

1. We Don't Rest Well

Americans are crazy busy.¹ Our world offers nearly unlimited opportunities and pairs them with impossible expectations. And we love it. We find the combination irresistible ... and yet, it's also crushing.

There's the never-ending list of things we could fill our time with—school, sports, work, music programs, drama clubs, chess clubs, clubs of all kinds, volunteer organizations, church youth groups—all good things that clamor for our attention and our participation.

And there's the list of people who think we can (and should!) do more than we already are—parents, grandparents, teachers, friends, teammates, coaches, shift-managers, pastors, youth-workers, boyfriends, girlfriends, church

1. I cannot improve on Kevin DeYoung's title for brevity or impact.

friends—all with some claim on our time, or at least, who think they have.

They want us to show up more often, to be more involved, to be more friendly, more outgoing, more welcoming, to produce more, to produce sooner and to produce better.

And because we know that we can always sleep a little less or rush through something a little more quickly, we pack more and more in, ending up busier than we were before.

We spin the gerbil-wheel faster and faster. We talk about not having any 'margin' in our lives, of how we're living under the 'tyranny of the urgent.' We feel tired. We look tired. And when people ask how we're doing, we tell them we are tired

And it never feels like there's any break, so we create breaks. We check out during the day by playing video games, watching videos, texting friends, scrolling through social media, posting to our own stories ... even our breaks are busy.

A busyness that's addictive. We find that we can't put our phones and devices down for long. Music and podcasts run constantly in the background. We binge-watch one show after another after another. We're always looking for the next thing to entertain us. Something

that will keep us from having to think about all the things that everyone wants from us.

Only, we always seem to spend way more time being distracted than we planned for. And then we feel bad. Everything that we checked out from is still waiting for us, still needing to be done. And so, we can't shut down and end the day when we should.

We lose the boundary between work and rest and we end up oscillating back-and-forth between the two. We know how to work and we know how to be entertained. But we are not very good at resting. We're not good at quieting our souls in the middle of a frantic world that is in constant, exhausting motion, and so our 'resting' feels as frantic as the rest of life.

We don't know how to be refreshed at the deepest level of our being. The thought of sitting quietly, being still, alone with our thoughts and our God, feels unnatural. Unproductive. Unappealing. Like he's one more thing 'to do'; one more person with expectations we can't meet.

BUSYNESS, REST & IDOLATRY

That's the problem when good things—like living a full, engaged life—take over life; when

they have no boundaries. A river running in its channel through a city gives life to the city. But when it overflows its banks so that all you can see is water, it's no longer a river. It's a flood. And now it's life-taking.

In the same way, when you try to get more life out of something than it was meant to give—when a good thing runs amuck—then it ends up damaging life.

This is what Scripture means when it talks about the danger of idolatry—of taking a good thing and making it an ultimate thing—of trying to find more life in some part of creation than in the One who created it (Rom. 1:25-32).

Idols—in this case, busyness as a way of life—never deliver on their promise to give you a good life. You believe that if you just cram a little bit more into your schedule—another activity; another distraction—then that will take away some of the pressure you're feeling and life will be good.

And yet, you discover that life isn't better. It's just busier. It's even less good now, than it was before.

Idols always leave you wanting more. They demand more and more time and energy from you, while they give you less and less return on

each investment. And once you start down this road, it's impossible to stop.

Do you have an idea what some of those idols are for you—the things that never seem to satisfy you like you hoped they would?

What's the solution? Unsurprisingly, it's Jesus. Yes, you knew I was going to say that, right? But, it's still true.

He steps into this swirling, chaotic busyness that wears us down without filling us up and he says,

Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls (Matt. 11:28-29).

Jesus promises deep, inner rest for those who live on treadmills and gerbil-wheels. He promises rest for those who are heavy laden. He offers a way of life that will help restore a work-life balance and navigate the expectations and opportunities that are not going to go away.

And Jesus offers that rest after having lived here, on this earth; after having experienced what it's like to be human.

REST

He knows firsthand what it is to be a finite, human being who cannot possibly squeeze in all the demands and offers that people put in front of you.

He lived with those same expectations—from His mother, His brothers, His disciples, His friends, the religious leaders and the thousands of people who followed Him everywhere He went, all wanting something different from Him.

They offered Him countless opportunities—to serve, to heal, to teach, to grow His ministry and to do anything and everything they wanted Him to do. He lived under all the pressures that you and I do and, after having experienced all of that, He says, ‘Come to me. There is a way of living here, in this chaotic world, where you can have rest and a light burden. Come to me for it. I know how to live it and I’ll share that life with you.’

This book is an invitation to enter into that rest—to unplug and to enter into a world with Christ that ratchets down the crazy while He nourishes your soul.

MAIN POINT

*Jesus offers rest to those who don't know
how to stop.*

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Outside of school or your job, what do you spend most of your time doing?
- What stresses you out the most?
- Do you really believe Jesus can help you with rest? Be honest.