

Modern Challenges to Christian Living The Challenge of Busyness

**Intro: What in your view might be the greatest challenge to Christian living?
There are many possibilities.**

Perhaps some would think of atheistic philosophy as it manifests itself in education and media, constantly challenging the legitimacy of faith.

Some perhaps might think of the media with its promotion of hedonism and its emphasis upon materialism.

Some might think of religious teachers who subvert the message of the gospel substituting a superficial religion for the true righteousness and consecration of true Christian discipleship.

I would readily acknowledge that all of these have their influence and provide a significant challenge to Christian living; but today I'd like to add one more that we often don't think about—the challenge of busyness!

Sometimes the most subtle enemy of our faith is not what is glaringly immoral. Instead it is what may in measure be life's legitimate pursuits that have captured the thinking and time of the Christian to the extent that he is rendered virtually inactive and ineffective as a disciple of Jesus.

Busyness of Life

We often have to wear a lot of hats, most of which manifest themselves in "have to" statements in our lives.

I have to go to work; I have to go to attend a meeting; I have to take my child to the soccer field, I have to pick up medicine for Mom; I have to meet a friend at the golf course; I have to go to the doctor; I have to go to church" And we can add a lot of other similar statements.

Sometimes you'll meet someone and say, "How are you doing?" And they say, "I've been really busy". It's almost as if our sense of worth and well-being is defined not by who we are but how much we are doing.

A CNN poll indicated that 59% of the respondents thought they had fallen into the busyness trap and were too busy for their own good.

Some of the things that make us busy are necessary and commanded; but many of them really optional. To some degree we cause our own state of busyness.

Why busyness becomes a concern

Busyness can hinder the decision to become a disciple

Luke 14 warns of the consequences of allowing busyness to hinder us from accepting the invitation of discipleship (Lk. 14:16-24).

Notice that each person who offered an excuse for not accepting the master's invitation was busy; and notice that there was nothing particularly immoral on face value about the activities that made them

so. Of course one could argue that busyness can simply be the excuse for not wanting to serve God.

Busy becomes an acronym for “Being Under Satan’s Yoke”

Increased busyness can take away valuable time for kingdom activities

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Too busy to attend the worship periods and Bible studies

Too busy to cultivate relationships with our brethren and show love for them in time of need

Too busy to engage in evangelistic effort to bring souls to Christ

Increased exhaustion from busyness can affect our ability to worship meaningfully

In the OT Israel reflected an attitude of weariness and boredom toward God’s worship!

“You also say, ‘My, how tiresome it is!’ And you disdainfully sniff at it,” (Malachi 1:13)

Neither our bodies nor our minds are geared for the meditative and reflective mood of worship. We just can’t get into it.

Is this the reason why so many churches have had to turn church into a pep rally atmosphere?

God didn’t tell the priests to change the worship! He told the people to change their attitude!

Could it be that worship loses its power because of our busyness!?

What does the Scripture say to help us manage the busyness of life

It urges to make Father and not the world the object of our love

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Unnecessary busyness is often the product of a worldly attachment that seeks all its pleasures and benefits at the expense of time with God, His word, and His work.

It urges us to prioritize the spiritual over earthly concerns

Consider the story of Mary and Martha

But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:41-42)

Dwight Moody was given credit for the saying, “Some people are so heavenly minded they aren’t of any earthly good”! Was this what Jesus was advocating? Not at all! None of us need become people who trek from Bible study to Bible study and never get in the field and

do the needed work of service. But clearly, we need time with God to prepare ourselves to be His messenger and worker. Thus Jesus commended Mary for choosing what He called “the good part”!

It urges us to manage our time in view of the end of all things.

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15-16)

We must identify time robbers and eliminate them as much as we can from our schedules. We must carve out nonnegotiable time for spiritual activity.

If we are too busy, we need to learn to “RELAX”

Remember our worth before God

Too much busyness is sometimes an attempt to earn acceptability by others, seeking to become indispensable so as to be sensed as more valuable

We need to remember that what gives our lives value is our character and relation to God.

Enjoy what we have

Too much busyness is sometimes an attempt to fill our lives with new things and experiences (what we don't have) rather than enjoy what we may already have or done.

Limit our labor

How much of our time can we justify working, if the end of that work is only to make more money to buy nicer things?

Pass the OT to the next guy and go home and spend some quality time with your family or your brethren.

Adjust our values

How important is it that your child play in every league and sport that school offers if it means to you become a burnt-out taxi driver and cheerleader and cannot live your own life meaningfully? But it keeps them out of trouble! Yes, to a degree; but it gets you into trouble!

eXchange the world's pressure for God's peace

Too often we greet God from the throne of grace, rather than meet Him at the throne of grace. (Shaun Smith)

Take a few moments every day to shut out everything!

Everything...but God and His message to us. Talk to Him and listen to His word.

Conclusion: Don't let busyness rob you of the vitality and blessing of knowing and serving God. Let's learn to enjoy the relaxation of faith! No one has ever accomplished more in this life than Jesus; yet where do we read about him hurrying from place to place? And when the demands increased, he simply in a disciplined way “separated himself to a lonely place”. And so should we do to pray and recalibrate our weary spirits to prepare them for His work.

I knelt to pray but not for long,
Had too much to do.
I had to hurry and get to work
For bills would soon be due.

So I knelt and said a hurried prayer,
And jumped up off my knees.
My Christian duty was now done
My soul could rest at ease.

All day long I had no time
To spread a word of cheer.
No time to speak of Christ to friends,
They'd laugh at me I'd fear.

No time, no time, too much to do,
That was my constant cry.
No time to give to souls in need
But at last, the time to die.

I went before the Lord that day,
I stood with downcast eyes.
For in His hands God held a book;
It was the Book of Life.

God looked into His book and said
"Your name I cannot find.
I once was going to write it down...
But never found the time."