

462 09/01/08 **Busy schedules...Must it be that way?**

After today's brief holiday, school and busy schedules will be back in full swing. It will be an unrelenting race to Christmas. Summer gives us a little taste of what life could be if we were not heavily overscheduled. And, wasn't it a sweet taste?

God did not intend that we run panting from one activity to the next. Nor does he want us to push and drag our children along at that feverish pace. There are some real hazards that come with that lifestyle. Tensions increase and family members become irritable and snappy with each other. It becomes acceptable to do work at a minimal level rather than striving for excellence. The temptation to cheat on school work increases. The use of drugs, alcohol, overeating and other ways of numbing pain increases. Parents and children live in a constant state of sleep deprivation. Parents have no time to listen to their children. Couples lose their connection to each other. Everyone loses their connection to God.

I hear parents say, "I hate this frenzied lifestyle, but I don't know what we can cut out. We have to get our kids involved in lots of stuff in order to have good college applications and possible scholarships. Everyone else is in the same boat."

God calls Christians to a lifestyle that is different from "everyone else." Paul wrote to the Romans, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2. It will not just happen that we will have time to renew our minds. We must make the hard choice to eliminate some things from our lives.

By cutting out some commitments, we create time to "Be still, and know that I am God..." Psalm 46:10a. Only if there is some uncommitted time in our day will we be able to listen to God, teach our children to listen to God, listen to our spouse and children, do jobs and school in an excellent way and get enough sleep to meet the next day alert and cheerful.

Next week, I will give some guidelines for creating a reasonable schedule.

