



I received a nice gift from Mike Sterlacci not too long ago. It is a book about being too busy. Thankfully the book is short—who has time to read a 700 page tome? The book, entitled *Crazy Busy: A (Mercifully) Short Book about a (Really) Big Problem*, was authored by Kevin DeYoung. He covers a number of helpful topics, admitting that he struggles with over commitment. He writes that there is a “...pervasive sense of being unrelentingly filled up and stressed out.” Maybe you can identify with that struggle. Years ago I read another book that used a helpful metaphor to illustrate the need for balance and limiting one’s commitments: Margin. When writing on paper, we invariably leave some margin of empty space around whatever is on the page. Our lives need margin and some time for relationships and rest.

DeYoung has a helpful (brief) chapter for busy parents. He describes what he sees as “child-obsessed parenting.” He observes that despite the fact that our kids are safer than any previous generation of kids, parents are more anxious than ever. Many parents are investing huge amounts of time, energy and resources into their children believing that their children’s failings will most certainly be the parent’s fault for not doing enough. He encourages all of us parents to take a step back and resist the theory of determinism. “We fear that a few wrong moves will ruin our children forever, and at the same time assume that the right combination of protection and instruction will invariably produce godly children.” (page 68) Rather than sustaining the rat race with our kids, he calls us to treasure the gospel, rest

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Heaven Gone Mainstream

With the release of a major motion picture on heaven, there is sure to be much conversation in the coming days on what heaven is like, yes heaven has gone mainstream. Heaven is for Real is the cinematic version of the New York Times bestselling book by the same name which chronicles the purported out of body experience by a little boy.

Given the general spiritual tone of our society, the movie is sure to strike a favorable cord among many; but is this necessarily a good thing? Could the movie wrongly give false assurance to many of their true spiritual state before a Holy God? And might this movie inadvertently do harm to a biblical notion of life within the context of a local church. So does God’s inerrant word speak to the issue of an out of body experience – like purportedly happened with young Colton Burpo?

The Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12, expresses quite a bit of spiritual humility in interpreting or touting his own out of body experience, when, in verse 6b he states, “But I refrain from it (from speaking about his vision of heaven), so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me”. Interestingly, Paul then mentions how God made sure he would not become too proud, nor concentrate on building up this experience, by giving Paul a “thorn in the flesh”. Elsewhere in Scripture, in 2 Peter 1:19, the apostle Peter says, “We have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention...”. Notice the sheer weight that the apostle Peter places on the word of God – he is using that in the context of the transfiguration of Christ! The written word of God as we have it is more powerful and useful than the vision of the exalted Christ that Peter, James and John experienced on the Mt. of Transfiguration!

“Is it ok for me to see such a movie”? That is the question that many well-meaning Christians will probably ask – and it’s a good one. That question can be answered this way, “It depends on why you want to see it.” If you are going to see it because you want to draw closer to God, reassure yourself of your destiny or give a clearer picture of heaven – than the answer should be “no,” it would be best not to see the movie. God has been gracious to His Body by already meeting the needs just mentioned above in the opening question of this paragraph – it’s the local church, the inerrant and more sure Word of God, and the local body of Christ that assembles itself in the context of a local church – and we should rely on this – God’s true provision for us – to be our sustenance and guide. Let’s partake of it daily and weekly through “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves.”

To God be the Glory

“Daughters of Grace Spring Breakfast”

May 11th @ 9:30

Busy All the Time: Over-Scheduled Children and the Freedom of the Gospel

Parents agonize over going weeks without one meal around the dinner table with all family members. They regret missing consecutive weeks of church while traveling to soccer tournaments. They languish as they want their child in a Bible study, but they cannot tell the football coach that small group comes before the pre-game meal or film study. Parents feel robbed of the vision they had of an intimate family that eats nightly meals around the table and went on walks to catch up on life. Instead, they're trapped in a circus of carpool. The vocabulary of fear and obligation dominates expressions I hear from parents when they lament over their child's busyness. "Well, we have to do an ACT prep class, or else . . . we have to take a full load of AP classes or else . . . we have to play a sport to round out that college resume . . . Johnny has to be an Eagle Scout . This attitude suggests they face certain condemnation if they deviate from the cultural norms. Fear looms over the possibility a child may not maximize every minute of every day in the name of resume optimization and ultimate human development.

Furthermore, parents reveal a fear of inadequacy as they guide their children. On one hand they feel as if they are failing to maintain an intimate family unit, because their family runs ragged. Conversely, they feel damned if they do not provide their child with every advantage to achieve success in high school and beyond.

Law and Gospel

From my perspective, the fundamental dynamic at the heart of this issue involves the tension between law and gospel. Whenever people use such language of obligation and inadequacy, one can suspect they are living under the law. In this context, the term "law" refers to an approach to life that involves constantly attempting to measure up to standards out of one's own power and effort. Living under the law constitutes man's natural mode. Before and even after we know Christ, we all instinctively try to prove ourselves. This mode of performance comes with no benefits. A person vacillates between self-righteousness (when he or she succeeds) or guilt and inadequacy (when one fails to measure up). Whether guilty or arrogant, everyone experiences exhaustion and burnout when living under the law.

In the case of over-scheduling, parents perceive a standard to which they and their children must meet. A child must experience success in academics, athletics, or the arts. For the child, admittance to the most prestigious, impressive college possible represents the standard. For the parents, they are expected to invest as much energy, time, and money as necessary to lead their child to optimal performance. The insane slate of activity constitutes the means that both parents and children exert in order to meet this standard.

If law underlies the misery of over-programmed families, then the gospel provides the antidote to counter it. Jesus says in John 10:10, "The thief comes to rob, kill, and destroy, but I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly." The thief to which Jesus refers represents teachers of the law who promote performance-based religion. He says their message "robs, kills, and destroys." I know many parents who feel as if living under the law as a family has robbed them of the family life they envisioned.

Christ contrasts the way of the life under the law, characterized by fear and obligation, against the way of following the Good Shepherd, a lifestyle of trust and rest in response to his love. Living under the gospel means one recognizes that the Jesus has lived perfectly and "laid down his life" on behalf of his sheep. Therefore, Jesus has measured up in every arena for every parent and child who has received his forgiveness and righteousness by faith.

Set Free

Christ has set his followers free from social mandates. Parents can begin their escape from this high-pressured frenzy of over-scheduling by first embracing the counter-cultural nature of following Jesus and living in response to the gospel. A follower of Christ has been freed from any obligation except that blessed call to follow and obey Christ and his Word. Given the freedom from the law, which Christ has won for his people, Christian parents can say, "No! No! No!" to travel baseball, math tutors, ACT prep, personal trainers, and so on. Parents can call into question every activity because there is no obligation to conform to cultural expectations.

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<http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2014/01/13/busy-all-the-time/>

PASTOR'S STUDY

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in the providence of God, and calm our hearts with this reminder: "...the most important thing [in parenting] is not what we do, but who we are as parents." (p. 73) Growing in grace as followers of Jesus is one of the greatest priorities we can pursue in life...no matter how busy we are.

Pastor Mark Musser.

The way to Heaven is ascending; we must be content to travel uphill, though it be hard and tiresome, and contrary to the natural bias of our flesh. - Jonathan Edwards

He whose head is in heaven need not fear to put his feet into the grave. - Matthew Henry

Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither. - C.S. Lewis

How sweet is rest after fatigue! How sweet will heaven be when our journey is ended. - George Whitefield

MAY 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1	2 Ignite Youth Group	3
4 Sunday School @ 9:45 A.M. Worship Service @ 11 A.M.	5 Missions Meeting	6 Fusion Youth Group	7 Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer	8	9 Ignite Youth Group	10
11 Daughters of Grace Spring Breakfast @ 9:30am. Worship Service @ 11 A.M.	12	13 Fusion Youth Group	14 Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer	15	16 Ignite Youth Group Men's Volleyball @ Boces School	17 Men In The Morning
18 Sunday School @ 9:45 A.M. Worship Service @ 11 A.M.	19	20 Fusion Youth Group	21 Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer	22	23 Ignite Youth Group	24
25 Sunday School @ 9:45 A.M. Worship Service @ 11 A.M.	26	27 Fusion Youth Group	28 Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer	29	30 Ignite Youth Group	31