



GETTING DEEPER

The Roots of Busyness

How being busy grows from necessity to compulsion.

by Greg Asimakoupoulos

Why do ministry and work so easily crowd out other priorities in our lives? Why are we so busy we miss out on family life? This exercise will probe three common reasons for busyness.

1. Has your free spirit flown too far? Many creative people prefer wide-open schedules, working out of the office, and the freedom to follow their creative inspirations. While the creative spirit is a blessing, it can also make a person hopelessly busy if it isn't checked by wisdom and priority. Even a creative spirit needs to manage his or her time to keep the important things in life from being crowded out. If the following statements sound like you, it's an indication that undisciplined scheduling is contributing to your busyness.

- "I resist structure for structure's sake."
- "Half of what I end up doing on a given day I hadn't planned to do when I got up."
- "When brainstorming comes, I usually drop what I've planned, get blown away, and don't return."
- "I lose my weekends because all of my must-do's are still left over at the end of the week."





2. Who are you trying to please? For many in Christian leadership, the things we want to do, must do, or feel called to do get crowded out by the things we feel we should do. There are always more should-do's being shouted in our direction. The process of adding should-do's to your workweek, however, means you end up continually busy, with an emotional tank near empty. Why do we allow others to "should" all over us? For many, it's because our sense of worth is too fragile to handle disappointing others. We find solace in knowing others approve but guilt when we don't meet others' expectations. If the following statements sound like you, it's an indication your busyness may come from a fragile sense of worth.

- "I lie awake at night sometimes, worrying about someone I couldn't visit or perfecting my sermon."
- "As the church grows, I get overwhelmed with everything everyone needs me to do."
- "I'm so busy doing everything that's expected of me, I forget sometimes what God called me to do."

3. Is busy good for you? For many of us, doubts about our inherent value or fear of failure have taught us to earn acceptance by doing applaudable tasks. We began to equate busyness with worth. In Diane Fassel's book on workaholism, *Working Ourselves to Death*, she connects the workaholic's addiction to busyness with low self-esteem: "Because they judge themselves by their accomplishments, they have the illusion they must always be doing something worthwhile in order to feel good about themselves... [Their] sense of self is not separated from their achievements; rather it depends on achievements. Much of [their] frantic activity is symptomatic, an attempt to suppress or deny low self-esteem." Perhaps the following sound familiar:

- "When I fail at things (which I rarely do), I question my competency at anything."
- "I would be a better person if I could just figure out how to get more done."
- "I feel especially good when I take on and accomplish what others don't think can happen."





Time Management

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Thought Provokers

- *Which of the sample statements above sound like something you might say to yourself?*
- *How do these attitudes contribute to making you overly busy?*
- *What are some constructive steps or biblical truths that could free you from these busy-making attitudes?*

Features

