

## CCC CHOOSING WHAT MATTERS MOST P5

### When You're Running on Empty

We are in Part 5 of a series that we're doing called "Running on Empty." The reason for this series is because people are worn out, they're drained, they're fatigued, they're exhausted – I am convinced we could make this a 100 part series. And why I say this is because busyness is such a part of our culture we don't even think about and or look at them as being lies.

I put in your message notes some responses for you to mark as we go on and let's look at them for a moment, the first one for you to circle is: *You never say it, You sometimes say it, You always say it.* Now I am using the word say it here, but that also means think it." So let's

look at some lies that keep us busy and keep us running on empty.

#### **First: There's not enough time to do everything.**

This is a lie. It also has another name. The name is "If there were only more hours in my day." The truth is there's just enough hours in your day that God wants for your day, for you to live a godly life for Him.

So when we come to this feeling "I wish there were more hours in my day, there's never enough time to do everything." What's happening is somebody is mismanaging something. Either you are or God is, Either you have way to much on your plate for that day, month, year whatever or God mismanage when he created the day to be 24 hrs... At some point when you think there's so much to do, that a lie that fuels our busyness.

The **second** lie that keeps us busy, and keep us running on empty is: **It's just a busy season I'm in right now.** This was my default lie. This is one I used so much – in my marriage, with my kids, as a pastor – “It’s so busy right now but it’s just a season. But you know how seasons are. Seasons always come to an end. It’s right around the corner. I can see good times. But all these projects seem to be due. There’s a lot of stuff going on, travel and different things like that. But when this season is over we’re going to get back to life as it was.”

That is a lie. Busy people don’t have seasons. Busy people have one season – it’s called *busy*. If it isn’t this it will be something else that will keep you in busy and running on empty. It’s not the season that’s busy. It’s the person that’s busy. I call them, busy addicts, which many of us are and we just don’t want to admit that we’re busy addicts. A busy

addict is always looking for an opportunity to score their drug of choice, which is more activity.

The **third** lie that keeps us busy, and keep us running on empty is: **This is really important.** You say, you think, this task, this person, this meeting, this opportunity is really really important... What we do is we line things up in front of us that are really important and we’re constantly faced with busyness. Here’s the key. It’s not just what we think is really important; it’s what God thinks is important.

What happens when you’re going through life and you think everything is really, really important and that brings you to running on empty here is the compound problem: When you’re running on empty you don’t have the discernment, you don’t have the wisdom, you don’t have the intelligence to be able to discern and decide what is really, really important. So when everything seems really important that

is proof that you're running on empty. The world and other people can't make it without you. **Most** people – would say “I put God first, family second, career or school third.” That would be the values. But frequently we make choices that don't validate those same values and why is that because, when you're running on empty your perspective is off. Your decision making becomes blurry. We crumble under pressure and here's what we do. We elevate things that aren't really that important and we devalue things that are really, really important.

You take these lies, these lies that many of you, you don't even think they're lies and mix them with the cultural bigger lie that Busy is better. As if busy is the ultimate value for who you are, if you're busy then you're valued. Busy isn't better. Choosing better is better. Busy isn't better. I want

you to walk out of here today knowing this, that God's word the bible says, busy isn't better, choosing better is better.

I'm going to tell you something that's going to hurt some of you. But I am not saying this to hurt you but to speak the truth to you in love in the hopes it will change your life and heal you. **Busy people are broken people.** They're broken emotionally. They're broken spiritually. They're broken relationally. And the reason they are so busy is they're trying to fill up what they're broken with. Activity is going to try and fill the need of their brokenness.

I know some of you will receive that very defensively. I know I'm probably ticking people off right now. See we say look I am someone, why because, “I'm busy but I'm not broken. I'm very, very healthy.” No, you're not. Busy isn't better. Choosing better is better. I'm convinced that until

we learn to choose better then we'll always be running on empty. We'll always be missing the mark.

I want to show you an example of this from God's word. I want to move this from Bill's opinion of what God's word, is telling us... to an example from God's word. In Luke 10 we have a conversation that Jesus has with two people, one who chooses better and one who doesn't choose better. *"As Jesus and His disciples were on their way, He came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to Him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what He said. But Martha was distracted [Circle "distracted"] by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to Him and asked, 'Lord, don't You care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me.' Jesus said, 'Martha, Martha, Martha, the Lord answered, You are worried and upset about many things.*

*But only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better [underline "chosen what is better."] and it will not be taken away from her.'"* Luke 10:38 – 42 Jesus comes to this woman's house with His twelve disciples. What was customary in this time when you entered somebody's house is that they would wash your feet and give you some food. Walking in sand and dirt – you always had messy feet. You walked in the house, you got your feet washed and you're offered some food.

The impression we get from this text is that Martha was not only being hospitable but that she was probably being too hospitable. While she's doing that, she's distracted with all the busyness, her sister displays the opposite action. It says she's enjoying Jesus' presence. She's sitting at His feet taking advantage of every opportunity to be with Jesus. The

bottom line is that Mary chose better. One was busy one chose better.

So what I want to do is I show you this pattern of busyness that I have found: one, recognize the lies and two, to recognize the pattern of busyness. So here's the pattern of busyness.

It begins with good intentions. This is where busyness begins – with good intentions. Martha wasn't an evil person. Martha was being hospitable. She had the right heart. She opened her home to Jesus. A lot of us in here your life began with good intentions. You had good intentions for your kids. You had good intentions for your career. You had good intentions for your ministry or your service. You had good intentions to provide for your family.

The good intentions actually got the ball of activity rolling and somewhere, somehow, something got lost and the

second thing happened – distractions moved in. Your good intentions were derailed by distractions. In other words what was to her and is to you... so important that it had to get done and couldn't wait until after your time with Jesus.

Martha was distracted by busyness, things, but the wrong things. When you're derailed by distractions, distractions can appear as priorities and priorities can seem like distractions. Then after you're derailed by distractions here's what happens. Pressure and pity arrive. This is where you begin to have a little pity party for yourself. Martha says in verse 40 "*Lord, don't You care?*" Pressure and pity takes over and she snaps. Snapping is usually a sign that you're running on empty. You have no emotional reserves to pull from when things are going wrong. You say and you do things that you regret, you snap.

*“Lord, don’t You care?”* So pressure enters and then pity comes. We’ve all done this. You know what this is like. My spouse doesn’t understand the pressure I feel to get the house clean and take care of the kids. My spouse doesn’t feel the pressure I feel to provide. My parents don’t understand the pressure I feel in school. My friends don’t understand the pressure I feel to pay the bills. My boss doesn’t understand the pressure I feel when he makes me write his sermons. No one understands how hard it is to be me. That’s pity.

But it doesn’t stop there: then after pressure and pity show up guess what’s right around the corner? Resentment. That’s where busyness leads to. Resentment follows. Verse 40. Martha has another classic line *“Tell her to help me.”* You can almost hear the resentment in her voice. Resentment is the sign of busyness.

Busy isn’t better. Choosing better is better. If you and I are going to be able to choose better, one, we’ve got to be able to recognize the lies; we’ve got to be able to recognize the pattern of busyness in our life.

Three, we’ve got to long for these words *“You’ve chosen better.”* While Martha worked Mary worshipped. She chose better. While Martha was distracted, Mary was focused. Mary chose better. While Martha felt pressure, Mary felt peace because she chose better. While Martha was filled with resentment, Mary was filled with enjoyment because Mary chose better.

My gut says that if you and I had a choice we’d want to have the heart of Mary. You may live in a Martha world, you may even have a Martha personality, but in your heart you want what Mary had. You instinctively want your soul to be close to Jesus. That’s why you came here today. How do you get

there? How do you have that Mary heart? You take action on busyness and running on empty?

### **1. You confess the lie.**

Identify the lies on the front half of the page. You confess them. You confess them for what they are. They're not empowering statements, they're lies that act as landmines that blow up on you and keep you from becoming what God desires you to become, they keep you from fulfilling God's will for your life.

### **2. You name the distractions.**

This is so important. I'd encourage you to take a piece of paper and just begin to list all the responsibilities that you have. All the things that you have to do. The events that you go to. The carpools that you do. The activities that you show up to. The ministries you serve in. List all the things that you have and then begin to see if any of them might be

distractions. You might get so practically as to lay your hands on them and pray, "God would You give me insight into which of these are distractions and keeping me from your will for my life?" When you find that they are distractions you begin to cross them out.

I'll tell you how you know that something is a distraction.

Something in my life that I said yes to something a commitment, an obligation, a responsibility, whatever it is, that I then later regret. That's how I know it's a distraction.

You feel guilty because you know doing this is displacing time from somewhere where it should be. But now you know that you really don't have to do it anymore. You just don't know how to get out of it. So you keep doing it. That would be a distraction. You ask God for wisdom to choose what is better. Remember busy isn't better. Choosing better is better.

### 3. **You choose what is better.**

At the end of the day wouldn't it be great to hear the voice of God say, "You've chosen what is better." This is fundamental to living a life as a follower of Jesus Christ. That's how you know that you're a follower of Jesus that you choose what is better. You don't know that I'm a Christian because I have a Christian tee shirt or in my pocket I have Christian mints with a Bible verse stamped on them. You know you're a follower of Christ by choosing God's way over the world's way. It's that simple and it's that complex.

Let me give you some questions to think about this week to unpack how do I choose what is better. First you have to have a standard for what is better. So what is my standard for what is better? If I'm going to live the preferred life that God has for me, I need to choose His way. If you are a

follower of Jesus Christ, *if*. Again recognizing not everybody is. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ here is your standard. The Bible, God's word is your standard. This is the standard for making decisions. If you're not a follower of Jesus Christ my question to you is, What is your standard? What is your standard for basing your ethical decisions, to make your choices? What's your standard? There's got to be some standard for your choices. Then the second question is, Am I making my choices by that standard? There's a lot of people who say, "I've got a standard. I'm a Christian, a Christ follower. But I am not making choices based on that standard. A third question is, what do I need to choose to say no to today? This week. This month. This year. Just sit down and begin crossing things out, giving you some space. Some margin.

A fourth question I put in your notes. I don't do this very often but this is kind of homework for next week. I'm very excited about what I'm teaching on next week: How do you refuel yourself? I want you to begin thinking about this ahead of time.

How do you refuel yourself when you're empty? I'm going to go after that this week.

Can you see making some courageous decisions this week that are going to require you to say no? Even though you are a people-pleaser and you want to say yes. But you're choosing what is better. When you do that consistently here's what happens. Your pace slows down. Your calendar lessens. Your busyness fades. You don't run on empty any more. You walk on full. As you walk on full the fullness of Christ begins to overflow into other people. Your heart is full. Your life is different. Can you see that?

That full heart is what God desires. That full heart is what you desire. Can you see it for you? I can see it. I can see it for me. I can see it for our church as our church gets healthy.

Let's go after it.

**Prayer:** God, one of the many things that we love about coming to a place where people gather is we sense Your presence and we can also pause. We can rest here. We can reflect here. We can be challenged by Your word. We can sing songs of praise and all these do our soul good. Then we tend to leave here and we enter the race and it doesn't do our soul well. We dry up. We run on empty. We make bad decisions and we don't choose what is better. God, would You give us the wisdom that is so much greater than our own? Would You give us the courage to say no to the things so we can say yes to what is better? We know that we all

have to work hard in our jobs and work hard in other areas of our life. But doing so with the pace that leaves us time for You and for what is better. That is our dream. You've wired that into our DNA and now we want to know how to get it. We can't do it on our own power. We've already tried. The time management classes don't work. The day-timers don't help. There's something broken that only You can fill. We ask that You would do that right now. We beg for that. We do so in the name of Jesus. Amen.