



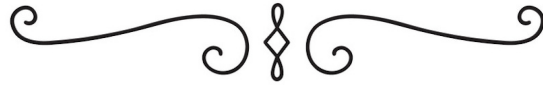
Reclaiming Your Time and Priorities: Overcoming Activity Addiction

By: Terri Walker

We are living in incredibly busy times where high activity is the norm. We've all heard or used some of the common terms associated with a typical lifestyle of constant activity: hustling, grinding, swamped, slaving, on-the-go... Society has set the tone for us to be willing to work and move tirelessly, spinning our wheels often with no return for our vested time and efforts. Sadly, this can be true not just for adults, but youth as well. Truthfully, some of us might even gain a sense of fulfillment by juggling multiple tasks and being involved in countless activities. But what is it costing us?

There are more than enough activities that can keep us over-scheduled and over-committed. And they're usually all aimed at producing a positive outcome in any specific area of our lives, so it's not surprising that we may prioritize them. As a wife and mom of four with a full-time job, I am often busy— both physically and mentally. There have been many times where at the end of the day, I've wondered how we did it all. And more often than that, I've wondered why we did it all. By that, I mean wondering what tasks/activities were truly necessary and which could possibly be a waste of time for myself or my kids if it's not even God's will. In a household where children are present, constant activity and busyness can create a false impression about what is truly important.

As born-again believers, sitting and taking stock of what and how much we're doing daily and praying about what is truly God's will can be eye-opening. Yes, some activity/busyness is necessary and can't be avoided, some is even fun and life-enhancing; but sometimes we do and go **more than is necessary** without thinking, as if being driven by a motor, filling our days with activities to satisfy our earthly motives without seeking the counsel and will of God. This constant activity can be a distraction from seeking our Heavenly Father and spending time in His presence and in His Word.



If you sense that you are an activity addict, how can you change course?

First, find out and agree with what is NECESSARY in your daily life and make that a priority.

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:38-42 (NKJV)

I'm sure Martha thought she was doing what was necessary: cleaning, cooking, setting a table... Yet when she complained about her sister not helping, Jesus told her directly that only ONE THING was needful. We know what that thing is because it's what Mary was doing: spending time with Christ and soaking up His Word.

Even in times of seemingly necessary activity (whether in or out of our homes) we must mindfully look to Christ. The busier you become, the more you need to intentionally sit still in His presence. We must resist putting all things ahead or in place of Him. We are designed to be completely dependent on Christ our Shepherd.

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4 (NKJV)

So, make it a priority to take time apart from activity to embrace BEING STILL, where you can dwell in His presence, spend time in prayer, and absorb His Word. Christ gave us this example when He always broke away from the activity in His daily life to pray. This must become a habitual practice for us.

Second, pray and be led by the Holy Spirit's guidance on your choice of activities.

Just as some are life-enhancing, some can be life-draining, robbing you of your time and peace and can ultimately cause you to be spiritually malnourished—which you should want to avoid.

Once we are born again, we become new creatures who are no longer conformed to the world and its ways. We must begin to function differently, according to the Spirit's guidance (what might even seem peculiar to an observing audience). Paul reminded the Galatians the importance of being led by the Spirit in their everyday lives: **Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Galatians 5:25 (NLT)**

Don't allow society's expectations (or your flesh) to dictate or influence what your priorities should be. Bring everything to God in prayer. Before you take on any activity, ask Him about it. In His infinite wisdom, you can be sure that He won't mislead you, so seek His will above all else.

Therefore, pay careful attention to how you conduct your life — live wisely, not unwisely. Use your time well, for these are evil days. So don't be foolish, but try to understand what the will of the Lord is. Ephesians 5:15-17 (CJB)

Third, don't neglect to take a restful day each week. (And don't feel guilty about it!)

If Elohim, the All-Powerful One, Creator of Heaven and Earth, took time to rest—and hallowed that restful day for mankind—shall we not do the same?

And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. Genesis 2:2-3 (NKJV)

His desire for us is that we have shalom and rest for our souls. Our physical and emotional health matter and can take a beating when we're constantly on the go and neglecting our Daily Bread.

...Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath... Mark 2:27 (NKJV)

28 Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)



God's priority for us is a relationship with Him because He truly loves us. Although He pursues us, He would never force this loving relationship on us. When we are so activity- and task-oriented, we can easily forget to focus on our necessary relationship with Him. It's through this relationship that we experience spiritual growth and, in turn, our lives can make a godly impact on others, thus expanding the Kingdom of God.

