

The Disciple

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LOVE WITH YOUR LIFE

These days, the idea of “being bored” has taken on a whole new meaning. In less than a century, our culture has gone from having a to sit on our front porches in order to talk to our neighbors to sitting in front of our TV’s in order to be entertained. Screens seem to be everywhere. You can’t even pump gas without a screen there to entertain you.

So, you may feel bored, but we need to go deeper. It is not that we are bored, it is that we are “over entertained”. In my opinion, we are so entertained that we are becoming numb to entertainment and therefore feel bored. Those that make money by entertaining us keep raising the bar because we become more and more numb to the bombardment of amusement that attacks our souls. The more we are entertained, the more stimulation it takes to entertain us. They are constantly raising the bar with more and more violence or sex. Like a drug we take too often we become immune to it so that it loses its effect on us. Soon we are bored all the time. We are saturated/sedated with stimulation. Our attention spans diminish as they get ravished by the constant shock waves of increasing stimulation. Our brains become numb to life itself.

There is a line in the book “Brave New World” by Aldous Huxley that goes something like:

“In the end, people will be delighted in that which diminishes their minds.”

This bombardment of entertainment seems to have a consistent, recurring message and it is this: Your missing something and we know what it is- it is our product. The reason this lie works on us is that it is half true. We ARE missing something. We are like an onion. When we get to the middle, there is nothing- a void. And so, we either try to fill that void with products or we avoid feeling it- through amusement or distraction. If this bombardment of entertainment is successful, we will be entertained into a life without purpose- a meaningless life.



**Cast your
cares on the
LORD
and he will
sustain you;
he will nev-
er let the
righteous be
shaken.**

Psalms
55:22

While entertainment is sedating us into apathy, we have our God commanding us to love Him and each other more fiercely. We are called for adventure. We are called to take risks- we are called to love. Most everyone loves their own children and grandchildren. But, God has called us to inconvenience our lives by loving others. You were created for much more than to be amused. You were meant to make a difference. You were meant to love someone who needs it today. Which brings us to verse eleven of chapter four. Paul exhorts the people he loves to love more and more by finding quiet, focusing on themselves and working.

“And that you study to be quiet, and to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you” 1 Thessalonians 4:11 KJV2000

Being Still (find quiet). The Greek word for quiet has to do with finding inner rest. We are commanded here to be ambitious about stillness. Be serious about thinking alone. Defrag your thoughts. Do you want to love people? Do you want to be more used by God in the lives of those you love? Then spend time alone. But not alone by yourself.

“Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”
Psalm 46:10

God made that emptiness inside of us for Him and Him alone. When we are still and know that He is God we find rest. Be alone with God and bring your Bible. Turn off all of the distractions and take seriously your time with God. Self-care is something that many of us need to work on and no one will replenish your soul except God.

Focusing on Your Own Issues. When Paul wrote “mind your own business” it sounded like he is telling us to not be nosy. However, in the Greek it is a positive command. We are to focus on our own issues. How much time do we spend focusing on “fixing” other people- especially our children? How much time do we spend on thinking about the people that annoy us, discourage us or just plain “drive us crazy”? There is a time and place to process our thoughts about others. However, Paul is writing so that we focus our thoughts on our own shortcomings so that God can fill us with His love. Remember the words of King David:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139

When we focus on our own issues in the power of the Holy Spirit, we find rest and God fills us with His love.

Working with Your Own Hands. We were created to work. God worked for six days before He rested. Jesus was a carpenter. God created us to work. The Bible treats work as a blessing. We bless others through our work. There is not job that doesn't matter. Whether you are a full-time worker driving a truck or a retired person writing a thank you card with a prayer, you were meant to be a blessing to others through a labor of love (Gal. 5:6).

When we work as for the Lord, we find rest and God fills us with His love.

God wants you to know that there is a rest for you- an inner rest. It won't come through entertainment or distractions. It will come through the hard work of peeling the onion (tears are often involved). Go into the quiet with God. There you may hear toxic voices from your past or find memories you would like to avoid, but keep “peeling the onion”. In that place- God is there waiting. He made that emptiness in you so that you would seek Him.

“¹²That you may walk honestly toward them that are outside, and that you may have lack of nothing.”

When we quiet our hearts with God we find rest and God fills us with His love so that God can use us in the lives of others.

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.” - Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30)

The Struggle Makes You Strong

I have heard a story of a gardener who was out tending his garden one day and observed a butterfly struggling to break free of its cocoon. The gardener watched in amazement as the delicate creature struggled violently to work its way out of its constraining space. The entire cocoon shook and trembled with the butterfly's efforts to emerge. This struggle went on for what seemed like an eternity to the concerned gardener. Eventually, the gardener became so distraught over the butterfly's wrestling to break free that he lost patience and decided to help the process along. He went into the house and obtained a pair of scissors, returned to the garden and cut a larger opening in the wall of the cocoon, allowing the butterfly to tumble out onto the ground.

What the well-meaning gardener did not realize is that *the struggle is part of the transformation process*. In the cocoon, the young butterfly's wings are engorged with fluid, and the struggle to emerge from the cocoon forces the fluid out of the wings and into the young creature's body where it can be absorbed and processed. Deprived of part of its transformative process, this particular butterfly's wings remained fluid-filled and it was never able to fly.

The gardener watched in despair as the butterfly slowly died, lying on the ground in his garden. In our lives, individually and together, metamorphosis comes as part of a process that involves joy and sorrow, pain and liberation.

Metamorphosis is a process, which involves struggle, dissolving, reimagining, revising, and flying. It is not always easy, however, when you emerge, spread your wings and begin to fly, you will have a greater appreciation for who you are and what the Lord has called you to become.



SUFFERING
produces endurance, and

ENDURANCE
produces character, and

CHARACTER
produces hope, and

HOPE
does not disappoint us ...

ROMANS 5:3-5, NRSV



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your support.

Be Thankful

Poet Unknown

Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire.
If you did, what would there be to look forward to?
Be thankful when you don't know something,
for it gives you the opportunity to learn.

Be thankful for the difficult times.
During those times you grow.
Be thankful for your limitations,
because they give you opportunities for improvement.
Be thankful for each new challenge,
because it will build your strength and character.

Be thankful for your mistakes.
They will teach you valuable lessons.
Be thankful when you're tired and weary,
because it means you've made a difference.

It's easy to be thankful for the good things.
A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who
are also thankful for the setbacks.
Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive.
Find a way to be thankful for your troubles,
and they can become your blessings.

