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the only question is where.*

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—DR. R. LARRY MOYER

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TOOLBOX

EVANTELL'S

SPRING 2019

BUSYNESS

A HUGE HINDRANCE TO EVANGELISM

BY LARRY MOYER

Founder & CEO, EvanTell

There's a story told about a doctor who rushed to the bedside of a patient one morning and said, "Please forgive me. I have been so busy I've not had a chance to talk with you. I have some good news and some bad news."

The patient replied, "Well, give me the good news first."

The doctor answered, "You have about one month to live."

The patient said, "Well, if that's the good news, what's the bad news?"

The doctor answered him, "I've been so busy! I should have told you three weeks ago."

Busyness is an issue for all of us, and that's not necessarily a bad thing. Busy people are often the most productive. But that busyness becomes an issue when it hinders us from talking to others about Jesus. Sometimes, our schedules become so full we have no time to heed His admonition, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19).

How do we overcome that busyness instead of letting that busyness crowd out our evangelism? Consider the following questions:

Have I asked God for His assistance?

Finding time to evangelize is like every other aspect of Christian living; God is not

asking us to go it alone. To appropriately apply John 15:5, without Him you cannot overcome the bad part of busyness. Start with a simple prayer, "Jesus help me."

How realistic am I being? It's probably not realistic to ask, "How can I take time out of my schedule for non-Christians?" The people who evangelize the most don't take time out of their schedule; they work non-Christians into their existing schedule. Begin by thinking about the activities you typically do with Christians. Then choose to do some of those things with non-Christians instead.

Am I looking at everything in life from eternity backward? What will matter most when we stand before Christ? Have we made sure the things valued by Christ are important to us as well? "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Are we giving the lost the same priority He did?

What is the only thing that lasts? The answer — people. Everyone will live forever; the only difference is where. Material things will pass away as God establishes a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:12). Hence, people need to take priority over possessions, which often occupy a large part of our busyness.

Will these four questions solve the worst of our busyness overnight? Of course not. But they will put us on the right path. Week by week you will make changes that help others and, most importantly, honor Him.

HOW JESUS *avoided* THE BUSYNESS TRAP

BY DAVID SOUTHER
President, EvanTell

Busyness can be a ruthless dictator. There are things we want to do, plan to do, or know we ought to do, but don't because of our busy schedules. This can keep us from doing those things that matter most to God, including taking time to cultivate relationships and share the good news.

How do we bring balance to our busy lives? Jesus provides a perfect model. If anyone should have struggled with busyness, it was Jesus. After all, crowds followed Him everywhere and constantly demanded His time and attention. Yet Jesus remained balanced and perfectly accomplished His Father's agenda.

We are not perfect like Jesus. We can learn a great deal, however, from Jesus's teaching and lifestyle.

JESUS PRIORITIZED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS HEAVENLY FATHER.

Jesus took seriously the greatest commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength" (Mark 12:30). He made time to spend with His Heavenly Father at the beginning of each day. He knew that God would direct His day and providentially provide evangelism opportunities.

JESUS FOCUSED ON PEOPLE.

Jesus followed the second greatest commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31) and made people His priority. When opportunities for ministry with individuals came, Jesus gave them His full attention. When the woman with the issue of blood touched His garment, Jesus discerned that God was at work. He gave the woman His undivided attention, even while traveling to another assignment. When our mind is focused on the person we are talking to, it helps us listen and honor the person as well as free us up to respond as the Holy Spirit directs.

JESUS RELAXED.

Jesus worked hard, but also took time to rest, relax, enjoy a meal, spend time with friends, and pray. He allowed margin (breathing room) in His schedule. Don't jam pack your schedule to the degree you have no room for recharging your batteries. Jesus had margin, so should we. But also, realize that some of your prime opportunities for evangelism may come during your downtime. Be prepared to share whenever God gives opportunities.



TAKE THE BUSYNESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

BY DAVID SOUTHER
President, EvanTell

We all go through seasons of busyness. But, if you find yourself chronically busy, take the time to examine and declutter your schedule.

The goal of decluttering is to create some margin in your schedule to free you up to focus on what really matters—cultivating your relationships with God and others, including sharing the gospel.

Here is a "self-assessment" to get you started.

- ☐ Do I consider busyness a badge of honor in the eyes of others?
- ☐ Am I focusing too much on keeping up a particular image or lifestyle?
- ☐ Do I have a problem saying "No"? Am I concerned with what people might think when I do?
- ☐ Are my actions geared toward representing myself or representing Christ?
- ☐ Is my busyness a result of fear? If so, does it involve an area in which I need to trust God?
- ☐ Am I using busyness to cope with something (loneliness, inadequacy, etc.) I need to take before the Lord?
- ☐ Am I controlling my smart phone and computer or are they controlling me?
- ☐ Do I view people as a hinderance to my schedule or an opportunity?
- ☐ If I look at the items on my schedule, does each activity help, hinder, or distract me from following Jesus and loving others?

Remember, the goal is to declutter wherever possible to free yourself up to pursue what really matters for eternity.



IDEAS

FOR BALANCING
BUSYNESS WITH
EVANGELISM

- 1 Evangelism requires planning. Look at your calendar and ask, "Where and how will I reach out to a non-Christian?"
- 2 Have an accountability partner who asks you every month, "How did you reach out to an unbeliever this month?"
- 3 Plan on having breakfast or lunch with at least one non-Christian once or twice a month.
- 4 Take a look at your scheduled activities, including: home projects, errands, sports events, hobbies, trips to the gym, etc. Then determine to ask your non-Christian friends to join you if applicable.
- 5 Examine how many Christmas, birthday, or anniversary cards and greetings you send each year to non-Christians. Those caring gestures can lead to opportunities to share your faith.
- 6 If a neighbor is engaging in some kind of home repair job, offer your assistance.
- 7 Look at your daily or weekly to-do list and ask, "What can I cut out of my schedule that would allow me to work non-Christians into my schedule?"
- 8 Visit a non-Christian who is in the hospital to offer encouragement.
- 9 Commit yourself to taking some kind of training in evangelism that will increase your boldness in evangelism.
- 10 Invite a non-Christian to join you and your family for dinner.