Have you ever been busy, but you enjoyed every moment of what you were doing? You felt energized, not anxious, angry, or sad! What were you doing then? Playing a game? Watching your favourite sport? You would have been doing what you enjoyed, at the time you chose, and with folks you liked! You were busy (occupied with your mind concentrated) and you were enjoying the experience!

This is not the normal state for most people. Others affect how we allocate time: our children, our boss, church commitments, the phone ... Often we don’t do stuff we like or feel comfortable doing, and at the time we would like. That’s why 80% of Canadians feel rushed most days, many wishing they could spend more time with their families.

Several folks tell me they wished they had time to follow advice in my quarterly letters. They know, they say, if “they had the time” to do some suggestions, their circumstances would improve, but they “just can’t make the time”!

For months I pondered this feedback, to which I relate. I was there on the fast track climbing the “corporate ladder” until three life changing events stopped me in my tracks!

In this letter, I ask three questions, and as I comment on each, I mention a couple life changing events, and suggest approaches to deal with the “hurry-sickness” epidemic.

(1) Do you think you can enjoy daily tasks even if you don’t choose them? Even if you don’t think you have the needed skill?

(2) Suppose you got everything you are busy trying to get—doing stuff you think you must do now? Then what?

(3) Can anyone do the tasks you are busy doing?

With these truths in mind, daily in all you do, adopt the attitude the Bible teaches and be your best always and accept the results. Colossians 3:23-24. When you feel you must do a task now, ask Jesus for His priorities. In addition, ask Him to help you rearrange your day. We focus on the urgent rather than the important task. What’s the difference? The urgent appears to need immediate attention—returning a telephone call. The important, on the other hand, often is not obvious and you can overlook it easily: listening to your five your old daughter whose body language suggests she is sad about something. Besides, you might
not like to do the important, so you put it off: a mother-daughter, father-son chat.

When you do God’s will, He will give you needed time, talent and skill (Proverbs 3:5-6). That’s why He wants you and me to seek His will daily (Matthew 6:9-11; Colossians 1:9). Then we won’t need to worry about pleasing others because we will be pleasing Jesus and doing His important task!

DAILY, surrender your agenda to Christ. Seek His will for your life. Don’t put roadblocks in the way! Just believe Jesus! Believe He loves you more than you can imagine. Believe He will never leave you or abandon you; and believe His will is not necessarily your wish!

Claiming these promises will allow you to adopt the right work attitude: work is a gift, so work as if serving the Lord. Then you apply the same attitude to each task, knowing it’s God will.

How do you know God’s will? There is no formula. Like getting to know your children or your spouse, you need to spend time with Jesus: read His word, talk to Him, be still before Him. He will speak to you His way, in His time, through Scripture, circumstances and or people. Learn to depend on Jesus, not on others!

Suppose you got everything you are rushing about to get—doing stuff you think you must do? Then what?

When I was on the fast track I told my wife and children I was “neglecting them” (I didn’t use these words, but that’s what I was doing) because I wanted to provide them a better life. Continually, my wife told me she wanted quantity time with me and not the executive’s guilty reliving, “quality time” . She didn’t want that illusive better life, she wanted more of me! Yet I continued in my delusion.

My first ulcer came at age 29, the second at 35. But I was climbing the corporate ladder, so it was worth it! Then one day my 18 year old son said, “dad, you are not here for me. Your job is consuming you!” I listened, heard, felt what he said. That I was able to do this surprised me! It had to be God intervening! It was! That day, I committed to Jesus to change. By His grace I did.


I got a new attitude. I changed my approach to work, which is the subject of my book Managing God’s Time. I tried answering these three questions:

1. What am I working to achieve?
2. What will I do when I achieve it?
3. Will I ever stop striving?

This led me to develop the four-part success definition I propose in Managing God’s Time. This was my main attitude change: I stopped striving to reach an unconscious, undefined, illusive prize, and started to be the best I could be for Christ in all I did. As well, I developed the P-Square decision process that focused on specific parameters, priorities, principles, processes to help me select and do tasks. The result? I learned to distinguish routinely, the urgent from the important. I focused on the important with a renewed, joyful attitude, and increased my productivity and attention to people.

When I was rushing about, I didn’t sit at Jesus’ feet to listen, learn, laugh, cry to hear His priorities.

What does your spouse think about your schedule? Are you listening, hearing and feeling what he or she says? Or are you in denial? What are you trying to get by being on a treadmill daily? Suppose you got everything you wanted today? Would you slow down? Could you? Should you?

Can anyone do the things you are busy doing?

Now is the time to take a “Time Alert”! Analyze how you are spending your days. Any changes needed?

As I worked on my new attitude in my mid 30’s, other significant life changing events happened. Most notably, over a three-year period five relatively young colleagues died— in two weeks, two died in my presence at different conferences. That’s when I had to deal with an essential reality— my dispensability. No matter how good and important I think I am, how needed I appear to be, if I die today, someone will step in and either discard what I was doing, do it better, or continue to do it. So I must look at stuff I believe I must do now in this light. I can do nothing if I am dead!

I introduced in my vocabulary: dead time. When I hear me saying “I must do this now,” I ask two questions:

1. Because of eternity, is this the most important task to do now?
2. How will this task affect my relationship with God, my spouse and my children?

Have you accepted your dispensability? Don’t be despondent; merely be realistic and understand what is important. Stop focusing on you so you can hear God’s priorities. Understand, people, not stuff are valuable.

My son’s talk and those five deaths, contributed to my searching for and finding life’s meaning. In 1985, at age 38, I heard Jesus’ call and answered His invitation to “come.” My challenge daily is to obey His other command: “Go,” make disciples! How are you doing?

Suggested way forward

So, can anyone be ambitious, busy, and enjoy what they do routinely? Yes, but you need a specific mindset-set.

First, accept busy is normal.

Busy means occupied with your mind concentrated. You will be dead when you are not busy! The challenge is this: on what should you be busy? Ask Jesus.

Second, stop using “deflection speech,” stop focusing on you. We use busy to deflect from our poor organizing. We say we “have no time”—a ridiculous deflection statement— we forget everyone has twenty four hours daily. Learn right priorities.

Third, accept you can’t do everything you want to do and others demand of you. Seek Jesus’ will daily.

Fourth, accept your dispensability. Stop devaluing your relationships unconsciously— God, spouse, children—thinking you must do specific tasks, rather than spending time on each relationship. When you think you must do a task now and so miss your daughter’s piano recital, or time with your spouse, remember dead-time. Often the job can wait, but you will never see the specific piano recital or relive that time with your spouse. There will be exceptions: stop, seek, see how you choose.

Fifth, regularly you need alone time to recharge. In Managing God’s Time, I recommend “My-Time”: daily alone time away from routines, to look at your circumstances. It could be a stroll in the park, a jog, looking at flowers.

When you decide to stop using deflection speech and start seeking and doing God’s will, you will see important rather than the urgent and then work on right priorities.

Think about this: are you working to gain stuff or to gain experiences? Are you working for God or with God?

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