



Trinity City Bible Study
Term 4, 2018

Crazy Busy

60 minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day, 7 days in a week, 52(ish) weeks in a year, 84.6 years in a lifetime (average life expectancy for Australian females born 2014-2016. A bit less if you're male and a bit less if you were born before 2014)

On the one hand, that's not a lot of time, on the other hand it is 44,465,760 minutes - and that sounds like a lot of time. So why do we so often feel like we don't have enough time? Why do we so often feel like we are 'Crazy Busy', and how can we respond in light of the gospel?

These three studies aim to help us consider this question from a few different angles and see some of what God has to say to us about it in his word. These studies won't follow a typical Bible study format in which we begin with the word of God and consider how it shapes our lives. That is definitely the best way to study the Bible as we dig deep into the riches of God's word and submit our lives to his agenda. But occasionally it is appropriate to spend more time scratching beneath the surface of our lives first to consider where we really need to let God challenge, encourage and transform us by his word. Consider it a bit like tilling the soil to allow the seed to penetrate and get in deep. And that's what we're doing here - we will certainly read the word but this series shouldn't set your pattern for standard practice. Roughly speaking, our three studies consider three big areas where we tend towards crazy busy – rest, relationships and focus. You'll need to be willing to spend some time in self-reflection. You'll need to be willing to share some of that reflection with your group. You'll need to be willing to have some of your assumptions and perspectives and practices re-evaluated as we move from what 'is' in our lives to what God shows us of how life 'ought' to be. And for these Bible studies to be both useful and God-honouring (which I hope you hope they will be!), you'll need to be willing to identify the real-life changes that God's word calls us to.

Through it all let's pray that God will teach us of his glory and the joy of being his children. Let's ask him to teach us to recognise the times and kinds of busyness that are not crazy and those that aren't just crazy but are sinful. And over it all, let's pray he will teach us to love Jesus more and grow in his likeness as we live for him in this crazy busy world.

Study 1: Rest despite busyness

Discuss the following questions as a group:

- When you're feeling flat out, what are the things that you find most refreshing?
- What would your ideal day off look like?
- If there was one thing that you could change so that you felt more rested, what would it be?
- How might the pursuit of leisure make you busier?

Spend 5 minutes on your own considering the last week using the week planner on the next page.

- Mark in the blocks of time that you spent on some sort of rest/recreation/leisure
 - Of those blocks you have just marked off, highlight the ones that you found genuinely refreshing.
- Note at the end of each day how many hours sleep you got that night.
 - Of those nights that you got less sleep than your ideal amount of sleep, note what kept you from getting more sleep.
- Mark in the spots where you spent time reading the Bible and praying in a focussed way.
- Give this week a "busyness rating" compared to your "usual" - was it less busy, about average, or more busy than usual?

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
6am -8am							
8am -10am							
10am -12pm							
12pm -2pm							
2pm -4pm							
4pm -6pm							
6pm -8pm							
8pm -10pm							
10pm -12am							
12am -6am							
Hours of sleep							
Sleep stoppers							
This week's busyness rating:							
Cruisy			Average			Crazy	

When God established his covenant with his people through Abraham he gave him a sign to accompany the covenant: the sign of circumcision. Similarly when God reiterated his covenant with his people through Moses he gave them a sign to accompany the covenant: the sign of the Sabbath. This shaped the 7 day week: 6 days of work, one day of rest. The exact nature of its implementation has been the cause of much debate, confusion and sin over the millennia that have followed, but it is helpful to consider the principles that undergird it.

Of all the passages referring to the Sabbath in the Old Testament, there are only four that provide an explanation for *why* God instituted the Sabbath. Look at the following table and complete the first three columns (we'll come back to in the fourth column later on):

	Reason given for Sabbath observance (for, so that, therefore...)	What does it remind us about God's work for his people?	How does it remind us that we are dependent on God's sovereign kindness?	
Exodus 20:8-11		He _____ us		
Exodus 31:12-13 Ezekiel 20:12		He makes us _____		
Deut. 5:13-15		He _____ us		

Jesus had a fair bit to say about the Sabbath, certainly far too much to look at it all now.

Read Matthew 11:27-12:14

- What is the bold claim Jesus makes in 11:27?
- How does 11:28 connect who Jesus is with the purpose of Sabbath?
- Jesus promised to give rest (11:28). How does this relate to his claim that 'something greater than the temple is here' (12:6) and that 'the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath'?

Side notes:

- 12:1-8 describes a conflict scenario between Jesus and the Pharisees. The Pharisees perceive the disciples' act of picking some grain as 'work', like harvesting a field. The Pharisees were so legalistic that they often moved far beyond the law as they added their own traditions to the law. So they interpret an activity that is simply sustaining the disciples as an unlawful act. In 12:3-5 Jesus responds to their accusation with two scenarios that might seem a bit confusing at first glance.
 - The first scenario refers to events recorded in 1 Samuel 21, but it is a scenario that doesn't have anything to do with the Sabbath. Rather it is a story in which God's anointed king David sidestepped temple regulations for the sake of providing for the needs of his men when they were on the run from the murderous rage of King Saul.
 - The second scenario refers to the simple reality that the priest 'broke' the Sabbath law every week when his 'work' of the daily sacrifice fell on a Sabbath day. God never had an issue with this (he set the law up that way) and the priests never had an issue with this. So it's a challenge to the Pharisees' legalistic perspective on the Sabbath.
 - In both instances 'temple protocol' was placed secondary to the mission of God's king and the work of God's priest.
- Regarding Jesus' statement about being Lord of the Sabbath, you might note that in the OT passages we read above - God describes the Sabbath day as 'my Sabbath' or a Sabbath 'to the Lord'. He is the Lord God, the God over the Sabbath and the God who gives the Sabbath.

Return to the table on page 5 and write in 'Jesus' as the heading of the fourth column. Under this heading fill in how the Sabbath points us to Jesus. How is he the fulfilment of the three truths that we are creatures of God, made holy by God, set free by God?

Why do we still need to be reminded of our dependence on God's sovereign kindness in Jesus?

Discuss the following statement:

"We tend to get busy because we forget (or we try to ignore) the reality that:

- *we are finite creatures dependent on the provision of our infinite creator.*
- *we are sinful creatures who cannot work ourselves into holiness.*
- *we are enslaved creatures who cannot work ourselves into freedom."*

In what ways are these three truths still awaiting their final conclusion - their ultimate fulfilment when Jesus returns? What does this teach us about expecting 'ultimate rest' here and now?

Where do our typical forms of leisure hit or miss the mark of helpful rest? Discuss how we might rest 'smarter' in ways that both reflect these three truths and continue to remind us of them?

Spend time in prayer giving thanks for the ultimate rest we have in Jesus, and asking that he'd help us pursue real rest in the midst of busy lives.

Study 2: Relationships in Busyness

Discuss: What makes you feel busier: when people get in the way of you doing the task, or tasks get in the way of you being with people?

Generally speaking how much does someone's inability to say no to things contribute to being crazy busy?

From the list below, rate your top 3 reasons for finding it hard to say no, giving one point to each:

- I'd rather see the job done by someone than not at all, even if that someone has to be me.
- I don't want to let people down.
- The task just seems too important to say no.
- I don't want to disrespect the person asking me.
- I'm worried they'll think less of me.
- I hate conflict and saying no feels like conflict.
- I want to make the most of every opportunity I'm given.
- If I say no, that just means someone else has to work harder, and I feel guilty about that.
- I presumed that not saying anything meant I was saying no.
- I don't want to be rude.
- I didn't know it's OK to say no.
- If I say no now perhaps I won't be asked again later.
- I don't really know how to say no.
- Other...

As a group, add up the total points for each statement. Discuss the following questions about the top 3 or 4:

To what extent do these reasons reflect a desire to please others vs pleasing God? Where they reflect a concern to please others, what is it that you fear will happen if you don't please them?

God speaks very clearly about fearing him. On one hand 'he is to be feared above all gods' (Psalm 96:4) because unlike anyone else, he is the one who reigns over the whole universe. All other authority figures answer to him. And you don't want to be on his wrong side - he is the God of fire and lightning that has even the mountains melting like wax (Psalm 97:3- 5). Yet at the same time God shows that while he is fearsome he is also loving and gracious and kind, such that when we know him in Christ Jesus, we fear him in awe and wonder rather than terror. This has loads of impact on how we relate to others. Let's follow a line of thought from Proverbs, through Psalms to Jesus to see how this might speak into our crazy busy lives.

Read the following proverbs and discuss how they bring Godly wisdom to the discussion about being crazy busy:

- Proverbs 14:26-27 *Whoever fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death.*
- Proverbs 15:16-17 *Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil. Better a small serving of vegetables with love than a fattened calf with hatred.*
- Proverbs 19:23 *The fear of the LORD leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble.*
- Proverbs 29:25-26 *Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe. Many seek an audience with a ruler, but it is from the LORD that one gets justice.*

Read the following verses from Psalms 27 and 34 and discuss how they inform our perspective on God in a way that challenges our fear of others.

Psalm 27:1-3

Psalm 34:1-10

Jesus continued the OT pattern of challenging our fear of others and addresses our heart's tendency to people-please.

Read Matthew 6:1-6

How might such an attitude impact on the difficulties we have in managing our busyness?

How does this further inform our understanding of what might really be going on in our hearts on some of the occasions when we struggle to say no?

Read Luke 15:11-32

In this parable we meet a man who had no fear of his father, then developed a misplaced fear of his father, only to then see his father's character of love and mercy that is worthy of awe and respect, but not terror and trepidation. How does this story portray the difference between being servant and a son in our relationship with God? (consider the relationship of both sons)

With this sweep of Biblical teaching in mind, what connections can you see between fearing God rather than others on the one hand and loving God on the other hand? Try and ground your discussion in the passages we've looked at as much as possible.

Return to your reasons why it can be hard to say no. Which of them stem from a love of God? Which of them stem from a fear of man? Pray about this with someone.

Is there concrete action you need to take this week to get less busy because you fear God not man? Pray about this with someone.

On the other hand, have you been challenged that there are things you need to say yes to because you fear God? Pray about this with someone.

For those groups with more time, or for some further thinking on your own down the track, it is helpful to see how another aspect of our relationships relates to our sense of busyness: love.

Knowing God's love for us, as an expression of our love for him, we are freed to love others. And sometimes that will make us busy. Loving others takes time and effort and we can get very busy doing it! And that's a good type of busy, but it can too easily shift from love to obligation and from joyful sacrifice to wearying chore. God has lots to teach us on this point, but let's just consider the following for now:

Read Colossians 3:1-17

List the ways in which gospel-identity shapes the behaviour we are called to (to ask this another way, list the different places Paul describes who we are in Christ to provide the foundation for what we are to do in Christ).

In what way have we already died, and what do we need to keep putting to death? Of those things that need to be put to death, what attributes might rear their head when we are feeling particularly busy? Which might contribute to our being sinfully busy?

What then should we put on? How is this a summary of putting on Christ - likeness? How does this re-orient our priorities when we're under the pump, getting hectic, flat out crazy busy?

In the midst of busy lives, how might it change our decisions if we were determined to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus? (v17)

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

How do verses 1-3 challenge our perspective on getting things done? How would our focus on people vs task shift if we had this in mind? Step through the various qualities of love outlined in verses 4-7 and consider how being crazy busy might be at odds with this kind of love. On one hand - how do these attributes of love protect us from getting sinfully busy? On the other hand - how does being crazy busy make it harder to love like this?

Study 3: Reason for Busyness

'Mission creep' is a term that was coined in the early 1990's to describe the gradually expanding objectives of a UN military campaign in Somalia. What began as a mission to provide humanitarian relief in the context of the Somali civil war gradually expanded to include regime stabilisation then counter-insurgency and finally collapsed in the violence of the Battle of Mogadishu, made famous in the movie *Black Hawk Down*. Not only were the initial goals unmet, but there was a terrible cost of life along the way.

The term has since been applied in various organisational, business and management contexts. The Cambridge Business English Dictionary defines mission creep as the gradual addition of new tasks or activities to a project so that the original purpose or idea begins to be lost. On a more trivial note, 'mission creep' could be used to describe the home DIY project that begins with a goal to quickly repaint the lounge room for when Mum comes to stay and ends up with a major project trying to patch the walls and fix the squeaky door and then sand the floor back to deal with the paint that got spilled and then the sofa needs replacing because it doesn't match the new paint job... and the house is in chaos when Mum arrives, and you're left wondering how it all ended up so crazy busy!

As a group, discuss whether you have seen or experienced how a lack of clarity about mission, purpose and goals has led to things getting hectic - "crazy busy". This could be anything from a simple situation in your own life to something on the global stage.

Working individually for now, take 5 to 10 minutes to complete the table below based on the following questions:

- List the roles that you have in life. Try and think of as many as you can, including the smaller trivial ones as well as the big important ones. Think relationally (eg son, sister, employee) as well as task (eg student, doctor, Prime Time leader)
- Pick a few of the biggest or most important roles and try and sum up your main goal in each role in one phrase goal (e.g. student = obtain degree; dad = raise godly children; electrician = enable electricity to safely get where it is needed).
- Now try and consider your life as a whole. Lots of organisations have a mission statement. If someone was to look on at your life over the last month, what might they say was your 'life mission statement' based on what they see?

My Roles	One key goal for each
<p>My "Perceived Mission Statement" (ie. what an onlooker might think my life mission is):</p>	

Now discuss the following questions with a few others (or as a group):

- What makes the important roles important? Is it just the amount of time they take up, or are there other factors that define the important roles?
- What makes it hard to prioritise the important roles in your life?
- How do the individual goals relate to your overall goals?
- How do you feel about the exercise of summing up your 'perceived' mission statement?

Now let's turn to the Bible.

The wisdom Literature in the Old Testament has heaps to teach us about living in a world where we are painfully aware of our limitations, like when we feel like things are crazy busy. We don't have time to read all of Ecclesiastes, but we can get an overview and then discuss the questions that follow.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11, 2:24-26, 12:13-14

Does this perspective resonate with your experience of life?

How does the teacher's insight help us have a realistic perspective on life?

How might this help address the sense that life is just "crazy busy"?

Now read Matthew 6:19-34

- Verses 19 - 24 present two contrasting ways to live. What are they? How does such a stark contrast help us clarify our goals in life?
- Verses 25-34 help us consider the implications of these contrasting ways of life. What does Jesus teach us about the character of God that gives you confidence to serve him?
- This passage is not a promise that life will feel easy and simple. After all "Each day has enough trouble of its own." But how might this passage help us take stock during those times when we feel like it is a bit crazy busy?

For the next 10 minutes, individually review your roles, goals and mission statement using the table on page 17. In light of what we have learnt from the Bible, what might a proposed mission statement for your life look like? Now pick your most important roles and consider how you might revise an ideal core goal for each one. Set a time to review and refine this at least once this week.

My "Proposed Mission Statement" (ie. what I'd like my life mission statement to be):

My Top Five Roles	One ideal goal for each

Turn it to prayer: If God has used this study to challenge you to change your priorities or perspectives, share one aspect of this and pray for each other to take action in response to this challenge. If it has raised questions for you, pray that God would keep teaching you from his word.

Suggested books for further reading:

Crazy Busy by Kevin DeYoung
The Busy Christian's Guide to Busyness by Tim Chester
Don't Waste Your Life by John Piper
Zeal Without Burnout by Christopher Ash
What's Best Next by Matthew Perman

Study 1 further reading:

Consider the following passages:

- Psalm 103:13-18
- Psalm 121
- Psalm 127:1-2
- Hebrews 4:1-11

Consider the following books/chapters:

- "The Terror of Total Obligation" Chapter 4 in *Crazy Busy*
- "We Need Sabbath Rests" in *Zeal Without Burnout*
- "A Wrong View of God" in *Serving Without Sinking*

Study 2 further reading:

Consider the following passages:

- Psalm 3
- Psalm 49
- Psalm 103

Consider the following books/chapters:

- *Serving Without Sinking* by John Hindley
- *The Busy Christian's Guide to Busyness* by Tim Chester
- "We Need Friends and God Does Not" in *Zeal Without Burnout*
- "Put Others First" in *What's Best Next*

Study 3 further reading:

Consider the following passages:

- Mark 1:35-39
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-58
- Ephesians 5:15-20

Consider the following books/chapters:

- "Mission Creep" in *Crazy Busy*
- "Sort Out Your Priorities" in *The Busy Christian's Guide to Busyness*
- *Don't Waste Your Life* by John Piper
- "Know What's Most Important" in *What's Best Next*



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