


Busy Here & There
Missing the Beautiful Things in Life

Welcome the church to the **Made to Move Sabbath**. In this second season of Made to Move, we turn our focus from exercise to balance. One of the fundamental challenges to our ability to maintain our health, physically, mentally, and spiritually is busyness.


How many of you, by show of hands, feel that you are too busy? I'm sure our definitions of busy might be different, so allow me to define what *I mean by busy*...

What is busy?
"Busy is that frenetic, always alert multitasking that propels us through over-burdened lives."
Tony Crabbe




How do we define a universal experience like busyness? Tony Crabbe, a business psychologist, defines busyness as "that frenetic, always alert multitasking that propels us through over burdened lives." It is urgency, distraction, and exhaustion.

Why do we think we're busy?
Because we have so much to do at home, at work, and at church right?

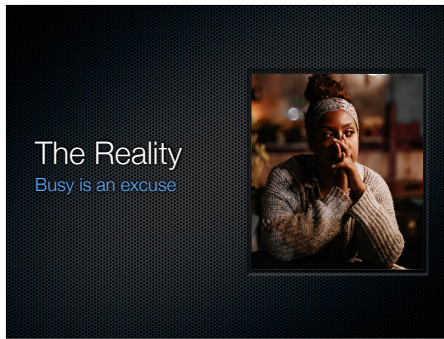


But most of us today feel as if our busyness is justified right? We have so much to do at home, at work, and even at church. But the truth is that busyness is not essential...amen? Believing that we're always so busy because we have so much to do is not only false but also not helpful.

The Reality
Busy is easier



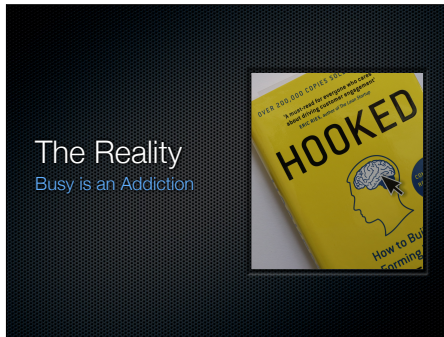
I want to give you 5 actual reasons why we're busy. The first is that busy is easier. To not be busy requires us to make tough choices to leave work early, not sign up for every department in the church we like, or set boundaries around social expectations. We allow the world and our inboxes to set our schedules rather than thinking for ourselves and ordering our time according to our priorities and values.



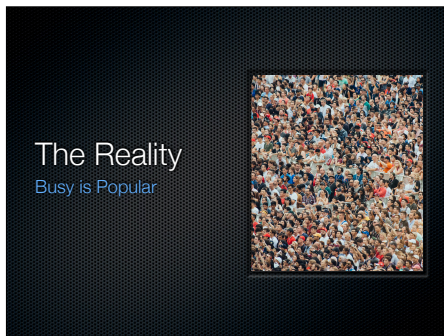
The second reason why we're really busy is that it is an excuse. We use busyness to give ourselves the perfect excuse to not do the big-thinking stuff. In being busy we get to feel productive while procrastinating!



The third reason we're actually busy is that **Busy is a Brand**. When we demonstrate our busyness to the world, and shout about it whenever we can, we proclaim our value. Somewhere deep down we think that if people realize quite how busy we are at work it will help us get promoted. But outside of work it proves our importance. So even if we try to make it sound like a complaint, we are really building our brand.



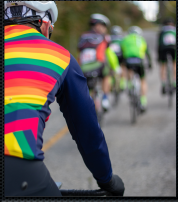
The fourth reason we're actually busy is that **Busy is an Addiction**. There is a small squirt of the cocaine-like *dopamine* released each time we look at our emails; and Google searches release opiate-like substances. Which of us hasn't fought with the temptation to whip our phones out for a quick fix of social media or text, even when we know we shouldn't? Which happens on average every 6.5 minutes!



The fifth and final reason we're really busy is that **Busy is Popular**. Our behavior is powerfully shaped by the social norm, what everyone else does. How many unbusy people do you know? Everyone seems busy and it's what everyone else is doing, so if you just join the frenzy along with the rest of the herd right? Why be different and refuse to overwork to be home with your family?

Is Busy Truly Bad?


Research has shown that we compete with our busyness!



But let's be real here, is busyness really a bad thing? Wasn't Jesus busy? Wasn't Paul busy? Ann Burnett discovered in her research that we even compete with our busyness. We feel defeated and diminished if someone "out-busys" us don't we? While it is true that all stress isn't bad for us, there is a scary increase in burnout across many industries and professions today, and even among those in full-time ministry.

Allostatic Load

It isn't any specific intensity of stress or exertion that is bad for us; it is the persistence.




Where does all the burnout come from and lead to? It isn't any specific intensity of stress but the persistence of the stress. Something that B.S. McEwen in his research refers to as Allostasis and Allostatic Load. It is best described as the accelerated wear and tear on the body and brain when we don't allow ourselves time to recover and reconnect. In Japan there is a word for this: *Karoshi*, which means "death from overwork." It described the unfortunate reality of healthy young adults dropping dead from stroke or heart attack as a result of chronic fatigue.

We live a world of too much.

The fact is that we live in a world of too much. We have too much to do, too much information and too much pressure.


Information

Today we will consume the equivalent 174 newspapers of content... That's 5x as much as we would have in 1986!




Read the text on the slide.

Information
In the time it takes you to read 1 page in a book, 300 million emails will be sent.



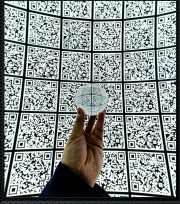
Read the text on the slide.

Information
In the last minute, 72 hours worth of content has been uploaded to Youtube.




Read the text on the slide.

Information
In the last 10 seconds, 100 people have discovered the internet for the first time, joining the other 3 billion...

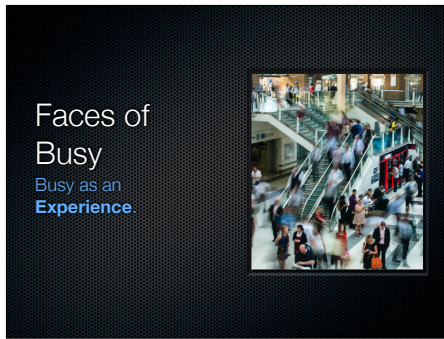


Read the text on the slide.

Information
We are bombarded with unlimited information, connection, and communication...



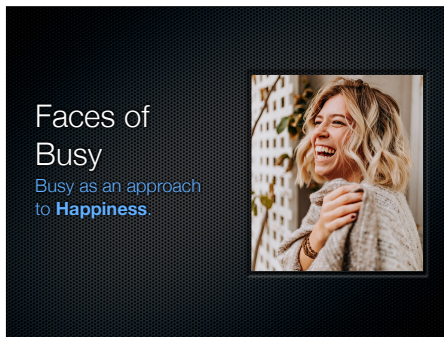
Read the text on the slide. Yet, we live in a paradox. We are overstimulated yet bored, enriched yet empty, connected yet lonely. We cannot continue life this way. We must turn away from the 3 faces of busy.



The faces of busy speak to how we relate to busyness. The first face sees busy as an experience of hopscotching & multitasking leaving us feeling overloaded and overwhelmed.



The second face sees busy as a success strategy of doing more and being busier will help us succeed in our careers.



The third face sees busy as an approach to happiness. An approach that says more money, more status, and more popularity are good things and will lead us to more happiness. All the while sacrificing the very things that would bring happiness, such as relationships, health, and meaning. This last one is the main victim of busyness. A loss of meaning in life, through a loss of meaningful connections with God and others.

This Made to Move Sabbath, the challenge is to move beyond busy and strive for greater balance in our lives. Balance that allows us to invest time, energy, and money into those people, places, and experiences that truly matter.

What do we mean by the phrase, “the meaning of life?”

The meaning of life is a question plaguing our current generation. Our busyness is driven by where we find meaning in life and what we believe to be significant. But what do we really mean by the phrase, “The meaning of life?”

The Meaning of Meaning

- *Linguistic or Semantic Definition*
- *Indicative sense of the word*
- *The sense of significance*

Let us first define the concept of *meaning* itself. There are 3 common and prominent senses of the word in English. The linguistic sense, the indicative sense, and the sense of significance. Let us take a look at each of these 3 concepts briefly as we seek to explore finding more balance in life for the meaningful.

Linguistic

Here we are discussing the meaning of words



The linguistic sense regards the meaning of words. This is what we find in Webster's dictionary or a translation book or program from one language to another.

Linguistic

The words: *rouge*, *red* and *marpo* all *mean* the same thing in French, English and Tibetan




For example, the words *rouge* (pronounced like *huge but ruge*), *red*, and *Marpo* (mar-poe) all mean the same things in French, English and Tibetan. They are all pointing to the color red, though they are not the color itself. They help us describe what color is that dress, the restaurant we're meeting someone at, or when someone is extremely angry!

Indicative
We might say that those clouds *mean* rain.




The *indicative* sense is best understood by an illustration. In this photo we can clearly see dark clouds approaching. And as such, we would say that *those clouds* mean rain is coming. The clouds are *not the rain* but they are an *indication that rain is coming*. Let's consider a more tangible example.

Indicative
That smile means she is happy or she likes it.



I might say about (your child or a picture of a child smiling) that smile means she is happy or she *likes it*. A smile is an indication of a joy or happiness that I cannot see with my actual eyes. Of course it could also mask emotions if a person wanted to be deceitful or they are an indication of a new level of anger that requires a smile :D

Significance
The idea that something is important to us or valuable.



The third sense is that of significance. This is the concept that something is important to us or valuable. For example, in this photo, we see a scene of the largest on-going religious service in the world: Mecca. Muslims around the world are encouraged to make the *Hajj (like -age sound in mirage) to Mecca* at least once in their lives. For those who do not subscribe to Islam, this looks like a group of people praying and circling a black box. But it is the most sacred place in all of Islam. We could say that it *means* something to them. Even it *means* nothing to us.

The Meaning of Meaning

- Linguistic or Semantic Definition
- Indicative sense of the word
- The sense of significance

So we have the linguistic, indicative, and sense of significance. But what is the core meaning of *meaning*?

Significance seems to be the **core meaning**...

It is really the sense of significance.

The sense of pointing outside or beyond itself.

It is the idea of pointing outside or beyond itself. So the word red points to the color. The clouds *point* to the rain, and Mecca *points* to a sacred moment and founder of Islam.

What are we really asking?

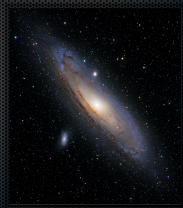
What is it beyond our existence that gives our lives significance, that makes them indicate anything?

So what are we really asking then? We are asking, *What is it beyond our lives that gives our lives significance? What is our lives an indication of? What does life point to beyond itself?*

The Meaning of Life

1. Demands that there is something *beyond* this life.

2. We cannot find the ultimate answer within life itself.



Thus, to answer the question regarding meaning in life, it requires at least 2 things:

1. That there is actually something *beyond* this life

And

2. That the *ultimate* answer cannot be found within life itself.

There may be smaller answers along the way that lead us to the ultimate answer, as we shall explore shortly, but these are only indications to lead us to the ultimate answer.

Reflections of Solomon

- Jewish King that ruled Israel about 900 BCE
- Wrote *Ecclesiastes* at the end of his life



In the Bible, Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, but also one of the busiest, wrote at the end of his life where he found significance among all his pursuits and busyness. He had 700 wives, pursued wealth, knowledge, music, passion after passion. But here was his conclusion having been to the mountaintops we seek to climb in our busyness...

Ecclesiastes

- Poetic Phrase, "*Under the Sun*," or "*Under Heaven*."
- The assumption that *there is nothing beyond this life*.



That it was all vanity or *meaningless*. It was pointing to nothing beyond itself. But notice that he uses the phrase "under the sun" or "under heaven" over 30 times throughout the book.

This poetic phrase sets the context for Solomon's reflection in the Ecclesiastes. The phrase suggests that we assume that there *is nothing beyond this life*. That we live in a world "without windows," so to speak. A world in which there is nothing outside of nature.

Ecclesiastes

- Contextually, this phrase specifically refers to *life without God*.
- However, I would like to refer to the points we will discuss as ***signs of something beyond***.



Thus, within the context of Solomon's reflections, this phrase refers to *life without God*. A life without God is a life without meaning. A life that points to nothing outside of itself. A life that indicates nothing.

The number 1 victim of our busyness is Jesus. Jesus misses His time with us and our families in worship, in prayer, and in studying His word. Busyness, like the weeds in the parable, choke out our spiritual life. Because we are busy here and there dealing with the cares of life, pursuing riches, seeking pleasure and amusement, or forbidden love. Thinking these will bring meaning but Solomon says they won't. How does he know?

Because he has drank at every one of these wells and came up thirsty still. But Solomon notes throughout the book some signs of meaning, of God, of Jesus in our lives that indicate something beyond.

Signs of Something Beyond

- Wonder
- Truth
- Love

We will just look at 3 for sake of time. Wonder. Truth/Justice. And Love.

Ecclesiastes 1:8-10

"All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun..."

Read the Bible text on the screen. Emphasizing the phrase "under the sun." Solomon says a life without God is a life without wonder. But what is wonder?

Wonder

A feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable.

Insight from a child

- Playing with a balloon
- Decides to go outside with it



A story of a friend of mine and his son illustrates a critical point. He had a helium balloon and thought that it was best thing since sliced bread to watch this balloon float to the ceiling and bounce off. His belly laughter easily more contagious than any variant virus. After doing this several times, he decided to take this show outside...

Needless to say, after he realized that big blue ceiling isn't going to stop the balloon he was crying and wailing. After his father came to ask "what's the matter?," he pointed to the balloon floating high above the trees in the distance. The father dumbfounded, responds, "I'm sorry son."

Then his son replied, “I know papa! When you’re in the airplane next, you can bring it back for me!” The father decided not to explain that you can’t open the door at 40,000 feet and allow his son’s imagination to calm his distress.

It was GK Chesterton he said that we can glimpse the eternal joys of heaven through a child’s ability to enjoy the repetitive. When you pick up a child and spin her around, what does she say? “Do it again!” And then you spin the child again, and the child says, “Do it again!” The world of a child is a world filled with *wonder*.

When we surrender the busyness, even for a moment, a day, or a month, we find ourselves experiencing the wonder of that moment with our children, our spouse, and even our Lord that makes us say, “Do it again!”

Ecclesiastes 3:16-17

“And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, [that] wickedness [was] there; and the place of righteousness, [that] iniquity [was] there. I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for [there is] a time there for every purpose and for every work.”

Read text on screen. Remark upon the fact that the “Place of judgment” is a place for justice.

Truth

“that which is in accordance with fact or reality.”

Solomon highlights the importance of truth or justice. Justice isn’t just about giving someone their due punishment or vindication, but the truth helps us decide which one goes where. The confusion around the truth and refusal to act upon that truth is what our Lord had to be crucified.

I would like to loosely define truth as “*that which is in accordance with fact or reality.*” Many people will say that truth is relative or that truth doesn’t really matter.

Or even the popular phrase, “Speak your truth.” Let’s look at an example of how important truth is, especially in a place of justice.

Insight from a tragic case

- Accusation from 2 girls
- Questioned by Lawyer
- What is the truth?



Many years ago in the UK, there was a case regarding 2 young middle school girls accusing their bus driver of attempting sexual assault. Parts of the trial were televised and as you listened to the 2 girls narrate their horrific ordeal in tears and quivering lips, you could only think that this guy deserved every ounce of justice coming his way.

However, when the defense for the driver approached the first girl in cross examination, things became much more complicated. He began his questions seemingly insensitive to what was just shared.

But then he began unravel her whole story.

He asked, “Isn’t it true Sarah that the day you accused my client, you were in the back of bus disregarding my client’s request to behave and stop some mischief you were up to?” Her response was, “I don’t remember.”

“Isn’t it true Sarah, that my client told you and your friend that he would call your parents to tell them about this mischief?” She responded, “I don’t remember.”

He went on, “That’s funny, because you just said that you remembered vividly how my client tried to assault you and your friend because you were the *last students* to be dropped off, and yet I have testimony from 5 other children that they were the last stop on the bus after you. Can you explain that?” She responded, “I’m not sure. I don’t remember if anyone else was there.”

“So now you don’t remember. I see. Isn’t it true Sarah that you and your friend hatched a plan to make up this story in order to keep your parents from taking my client’s call regarding your misbehavior and disrespect that day?” She responded, “I don’t think so...”

At this point, the judge allowed a recess, and all you can do in walking away from this is ask the question, “What is the truth?”

When truth is revealed, when justice is served, Solomon says that this is pointing to a sign of transcendence. That someone beyond has invaded our experience. In a time of social justice, such a message is all too relevant.

But even in our own lives. Our own pain and brokenness, we see meetings and committees fail to hold accountable people who have hurt us or wronged us. But yet, every once in a while, truth comes to light and justice rolls down like a mighty stream. Pointing us to the final judgment in which God will vindicate the innocent and condemn the unrepentant guilty.

Is busyness driving out our time to pursue the truth, to share the truth, and to live the truth?

Love

Our next and final victim of busyness is love.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up.

Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken."

Read the text on the screen. Solomon is speaking of the value and meaning that relationships and genuine connection bring to our lives. Busyness siphons the life out of our most significant relationships and robs our lives of meaning.

Story of George

- Mother in Romania
- Couple sought for Adoption
- Teacher to help play cello
- Recital



There was a story published by a couple out of Connecticut regarding their adopted son George.

They went to Romania, where the wife was from, and sought to adopt a child. At the orphanage, they chose George because he was ostracized by the other children due to him being born with no arms.

To their surprise, his mother was still alive and lived nearby. They needed her approval to adopt George and she seemed skeptical. She believed they wanted to adopt him to experiment upon him in America. The wife luckily brought her Romanian bible and told the mother that they wanted to adopt George to teach him the words of Psalm 139, "You are fearfully and wonderfully made." The mother in tears asked, "How will you teach him this?" The couple responded with God's help.

To prevent George from boredom, the couple invited a cello teacher to teach George how to play the instrument. The teacher, shocked at first, researched possible ways to teach a child with no arms. After months of lessons, she told the parents that George was ready for a recital. The patently reluctantly agreed.

As George and his teacher walked on stage together, the audience of her other students and their parents went completely silence. You could feel the anxiety and worry in the room like humidity. George took his seat and the teacher handed him the cello and bow. As she began conducting she said, "Begin."

The notes were a terrible cacophony of sounds. The teach quickly said, “stop.” George turned red in embarrassment and his mother placed her face in her husband’s shoulder unable to watch.

Then the teacher said, “Again.” George then played the most flawless piece of classical music. By the final note, the entire audience was on its feet with most in tears and applauding. Since then, George has learned violin and guitar with his feet. (Here’s a picture).

This couple could have spent their time making more money, building a bigger house, or enjoying vacation in Bali. But instead of joining the rat race of busyness, they made time to love and invest in someone. By God’s grace, they showed George that his physical lack of arms only increased his ability to reach and inspire others that we all are fearfully and wonderfully made. Even with our own limitations, weaknesses, and inabilities.

Who are the George’s in your life that busyness is robbing you of such moments?

Signs of Something Beyond

- Wonder
- Truth
- Love

It has been said that “Beautiful things never cry for attention.” A sunset doesn’t wait for onlookers to color the sky with its various hues. A rose releases its sweet fragrance even if no one is there to smell it. Why? All for the glory of their Maker. Pointing beyond themselves to the love, creativity, and beauty of Jesus.

Are there passions, people, and problems that bring beauty into your life that you’re missing? Greater balance will help you not miss the beautiful things in life.

All 3 of these can ultimately be found in the person of Christ. Thus, balance can ensure that we don’t miss the most beautiful thing in life: Jesus Christ, our Lord.
