

Why Your Life Sucks
No Rest for the Weary
February 2, 2014

PRELUDE – I Will Follow
Worship Songs – Great God/The Love of God
Feature – Days Go By
Drama – An Hour on Wednesday

Does that drama sound familiar? If not, how about these situations:

Moving from one check-out line to another in attempt to find the shorter/faster line. You may even know which checkers are the fastest so you intentionally get in their line.

Multi-tasking to the point you start forgetting tasks

Putting on clothes backwards, wrong-side out or mismatching shoes/socks

Sleeping in your daytime clothes to save time getting dressed in the morning ☺

All of these are symptoms of a condition called

“hurry sickness”, which according *Psychology Today* (Feb. 8, 2013, Sword and Zimbardo) is characterized by continual rushing and anxiety and an overwhelming continual sense of urgency. The definition goes on, “hurry sickness is a malaise in which a person feels chronically short of time and so tends to perform *every task* faster and then gets frustrated when encountering any kind of delay.”

The worst part of hurry sickness is society actually encourages it --- everything from producing hire quotas to cramming our schedules with constant activity --- all of these power a fast-moving merry-go-round that we can't seem to stop.

When I'm counseling folks, one of the first questions I ask is about their schedule. If it's a couple, I'll ask how long it's been since they had a real date. If it's an individual, I may ask how he or she feels about simply sitting and doing nothing.

To help folks think about this, I have an assessment we work through. You have this assessment in your program – if you need one, our ushers can get one for you ---- raise hands.....

This material drawn from the *Hearing God* class some of you may have attended. So it may sound familiar. But trust me – it won't hurt you to assess where you today as opposed to when you took the class. I *teach* the class and need to look at this assessment often!

Hurry Sickness Assessment

Between you and God

Be honest about *where you are*; not *where you want to be*

1 = never

10 = most of the time

1. You go through your day with a constant sense of urgency – no time to relax or just let down. Put an X that describes where you are.
2. You notice underlying tension in close relationships. There are a lot of sharp words, quarrels over insignificant things or frequent misunderstandings.

3. You're preoccupied with escaping. You tend to seek time to be alone, to tinker with things around the house or garage primarily so you won't have to deal with people. You watch a lot of TV because you want to "check out" from everything.
4. You often feel frustrated because you're not getting things done. You frequently find yourself thinking, "I'm just not disciplined enough" or "I'm just not organized".
5. You sense time is passing too quickly – life is passing by without you getting what you really want out of it.
6. You have a persistent desire for a more simple life. You imagine moving to the country or changing jobs. When you see photos of people living at the much slower pace, you try to picture yourself in the image because you want it so much.
7. You have little time for love – for doing thoughtful things for others. You get ideas of how to be helpful or kind but find yourself backing away because you're afraid of how much time it would take. If you're married,

you find you don't take time for romance or sexual intimacy.

8. You often find yourself multi-tasking. A car ride is time for talking on the phone, flipping radio stations and making mental to-do lists.
9. You've lost a sense of gratitude and wonder about life. Maybe you know it intellectually, but you've lost the *feeling* of life being good and the desire to thank God for all you have.
10. When it gets really quiet, you sometimes have a gnawing feeling that *there has to be more to life than this*.

The Price of Hurry Sickness

Now I want you to take a look over your assessment and answer these two questions (remember, this is between you and God).

- **What price do you pay for hurry sickness?**
- **What price do those you love pay for your hurry sickness?**

There's no scorecard for this assessment. It's just a tool to help you see if you're inclined to hurry sickness. You may even be thinking, "What a waste of time." Think about that – slowing down long enough to assess your pace of life could be a waste of your time....

If you don't hear anything else today, I pray you'll remember this ---- ***hurry sickness is the greatest enemy you will ever face in every relationship – including your relationship with God. (REPEAT)*** We all struggle with this. We heard it in the drama when Laura said:

"I can't reach you at the office, I can't reach you on the phone. I can't reach you at home. What's happened to you? What's happened to us? We used to be alive....Now, we're just....successful." We used to alive.... Now we're just Successful....

When we're in the grip of hurry sickness, we truly do feel that there's no rest for the weary. We say things like, "If I stop (doing xyz) it won't get done." "I have to do this – no one else is going to". "If I don't do this, (xyz person) is going to be upset."

We feel frantic and anxious. We become rude and disrespectful. People around us become obstacles to our “goal”. And in a word, we feel trapped. And when we feel trapped, We say things like, “I just need a break/day off/vacation/new life”. But at the root of this kind of thinking is a much darker thought.....“I truly cannot stop or the world, MY world will fall apart.”

In time we begin to believe there really isn't any rest for the weary. And because of that, it feels like our lives suck.

Two Big Illusions

As different as we all are, there are two illusions that land us right in the middle of hurry sickness. One has to do with time; the other has to do with money.

- **Time: “Someday Things Will Settle Down.”**

When things settle down, I'll ---

....get around to what matters

...live out my priorities

...create a budget

...spend more time with my husband/wife/kids

...get around to what really matters

Here's the ugly truth.....

Things will settle down when you die.

Until you die, things will not settle down.

REPEAT

The best advice I can give you to deal with the suckage effect of going too hard and too fast is this: *Take responsibility for your life and become ruthless about eliminating hurry.* As I said before --- hurry is the greatest enemy we have in any relationship.

You're probably thinking, “But I've got a family/bills to pay/obligations to fulfill and a wonderful church to attend ☺. I'm not like you – I'm not a pastor and I can't just take time off to slow down☺. Most days it seems like everyone wants a piece of me. So how do I know where to cut back?”

Great question. Here's the key. There's a difference between being *busy* and being *hurried*.

(Repeat)

➤ **Busy has to do with our outward condition,**

Hurry has to do with the state of our souls.

(REPEAT)

Busy has to do with our outward condition. Hurry has to do with the state of our souls. It's a direct result of having too many competing priorities. On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest priorities, *everything cannot be a 10*.

For some of us, that feels like death because we're perfectionists – and every **MUST** be a 10. Let me share a secret with you --- it's been proven when we are in the grip of hurry sickness, our productivity declines.

When we look at scripture, Jesus was often busy, but he was never hurried. Jesus spent His time teaching, preaching, performing miracles and just spending time hanging out with people. But somehow, even though He was busy, He wasn't hurried. Somehow

He kept His priorities straight and he always knew what mattered – what really was a 10.

OK, so the first illusion about hurry sickness is “Someday things will settle down.”

The second illusion is about stuff....

➤ **Stuff: “Someday I Will Have Enough.”**

We live in a world that tells us, “use me, buy me, wear me, drink me, own me... whatever... and you will be content.” But we're not. A new car, a new house, a new relationship, a new (fill in the blank) – none of these satisfy us. Of if they do, the satisfaction is only temporary.

The truth is, we're all attached to our stuff because we believe “more” equals happiness, “less” equals unhappiness. AT&T even advertises with the slogan, “more is better” for its 4G network! So we do whatever it takes to get more. And find ourselves working longer hours trying to pay for more stuff. But if we don't get “more” (the newest, brightest, best, whatever) we get depressed and begin to believe our lives suck --- because (as the little girl in the ATT commercial says, “We want more! We want more!”

Training Activities

So we've defined why it feels like there's no rest for the weary. But what do we do about it? How do we get past these two illusions? By making some very simple changes in our lives (and don't confuse "simple" with "easy"!)

➤ **First --- Slow Down**

Walk more slowly.

Chew your food.

Breathe deeply.

Really listen to children.

Drive in the slow lane on 152.

Get in the longest line at Walmart or the grocery store.

➤ **"Just Say 'No'!"**

Every time we say yes to one thing, we are saying no to something else. You may need to just start saying "no" to new requests. But most of us need to re-assess how we're spending our time and say "no" to activities that have accumulated from years of saying "yes".

Think of the series "Hoarders". Some of us "hoard" constant activity; others of us are

afraid to say "no" because we might disappoint someone (and they may not like us)....

I told you --- these are simple steps, but they aren't easy!

➤ **Keep a Sabbath**

Commit to one day (or even a few hours) a week when you rest and do no work. Do things that energize and renew you. Avoid the temptation to "just check one thing" on your iPhone --- only to find you've just spent 30 minutes getting buried in emails from work.

If possible, go "dark" – no phone, computer, TV. This isn't a day to "catch-up" on laundry or bill-paying (unless you honestly find those refreshing). It's taking responsibility for your schedule, rather than complaining about the suckage of "never having time to rest".

➤ **De-Clutter**

The more stuff we have, the more time and energy are required to maintain it. What could you live without in order to simplify your life? Go through your closets, basement, and garage—give things away. Trust me on

this --- you have no idea how exhausting it is to look at clutter that needs to be organized, put away or thrown away.

Prior to our remodel last year, NHCC did the Great Purge or 2012. It started out as a way to free up more space to remodel. But by the time we finished, we began to realize the constant clutter and lack of organization was wearing us out.

Thankfully we were blessed with some amazing volunteers who love to put order to chaos! The same is true about your basement or garage or spare room or car.....

➤ **And the last one: Be intentional about downtime**

This is kinda like a Sabbath but instead of a long span of time, this is those extra few minutes at lunch or before you go to bed.

Here's an example: You're exhausted from a long day at work. The family is finally in bed. Do you: check your email? Do some FB stalking? Read on your iPad or play "Words with Friends"?

Hang with me on this because there's been some interesting research done on the effect of "blue screen lighting" and our brains. One study has linked the use of any kind of visual electronics to insomnia. Any handheld device is worse than a desktop computer because the short wavelength blue light from the screen is focused directly on our eyes. (July 1, 2013 ABC News [Experts say exposure to artificial light from tablets is causing sleep disorders](#) Deborah Rice)

Within a week of when a person starts to use a hand-held device for an hour or two before going to bed, our circadian clock (our internal biological clock) is confused about day and night. This "confusion" suppresses the production of melatonin, which is a hormone that helps regulate and promote sleep.

If you have ever struggled with even mild insomnia, you know that you truly do feel like life sucks. Not only do we feel lethargic and grumpy, in time we can develop depression and anxiety disorders. We don't process information well and we may even find ourselves saying "yes" when we need to be saying "no" ---- simply because we aren't physically rested.

I read about this study several months ago and I decided to test it out. I stopped using my iPhone and computer an hour before I went to bed. I still read – I just read a book or magazine. I also stopped watching TV just before going to bed. I followed this routine every night for 2 weeks and I really think there's something to it. I went to sleep more quickly and I slept better. And the next morning, I felt rested. I'm not doing it every night but that's my goal – because I feel better when I make this one simple change.

Letting God Speak

Like I said --- simple things, but not necessarily easy. For the next few minutes we're going to practice "slowing down" because I think sometimes we believe we need to lock ourselves in a dark closet or sit in a half-lotus position while staring at a candle. The truth is it only takes one thing to slow down and find rest. It has to become a priority in our lives. No one else can manage our schedule. No one else can say "no" for us. You are responsible for yourself, just as I'm responsible for myself.

So let me explain how we're going to close out our time this morning

We're going to spend some time asking God to speak to us directly about the matters of time and stuff. I promise this won't be weird or scary – but it may feel different because most of us don't have a lot of "quiet" in our lives.

Will you pray with me?

God, we pray that You will speak to us through Your Word. We confess we are tired and sometimes we blame everyone else for the things that suck in our lives. In the next few minutes, show us where we need to take responsibility about our time and our stuff. Thank you that we can bring our struggles to You and You help us with them. In Jesus' Name, Amen

On the back of the hurry sickness assessment is a scripture from Luke 10 in the Bible.

- **I want you to read it silently and as you do, circle or underline a word or phrase that stands out to you.**

(Pause and wait for my cue)

Now I'm going to ask you to do something that may seem a little strange. I want you to read the same passage again.

- **This time in one sentence, write how this word or phrase may connect with your life right now.**

(Pause and wait for my cue)

OK, now I want you to read the passage one more time.

- **And this time what response do you sense you might need to make as you reflect on the scripture?**

What might you need to do? Or stop doing? Or change? Is there a conversation that needs to happen? Or do you just need to continue to pray about what God may be saying?

(Pause and wait for my cue)

Will you pray with me?

God, thank you that we can depend on you to bring order to our chaotic lives.

Help us make simple changes that can make a difference in whether our souls are restless or at peace.

Help us to search for ways to be still and know that You are with us.

Feature – Be Still

Closing Comments – Rick (incl. movie series trailer 1.5 min)