

Is Your Body Warning You of Overload?

Are you working more and relaxing less? Do you do more and more but your “to do” list never seems to get any shorter? Are you running to and fro and yet only running yourself ragged? If so, it’s time for a break.

Historically, Americans had the shortest working week in the world after World War II. Today, we have the longest. But life is much more than a 40- to 50-hour week. People are so desperate for some free time that, according to the Center for a New American Dream, half the work force would trade a day off for a day less pay.

The only problem is that if we do find even a few minutes to sit back and relax, we feel guilty. In a rush-rush world if we’re not constantly on the move, we’re made out to be lazy and unmotivated. In a noisy, active society many people simply aren’t comfortable when faced with quiet free time. Society has done a convincing job of making us believe that we should never just sit without something happening.

Contemplating a beautiful sunset, staring at a crackling fire or pondering the complexity of the human body appears to be a lost art. It seems something in the human condition drives most of us to a lifestyle of *doing* as opposed to *being*.

Stress and overwork are major health problems today. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that 80 percent of our medical expenditures are now stress-related.

Even our children are overscheduled. The pressure for kids today to achieve and compete is at an all-time high. And it’s happening at an increasingly younger age.

Parents tend to feel they are depriving their children if they

don't allow them to take advantage of the plethora of activities available to them. But even children need time to relax, unwind and use their imaginations. Free time encourages creativity, something many children today are lacking.

The whole family can get stressed out from too much rushing and a lack of downtime together. The fact is that if we burn the candle at both ends, it will not last through the night. If we can't take care of ourselves, we can't possibly take care of others.

When we have so much to do we tend to try to do several things at one time, adding to our stress and frustration. A survey from *Scientific American Mind* magazine finds an astounding 72 percent of women feel pressured to multitask in order to get things done. In addition, 65 percent say they get less done despite feeling busier than ever.

There's a reason for this: When we switch gears during unfamiliar or complex tasks they tend to take significantly longer to finish than if worked on separately. Not every job is multitasking friendly, so we must learn to discern when to multitask and when to concentrate on one job at a time.

Like a runaway train heading for a collision, we often don't know how to stop. The key is to adopt a healthy attitude toward commitment while balancing that attitude with an awareness of our limitations.

Every one of us has 24 hours in our day—no more, no less. How we view and use that time is up to each individual. You don't have to wait until you burn out or develop health problems before you relax; you can take time for yourself even when you're at your busiest.

First, start your day in peace by spending quality time with the Lord and ask Him to order your day. Take time to refocus on what you really want out of life and set your priorities to accomplish those things. Know your limitations, establish

clear boundaries and learn to say no. Consider your family and re-evaluate obligations and activities. There's a time for everything and maybe now is not the time for some things.

Then maintain a proper perspective and heed warning signs that point to overload and imbalance, such as exhaustion, mental fatigue, resentment and compulsive behaviors. Allow some time in your daily schedule for doing nothing. Go ahead. Just try it, and you'll find you're no longer screaming, "Give me a break!"

PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF 10/07/2013

This week ask the Lord to help you set your priorities and order your day. Spend quality time in prayer daily and ask God to help you set boundaries and say "no" when needed. As you pray for those closest to you remember the persecuted church, those giving their lives for the gospel and those serving in the military. Pray that God would have His way in our nation and that we would focus on what's important to Him. Continue to pray for revival, the protection of Israel and our allies. Ask the Lord to show you how to be a blessing to those in need around you. 2 Chron.7:14