He clearly had a busy schedule. The gospels often talk about the crowds pressing in on Him. Many people asked something to be done for them. We never hear Him taking a vacation and His three years of public ministry seem jam packed with activity.

What I think we do not realize is that the gospel narrative leaves out the transition times. It seems that on one day He is in Galilee and the next in Jerusalem. We tend to put our 21st century mindset on and think that this represents a quick 90-minute car ride. It was probably a five-day walk. That gives a lot of time for reflection, casual dialog and pondering.

Dallas Willard coined the phrase, “You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.” One of the ways I measure this in my life is how I respond when someone says to me, “Can you do me a favor?” I used to say, “it depends on what it is” or “if I have time.” I have now changed to saying, “Sure, what is it.” I have found that 9 times out of 10 (or maybe 99 out of 100) their ask is well within my reach. There may be a few times that I just cannot help, and that is okay. But what my initial response communicates to them is that although I’m busy, it has not moved to being hurried. I value them and their need more than my task list or busy schedule.

An occasional time of reflection is an excellent way to check where you are on this progressive scale. Look through the Gospels for places where Jesus was busy but not in a hurry. See how He ruthlessly eliminated hurry from His life.

One other thing that Jesus often did was to slip away to pray. He was intentional about slowing down to make time to spend time talking to the Heavenly Father - to get direction and hear His voice. That is a good model to follow.

I am guilty of a lot of infractions in this arena. In some ways, I feel as I am so unqualified to be writing this lesson. But by bringing it out in the open, to people I consider friends, maybe we can do as the Proverbs says and sharpen each other.

1 Corinthians 15:58 | Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Matthew 14:22-23 | Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.