

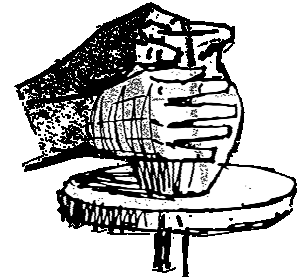
His Workmanship at Westside

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”
—Ephesians 2:10

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Isaiah 64:8

Do “Busy” Better, by Tim Jennings

Are you busy? Me, too. Some days I feel like a thoroughbred race horse bursting out of the gate, running around in circles, only to end up at the same place at the end of the day and somehow further behind. We often begin the year with a flurry of activity. We make plans and start new projects until our schedules nearly burst. If we are not careful, we can become busy without becoming better.

Life is a whirl of activity, and to some extent it should be. After all, the Bible never honors laziness. Solomon wrote, *“The desire of the lazy man kills him,”* Pr 21:25. We are not put here to live a life of leisure. Paul said, *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord,”* Col 3:23. Jesus had an active schedule which got Him up early in the morning and took Him late into the night. The demands of His day were sometimes so pressing that He didn’t even have time to eat.

God created us to work, to be fruitful and helpful. Life is busy, but the life in Christ is busy with different things and for different reasons from most people. We are called to do busy better.

Step 1: Examine the Reasons. First, we must examine the reasons behind our busy-ness. This can be an ugly task, because we often discover our weary pace is driven by a sinful pride.

Do you ever wear your busy-ness as a badge of self-importance? Do you hear that insidious voice which whispers, *“I must be an important person, just look at how busy I am.”* We become involved in a dizzying array of activities so we can fit in with the people at work and not be left out of what the other children are doing in school. So we put in the extra time and sign up for the new activity to establish our place in this world.

At other times our exhausting pace is driven by our selfish pleasures. Truly, how much of our days are devoured by activities that are merely focused on ourselves? Certainly we are important. Our growth is essential. However, our comfort is not the goal of life. Technology is the greatest tool of selfish pleasure today. The big screen, small screen, and palm screen all conspire to waste our time and fill our minds with trash and trivia, leaving us further behind on the things that matter. Our



electronic devices are the first things we check in the morning and the last things we consult at night. They are enshrined as the idols of our day, and they drain our lives of time and energy. The other day I heard a man describe his life as *“crazy busy.”* But Jesus does not call us to crazy. His full days were never frenzied or frazzled. They were lived in the fullness of the Spirit and the fulfillment of His Father’s will. That leads us to...

Step 2: Install a Filter. One verse has realigned my schedule more times than I can count. This verse filters out the activities that clutter up our schedule and allows us to be busy with better things: *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,”* Mt 6:33. This statement complements what Jesus called the *“first and greatest commandment...”* *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,”* Mt 22:37. There is a *“foremost”* and an *“all-ness”* to living for the Lord. It’s all-out living, intense, *“heartily,”* in *“whatsoever we do,”* Col 3:17, 23; Deut 4:29; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 26:16; 30:2,6,10; Josh 22:5; 1 Sam 12:20,24; 1 Kg 8:23,48; 14:8; 2 Kg 23:3,25; 1 Chr 28:9; 2 Chr 6:38; 15:12,15,17; 22:9; 31:21; 34:31; Ps 9:1; 86:12; Pr 3:5; Lk 10:27. *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might, [and with all your mind, and with all your*
continued on p. 2

"But seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you," Mt 6:33 Do "Busy" Better, from p. 1

strength.]... And to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices," Mk 12:30, 33; quoting Deut 6:5. We want His rule to be evident in every part of our lives.

Jesus calls us to a life of "seeking," which is a focused kind of busy. "And you shall seek me and find me, when you



search for me with all your heart," Jer 29:13. "Seek first the kingdom of God" is like a coffee filter for living. You know how a coffee filter works. You put coffee [or all this stuff] on top of the filter. Then you run water through it, and only what is suitable for consumption is allowed through. That is what Matthew 6:33 is for our daily lives. It is the priority through which we filter everything. We constantly ask ourselves, "Is what I'm thinking, saying, doing, and planning demonstrating that I value God's kingdom above anything else?" If the answer is "yes," we choose to do it. We act to do it. If the answer is "no," then we leave it. There must be a kingdom reason for all of living!

A. God's Right Way. We are to be busy with "God's kingdom and His righteousness." Kingdom living starts with "being": the Beatitudes say the blessed person IS. He is poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungry, thirsty, merciful, pure in heart, making peace, and persecuted. Being these things, we approach—seek—God's kingdom. We are constantly

faced with choices, and Jesus said, "Pursue what God says is right for you." Seek God's righteousness. Ah, all of a sudden my schedule isn't filled with my pleasures, but with God's values! Righteousness is all about loving God and my neighbor. Kingdom living, Jesus said, is right living expressed in love. "Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven," Mt 5:19. Then He illustrated how that righteousness is expressed in our love for other people (Mt 5:20-48, even when they don't deserve it!), and in our genuine devotion to God (Mt 6:1-32). "Let all that you do be done with love," 1 Cor 16:14. Now, look at your schedule. Is it full of love for others and devotion to God?

B. Ruling My Life. This standard of righteousness is not just something I can treat lightly. It issues forth from my King, and I seek Him to rule my life. When I hear a hundred voices shouting at me, "Do this! Go there! Buy that," the world tries to jump into the driver's seat of my life. I can hush all the noise by asking, "What does my King want me to do?" How liberating! How healthy! I can listen to the One Who knows me, Who loves me, Who can guide me better than anyone else, and Who offers me rest, Mt 11:28-30.

C. My Main Concern. Many of us are willing to accept the Kingship of God on occasion, but Jesus ratchets up the intensity with the word "first": "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Disciples do not have several priorities, of which God is one. We have one single goal: to make God's way the rule of our lives. "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore your eye is single, your whole body shall be full of light," Mt 6:22. We focus on one thing—it isn't even that God is at the top of the list, it is that He is at the center of everything on the list. The Lord's people do not have a

top 10 list of priorities, of which God is first; instead, we have one overarching priority through which we filter everything. When we see our priorities in terms of a list, it is easy for us to think (falsely) of the Lord as an important part of our lives, but not the whole of our lives. For example, we might say, "I put God at the top of my priority list. That is why I go to worship on Sunday. But the rest of the week I've got to get to my other priorities." **No!** God is the center, the focus, always at the forefront. When we keep our eyes on Him, we are safe and secure, steadfast and faithful, full of endurance: "let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus**, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls," Heb 12:1-3. Without this focus, we become double-minded: "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways," Jas 1:8. "Obey in all things...with singleness of heart," Col 3:22.

Priorities are like the sail of a ship—the way they face determines where we go. No issue is more fundamental to life's destiny than determining our priorities. Yet I am convinced that most of us do not examine our priorities. We mindlessly plug into the flow of life and go where the wind of circumstance takes us. We are so busy meeting the responsibilities of the day that we fail to consider the destiny of our lives. We're like a man who hurriedly fixes his car just to drive it off a cliff!

As citizens of heaven we know where we are going, and we constantly examine our values to see that we are walking in the right Way. We determine not to plug mindlessly into the flow of this world, because we know it is destined for destruction. We believe God has continued on p. 3



Psalm 133:1

God's harvest we'll glean in 2016 "Please let me go to the field and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." —Ruth 2:2

Do "Busy" Better, from p. 2 saved us for a greater purpose than just living a "busy life." He wants us to live a meaningful life, a fruitful life that glorifies Him. We must recognize that busy-ness does not equal godliness. Nor does it equal fruitfulness. Many people are out-of-their-minds busy, but they are spiritually stagnant. Some of us seem to wear our busy-ness as a badge of importance, when, in fact, our schedules simply reveal a deep preoccupation with self! Jesus gave us this statement in Mt 6:33 (Lk 12:31) that rights the ship and sets the sails to living a life of joyful significance.

The word "first" in Mt 6:33 makes us face the reason behind our busy-ness. It compels us to consider why we are buying that thing, signing up for that activity, going to that place, or attracted to that person. It causes us to ask, "Does this reflect that my main concern is that God's ways govern my life?"

C. What I Passionately Pursue. Soul-searching is not always a pleasant examination, and Jesus added a word to ratchet up the intensity even once more, "seek." The word "seek" describes our ambition, what we are passionate about. Jesus insisted that the reason we make God's way our first concern in every decision is because that is what we are passionate about. In other words, our schedule reflects our joy, our passion. What does yours say? Disciples of Jesus are not "crazy busy," we are "kingdom busy!" We evaluate each activity by asking, "Does this show that my main concern which I passionately

Discipleship Here At Home

pursue is God's right way ruling in my life?"

That filter helps us do busy better.

This week write Matthew 6:33 on a piece of paper (or better yet on a coffee filter) and carry it around with you. Whenever you make your schedule, spend your money, or dream your dreams, ask yourself, "Does this show I value God's kingdom above all else?" It is the priority which will set your sails toward a meaningful life.

A Daily Devotion

Like most people, you may be planning to start a new daily devotion schedule for 2016. If you haven't started, it's not too late. Three benefits to daily study are key to our spiritual growth: carving out time for a daily devotion will provide the child of God direction, strength, and a desire to be Christ like.

First, when we establish the habit of spending time in God's Word daily, we gain direction to make the right choices. "Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day," Ps 25:4-5. Make this guidance and direction your desire.

Second, spending time in God's Word provides us strength to continue in God's ways. "Fix your eyes on Jesus" so that "you will not grow weary," Heb 12:1-3. A scheduled daily devotion is like strength training so we can "run the race with endurance."

Third, setting aside time for daily devotion increases our desire to be like Jesus Christ prayed "'Sanctify them by Your truth," Jn 17:17. Paul urged brethren to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind," Rm 12:2. This renewal comes from time spent getting to know God. What better way to know God than by spending time in His Word? If you want to enjoy these three benefits and many more by spending time in God's Word, you can start today.

Bereaved Scott and Amanda McClelland returned today from **Scott's** grandfather's funeral in Amarillo, TX, last Friday.

Letha Fink has returned from Portales, NM, where her family grieved the loss of her sister.

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- **Brandon Thompson**—strep throat; **Monica** is home with him
- **Mike Bennett**—home from FL after serious staph infection; port installed to fight infection
- **Brittany Tope's** mother **Gayle**—biopsy of spot on liver shows breast cancer has spread; **Brittany's** grandmother—on dialysis
- the **Savareses'** grandchildren, **Frankie Kosik**, **Lorraine** and **Christian Harrod**—breathing difficulty, using nebulizer, or inhaler and steroids
- **Jordan Corray's** colleague and mentor **Craig Smith**—in ICU with brain injury after fall from roof; friend **Kylie Cabalka**—staph infection complications; out of ICU to rehab and making progress
- **Sarah McMurray's** mentee **Lakesha Griffin**—age 12; safety, stable home place
- **Connor Boyd's** friend **Christian Lyons**, high school freshman—leukemia
- **Berney Charo's** brother **Eliud**—prostate cancer
- **Kory Tope's** uncle, **Skeeter Schulz**—broken hip
- **Judy Strand**—preparing for liver transplant by chemo
- **Sheryle McNeill**—pinched nerve
- **Ernesto Gonzalez's** father **Fidencio**—stage IV lymphoma, some improvement after 2nd chemo
- **Mary Ellen White**—recovering at sister's house after hip replacement on Christmas Eve; cards to 5307 E. Yale Ave, #306, Denver 80222-6928
- **Letha Fink's** brother **Kenneth Morrison** of GA—liver disease, diagnosed with neuro-muscular disease
- **Bill Dennis**—sick, unable to make Dr. appointment
- **Noah Hadders's** teacher **Sharolyn Elmore**—chemo for breast cancer
- **Larry Campbell's** FL partner **Terry Hargadine's** wife **Michelle**—recovering from mastectomy Thursday;
- **Terry**—recovering from knee replacement surgery
- **Kayla Knighten**, **Christine Adams's** daughter, needs our prayers; **Judy Strand** requests prayer for her son **Joe**; pray **Ed's** son **Rodney Schulz** and **Sheryle's** daughter **Tiffany** receive the gospel;
- **Sylvia Chapman**, **Brett's** grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; **Brett's** grandmother **Sue**, and Aunt **Connie Doss**—cancer returned

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- Christian Harrod**; **Addison Tope**; **Rocco Jr.**
- Ann Cox**; **Logan Corray**; **Pat Wilkes**—asthma
- Orchid Cox**—chronic blood clot condition
- Jonathan Hadders**—RA
- Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy; celiac disease
- Kirk Johnson**—MS; **Amanda Mailloux**—IBS
- Menards**—**Lloyd** diabetes, Alzheimers; VA help;
- Virginia**, blindness from macular degeneration
- Sandra Perry**—diabetes complications; oxygen
- Cheryl Reames**—fibromyalgia; diverticulitis
- Judy Sartin**—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis
- Judy and Mike Strand**—hepatitis treatment
- Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung weakness

Rejoice The **Shreves** are expecting their first baby in April.



Exposing current trends

abortion

Bonfire of the Humanities, by Tony Perkins

If abortionists don't respect life before birth, why would they respect it after death? The clinic operators in Ohio and South Carolina certainly didn't—illegally trashing aborted babies in local landfills. Now, in a video that the Center for Medical Progress took but left to others to release, we see that this garbage-heap mentality is just the tip of the trash bin.

Students for Life highlighted the leaked footage last week, leaving viewers to gasp at the crass inhumanity of abortion. At the Conference of the National Abortion Federation, David Daleiden's team caught one Michigan abortion facility owner on tape complaining about the backlog of baby corpses, which is nothing compared to her vulgar ideas for disposing of them. *"Nobody wants to talk about dead bodies, nobody but me. There was a point when Stericycle fired us that I had five months' worth of fetal tissue in my freezers and we were renting freezers to put them in. So all I thought about, I was so consumed with fetal tissue, I was ready to drive to upper Michigan and have a bonfire."* As if that weren't enough, she said, *"We thought we'll give [the fetal remains] to everybody in a gift bag, they can take it home, figure out what to do with it. It's their pregnancy—why is this our problem? And I'm saying that in all seriousness."* Shocked yet? She went on, *"And the garbage disposal was an option; I mean, there was a point that I actually hired someone from another clinic to come in and take 20 bottles and put it into my garbage disposal."*

This is what the abortion industry is all about—an industry that your tax dollars are involuntarily funding by hundreds of millions of dollars. As this woman notes, in a moment of rare clarity, these facilities are *"all one incinerator away or one incineration company away from being closed."*

Or one veto. The House took the monumental vote to stop the flow of Medicaid money to groups like Planned Parenthood, which sees nothing wrong with this coldblooded approach to the lives it snuffs out through abortion, but the President immediately vetoed the bill. If people like this Michigan woman insist on treating the unborn with inhumanity, we should at least ensure she doesn't have taxpayer dollars to do it. Your votes (and your abstention from voting) do make a difference.

History will hold this president responsible for shackling Americans to an organization that built its empire on the backs of innocent children and traffics in the sale of their parts. For pro-lifers, the victory was never in the president's hands, but in Congress's, which proved its sincerity in fighting for the values of life and dignity. As Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WV) said, Americans can take heart that this is the beginning of the end of this horrible policy. *"All those rules and procedures Senate Democrats have used to block us from doing this? That's all history. We have now shown that there is a clear path...without 60 votes in the Senate. So next year, if we're sending this bill to a Republican president, it will get signed into law."* Thanks to conservatives in Congress for keeping their promise to pass a bill defunding PP. Pray that this hard work may finally pay off when we elect a pro-life president.



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Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

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Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, studies on the attributes of God: *"Show Me YOUR Glory,"* Jim Reingrover
- **sermon**, *"Introduction to 1 Corinthians,"* Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon

- **sermon**, *"An Expository Lesson on Isaiah 6,"* Jim Reingrover

New Wednesday night study: *The Thessalonian Letters*