

3. REMOVING THE ROOTS OF RESTLESSNESS

(Ecc 2:4 - 9, 11; 22 - 26)

Ecc 2⁴ "I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. ⁵ I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. ⁶ I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. ⁸ I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well -- the delights of the heart of man. ⁹ I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me.

¹¹ Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

²² What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? ²³ All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.

²⁴ A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, ²⁵ for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? ²⁶ To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth . . ."

III - wall climber in garden

The same is true in our lives, before we can usher in and grow some peace, we need to dig out the roots of our restlessness. If we do not,

then these ugly weeds will crop up again and ruin our peace. But removing stubborn weeds is not easy - you need to keep looking out to see if they have spread to any new part of the garden and you need to be patient and persistent.

A. WHAT ARE THESE ROOTS OF RESTLESSNESS?

1. THE DESIRE FOR MORE:- Commercial play to our restlessness and even help to create it. And the ones that succeed are not the ones that appeal to our reason, but the ones that appeal to our greed. Advertisers understood human psychology - they spend millions of shillings on some silly advert that may never convince you intellectually, but that not what they are after - all they want is to create a desire for more; and once they have created that desire, they then promise you that if you purchase this product, your life will be flooded with a sense of peace, blessing and fulfilment. In our generation therefore, this "more" is perceived to be the answer to the restlessness we feel.

More money, more goods, more credit, more house, more cars, more entertainment, more cloths, more comforts, more, more . . . all promise to fulfil us, but all they actually do is create a desire for more, and so we live with a deep sense of restlessness. More is never enough. We are enslaved and driven by desires which can never be satisfied.

PLATO used to say "Poverty consists not in the decrease of one's possessions but in the increase of one's greed."

2. THE DESIRE FOR SUCCESS:- The 2nd root of restlessness relates to the first, it is the desire for success, or the sense of significance that success promises.

What is success we long for? - you cannot really answer that question objectively. Success is a nebulous, unattainable goal. We know we want it, we have to have it, but we don't know what it is! Is

success owning your own car? Or your own house? Or is success having the power to purchase anything you want?

The problem with these is that they are like fools gold - they glitter in an appealing way when they are just out of your grasp. They promise to give you joy and fulfilment, to meet your thirst; but when you finally have them, they don't deliver - they are empty . The day you bring them home you are deeply proud of the product, but the joy you have in owning them is quickly gone, and the restlessness comes flooding back.

Many fall for this trap of chasing success, they kill themselves trying to rise up the ladder of material wealth, the ladder of "success" - the cars, the houses, the properties, the titles, the recognition; only to get to the top and realise that the higher you go up the thinner the air. Their heart are restless all life long for they do not know what they are looking for.

Now some don't have the purchasing power, or the charisma to play this game; but that's okay; because in this game you're allowed to play on credit; and if you can't, then you're allowed to pretend you're playing. So we buy the suits, the briefcases and the cellular phones. We drive the cars, we carry the cards and we tweng our talk, - but inside, deep inside, our hearts are restless.

3. UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS & OVERCOMMITMENT :- A third reason we are so busy is because of the unrealistic expectations we live with, expectations about how much we can accomplish in any one day or week. It's like a mountain of work we are trying to get on top of. The thinking behind unrealistic expectations goes something like this ". . . *this is it! Once I get on top of this particular mountain of work, I'll cruse down hill after that, it will be smooth sailing, no more burning the candle at both ends, I'll be in control of my life*". "as soon as" we

Get thru this week
Get over with this project

Get a raise
Get a better job
Get that car
Get that house
Get a bigger house
Get over the babies

But our hope is false because our hill is like the Ngong hills, you get to the top of one ridge, and find their is an even higher one awaiting you.

- a. Overcommitment speeds up your life. *If only I could work faster, work longer, get to the office a little earlier, pop into the office for a few hours on Sunday afternoon; read faster, type faster, drive faster...*
- b. Overcommitment also turns you into a thief - teaching you how to steal time from your family and friends and give it to your commitments.
- c. Thirdly, overcommitment teaches the next generation to do the same. We don't often realise that our children observe us stealing time; and when they get old enough to steal time from the family, they too will do so. As teenagers, they will begin to steal time also, the way you stole time from them. But their time stealing doesn't stop there. They will steal time from 2 generations - from you and your family; & in time from their own children because they learnt from you. How many of us have been stealing this week?
- d. Finally, overcommitment wacks our perspective so out of sync. That we don't even know there is a problem *Ill - man on a walk with his wife.*

Now, as I say this I recognize that there is indeed a time for sacrifice, to put in the extra hours, and to deny yourself sleep. But

boundary lines have to be set around such times in terms of what sacrifices must be made and for how long?

4. THE DESIRE FOR AN ADRENAL HIGH - the 4th root of restlessness is our adrenal drive. I've talked about this before and it is basically that our jobs can be so fast paced that we constantly need to be in a state of adrenal arousal to remain alert and able to function. Too much of that and we become addicted to that state of arousal. As a result, every time you come down from an adrenal high, your heart is restless. Being with your friends, giving back to society, being at home or with the children . . . none of these arouse your adrenaline and so your heart is restless.

B. PULLING OUT THE ROOTS

Now, we could go on talking about other roots of restlessness, maybe its old memories and fears that tyrannise your present; or its an unchecked heart that lusts after adulterous pleasure It will be different things for different people, and so you search your heart and see what the roots are. Let's now turn instead to how to remove these roots.

1. CONTENTMENT : As we grow up the world introduces and assigns to us 4 "friends" that accompany you whenever we go. Most of you have your 4 friends sitting around you right now even though you can't see the, they are called

compare)	
complain)	these 4 greatly increase
compete)	our restlessness
conquer)	

What you need to do is after this service drive out along Limuru road, up till one of the lookout points; say goodbye to your lifelong companions, open the door and shove them out. Then quickly turn round and ride back. But on the way you will find 3 new friends

thumbing a lift. **STOP**, pick them up and welcome them into our life, let them flood your life.

The first of the friends is called contentment. Listen to what the bible says about contentment.

1 Tim 6:6-10 ⁶ *But godliness with contentment is great gain.* ⁷ *For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.* ⁸ *But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.* ⁹ *People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.* ¹⁰ *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*
and again in

Heb 13:5,6 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*⁶ *So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

contentment can pull out the roots of restlessness in 3 ways.

- (a) It puts a cap on desire My accountability group.
- (b) It nails down undefined terms like success and expectations. What is success.
- (c) If promises that ever where you have very little, you need not fear for you have the 2 most important things in life - God promises and presence. Heb 13:6

The wisdom of Prov 30:2

Prov 30 ⁷ "Two things I ask of you, O LORD;
do not refuse me before I die:

⁸ Keep falsehood and lies far from me;
give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread.

⁹ Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you

and say, 'Who is the LORD?'
Or I may become poor and steal,
and so dishonour the name of my God.

2. GRATITUDE : But contentment is just one of the friends you must pick up and little further down the road - pick up a 2nd hitchhiker called gratitude. Let him too flood your life.

Phil 4:8 "Finally, brother, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely what ever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praise worthy - think about such things."

III - Teaching the children gratitude
- our thanksgiving day (Dec 5)

Gratitude allow you to say with the Psalmist in Ps 116:7 *Be at rest . . .
O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.*

3. PRAYER AS SUBVERSION - Picture prayer as the archenemy of busyness! For many of us here, the two are always in battle - if busyness prevails, then we do very little praying. But the converse is also true , that prayer subverts busyness for it allows God to be in control of my day. Even though we set out into the day with a plan . . . discover - don't design your day.