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## A New Power for Work

### 1. Work beneath the work

- A survey by the Australian Institute found that Australian workers hold the dubious record of doing more hours in a week and any other nationality
- The Monday to Friday, 9-to-5 working week is gone ... with many employees logging in on laptops, mobile phones and Blackberries at any time and on any day
- Clive Hamilton, from the think tank Australian Institute, believes the trend is damaging lives and relationships
- Dr Hamilton said
  - *"In the early 1980s the long historical trend of falling work hours reversed, and we started working longer and longer hours ... to the point where now, Australians each year work more hours than any other worker in any other country ...*
    - *more than the Germans*
    - *more than the Americans who generally only have 1 or 2 weeks AL*
    - *more even than the Japanese were famous for the phenomenon of death by overwork*
- He said
  - *"Many of us are caught up in a 'live to work' state of life"*
- He believes
  - *"We've become seduced by the dollar and materialism"*
- *"While many workplaces have offered more flexible work structures because of technology ... the new workplace could be a double edge sword"*
- He says ...
  - *"Now flexibility is generally a very positive word, but in this case it can be a very negative word, because it means*
    - *people are flexibly working at night*
    - *flexibly working on Saturdays and Sunday's*
    - *and this is having a big impact on the personal lives and indeed the health of those who hooked on this work and spend cycle.*<sup>1</sup>
- No doubt there are some who are driven by the 'dollar and materialism'
- But I think Dr Hamilton has been a bit too simplistic in his explanation for our modern work ethic
- As we've been discussing throughout the series ... what often drives modern people in their work is

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<sup>1</sup> SMH - Australia 'the hardest working nation' - 3rd August 2007

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- Fulfillment
  - Significance
  - And not just riches
  - That is ...
    - Seeking fulfillment in meaningful projects
    - Building a reputation to feel significant
    - As well as ... acquiring riches and wealth
  - It's often the desire to achieve these things that will compel people to work as hard they do
  - These motivations are what Tim Keller calls the 'work beneath the work'
    - That is ... we are working in order to
    - Be fulfilled, acquire riches and build a reputation
  - **Illustration - Rocky**
  - Give you a slightly comical example ... Rocky
  - When Rocky's getting ready to fight Apollo Creed ... he says to Adrian ... *"I can't beat him"*
  - Adrian says *"Don't say that"*
  - Rocky says *"I just want to go the distance. Nobody's ever gone the distance with Creed, and if I can go that distance, you see, and that bell rings and I'm still standin', I'm gonna know for the first time in my life, see, that I weren't just another bum from the neighbourhood."*
  - You see he's working to justify himself > to create significance for himself
    - All that training, running, punching the living daylight's out of sides of beef in the cool room ...
    - What for?
    - To try and prove to himself and others he's a somebody
  - And we can all do that with our various areas of work
  - When your work becomes the thing you do to find fulfillment, riches or significance ... it'll destroy you
    - It'll cause you to neglect your spouse and your kids
    - It'll cause you to neglect your community and it will cause you to neglect your church
    - It'll turn you into a workaholic
  - And on top of all that ...
    - It's emotionally and physically exhausting
    - You are constantly restless ... constantly seeking the
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- Next project to satisfy you
- Next paycheck to spend
- Next accolade boost your self esteem
- You end up working, training or studying extraordinary hours to get what you want that
- Even when you're not working ... you can't switch off > you've still got work buzzing around your mind
- And so you end up restless and tired
  - When you fail you become bitter
  - When you succeed you become proud and self-righteous
- How do you overcome that?
- What can you do to avoid this cycle of working to justify your existence and your worth?

## 2. Work and Rest

- God tells us we need to rest!
- Just as part of our DNA as humans is to work ... so it is that part of our DNA to rest
- Our series this past 6 weeks has been Faith and **Work**
- However work cannot be understood unless we also understand the idea of 'rest' throughout the Bible
- Life is not all about our work
- God has built into the fabric of his creation the notion of resting from work
  - After all ... God created the H&E in 6 days & on the 7th day he rested
  - He rested in his achievement, delighted in his work
    - It's like he sat back and cracked a tinny or bottle of champers ... checked it out and reveled in it
  - This is the climax of his creation ... an ongoing Sabbath rest
- What Gen 2:2-3 show us is that while work is good ... it is not the goal of life > rest is
  - And this is a pattern that he calls on his people to share in too
- God's rest in Gen 2 ... forms basis of the Sabbath command listed in the 10 Commandments
- When God gave Moses the 10 commandments ... the 4th commandment says

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- *Exodus 20:8-11 – "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."*
  
  - The Sabbath command makes it clear that work is to be done in 6 days and the 7th is set aside to be distinct and holy where we rest
  - The motivation is because we're following the pattern of God himself
    - That is, since God rested after his creation work ... we also ought to rest from our creation work
    - And this pattern for work and rest is for everyone > believers and unbelievers because it's the way God made us
  
  - Council worker on stop / go sign has managed to perfect the ability to simultaneously work and rest
    - But for everyone else ... we need to rest
  
  - The rest we're talking about is not a state of idleness ... but actually an opportunity to enjoy the goodness of creation and the one who made it
  - This doesn't mean we have to get dressed up in our Sunday best to go to church and sit around all day being boring ... while our non-Christian friends go to the beach and movies and enjoy themselves
  - But it does mean ... resting from work
  
  - **Application**
  - God is wise in this ... because rest is good
    - Just as working is part of our DNA ... so too is rest
    - We need it > for the good of our health, our family, our productivity
  
  - And as you rest ... then it helps guard you from making an idol of your work ... or becoming a workaholic
    - It guards you from exhausting yourself and driving yourself into the ground
    - It ensures you give the proper attention to spouse, kids, community and church ... because God has given us other work to do other than our paid employment
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- So on a really practical level
  - Limit your hours at work to a reasonable amount
  - Avoid bringing work home, answering work emails / calls at home
  - Take your annual leave each year
- Rest is good ... is part of the pattern of life God has made us for
  
- The second reason why rest is good ... comes from Deuteronomy 5:12-15
  - Here Moses gives Israel a big motivational speech just before they enter the Promised Land
  - Part of his speech is a recap of the 10 commandments they received at Mt Sinai 40 yrs previously
  - Reason for 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment is slightly different
    - <sup>12</sup> "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. <sup>13</sup> Six days you shall labour and do all your work, <sup>14</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God ... <sup>15</sup> **Remember** that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.
- Here God says the Sabbath is a day for remembering God's great act of salvation ... of rescuing his people out of slavery
  - When the Israelites were in Egypt they were slaves to Pharaoh
  - Forced to make bricks from straw > they had no rest
  - Life was exhausting
- The Sabbath was a time to look back on and rejoice in how God had saved them from a life of slavery
- But also remember what he was saving them for
  - You see God saved them out of Egypt to take them to the Promised Land
  - The Promised Land was meant to be a place of rest ... rest like the garden of Eden
  
- **Application**
- So rest from work is not only to enjoy God's creation ...
- But it's also to remember him and his great act of salvation
- To pause, reflect and give thanks to God that he rescued us from slavery
  
- Tim Keller – Every Good Endeavor
- To be unwilling / unable to rest ... shows you are still a slave
- That is ...

- Our desire for fulfillment, riches or significance that drives us to work so hard actually enslave us
- It's like you're still in Egypt
- Not a slave to Pharaoh ... but a slave to your work
- When you fail to rest ... you're a slave to your work
  - Because what's happening is you think you can gain these things through our work ... and so you can't but help but flog yourself in order to fulfill that desire
  - In the end you don't know how to let go ... or you can't or won't let go
- To rest ... means you're not a slave to those things
  - As you rest you begin to part with desires for fulfillment, riches or significance
  - You're not like Rocky ... driven to have to prove yourself to anyone
  - You're less driven to do the work beneath the work
- **Illustration - Kate Campbell**
- Interesting hearing Cate Campbell interviewed recently
- Cate Campbell > world record holder in 100m freestyle > favourite for the gold medal at Rio > finished outside the medals in 6<sup>th</sup> place
- Interviewed after the race > clearly disappointed ...
  - *"I have always said that I didn't need a gold medal to have self worth. That's being put to the test at the moment."*
  - Absolutely!
- But then she was interviewed on Channel 7 when she returned to Australia this week
  - In tears ... said she felt embarrassment and shame at her performance
- She shouldn't have to feel like that
  - A gold medal is **not** what defines you as human being
  - She wanted to believe it ... but deep down it seems she can't let go of the need to work / win to prove herself
  - And it was devastating for her ... it was eating her up
- But of course, this side of the cross ... and this side of the Promised Land
  - we remember an even greater act of salvation
  - we look forward to an eternal rest
  - Because the Sabbath Day rest of the OT and the rest in the Promised Land ... points towards the final rest that is to come

- A time will come when our toilsome creation work & our salvation work will come to an end
- The writer of Hebrews wrote
  - *Hebrews 4:9-11* <sup>9</sup> *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;* <sup>10</sup> *for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.* <sup>11</sup> *Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest*
- It will be a return to the rest that A&E shared with God in the garden of Eden
  - It'll be a work that is no longer hard and toilsome
  - It'll be a work this is pleasurable because our work in heaven will be praising God in his new creation

### 3. Rest beneath the rest

- And how do we enter that eternal rest?
- We come to Jesus
  - *Matthew 11:28-30* *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.* <sup>29</sup> *Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.* <sup>30</sup> *For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*
- Jesus offers us real rest > true rest > rest for your soul > rest that will never end
- Jesus says I am the only one who can give you that
- And notice **how** Jesus gives you rest
  - He puts a yoke on you!
- Yoke
  - Wooden brace over two oxen or horses ... so they can plough field or pull a cart
  - A yoke is a symbol of slavery and of work
- How could a yoke from Jesus give us the rest we need?
  - Jesus says ... *'my yoke is easy and my burden is light'*
- Why? ... *'For I am gentle and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls'*
  - Jesus is gentle ...
    - He welcomed little children (Matt 18:1ff, 19:13ff)
    - Compassion on sick and suffering
    - Merciful to the sinners, tax collectors and prostitutes
  - Jesus is humble

- Humble enough to wash the feet of his disciples
- Humble enough to go to the cross and die for you
- And so when you yoke ourselves to Jesus ... you're not yoking ourselves to a harsh task master
  - You're yoked to one who is gentle and humble
- You see Jesus is
  - the only boss who will not drive you into the ground
  - the only audience that doesn't need your best performance in order to be satisfied
  - won't put you down if you fail to live up to expectations
- Why is this?
  - Because his work for you is already finished
- You see you receive true rest when you come to Jesus and take on his yoke
  - When you come to him and take on the work he finished for you at the cross
  - When you come to him and rely on his work ... not yours
- You will only find true rest friends if you rest in the finished work of Christ
  - Because only as you rest in him will the work beneath the work be fully satisfied
- Scientists say that if you don't have at least 2 hours rapid eye movement sleep / REM sleep a night ... you wake up exhausted
  - What this means is .... you might be spending 8 hours sleeping each night ... but unless you get the rest beneath the rest ... the REM sleep you need ... you're not really rested
- Same is true for us in life
- You might be
  - taking time off
  - taking breaks
  - going on trips
  - working reasonable hours
- But unless you get the rest beneath the rest that comes with Jesus ...
  - Unless you are getting the deep inner rest ... the REM of the soul that you so badly need
  - Then you will remain restless, exhausted and a slave
- Jesus says ... I can give you the REM of your soul



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- I can give you the deep rest you need
  - Because without me
    - You won't be able to relax even when you're meant to be resting
    - You won't be able to walk away from your work and truly rest as you should
  
  - **Chariots of Fire** (significance)
  - The movie Chariots of Fire ... chronicles the true story Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddell who are athletes competing to run at the 1924 Paris Olympics
  - For Abrahams ... running and winning was all about justifying himself > justifying his existence > finding significance
  - Towards the end of the movie, just before he is about to run the 100m at the Olympics ... Abrahams says to his friend Aubrey
    - *"I will raise my eyes and look down that corridor; 4 feet wide, with 10 lonely seconds to justify my whole existence. But WILL I?"*
  - The contrast of course was Eric Liddell who had such a deep rest in Christ ... that he could miss a likely gold medal by not running on Sunday
  - The first man, Harold Abrahams **had** to get the medal because he was doing work beneath the work
  - The second man, Eric Liddell, a devoted Christian, didn't care in the same way whether he won a gold medal or not
  - He was at rest ... he had rest in Christ
  
  - When you come to Jesus and have the rest he offers ...
    - that's when you have the rest beneath the rest
    - that's when you can truly rest
  - And as you rest in him .... it frees you to stop doing the work beneath the work to justify yourself to yourself or others
    - You can let go of working to fulfill all those other desires that can never be fully achieved or quenched
    - And it will free you to work in away where you serve God and serve the community he has placed you in
  
  - As you do ... you will get a glimpse of the glorious rest he is calling you to that will last for eternity
  
  - Jesus says
    - Take my yoke
    - Yoke yourself to me
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- I'm the only one who will give you true rest

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