

Northside church of Christ

4001 North Ninth Avenue
Pensacola, FL 32503

Times of Worship:

Sunday: 10:00 & 11:00 AM
5:00 PM
Wednesday : 7:00 PM

Minister: Joseph R. Matzer

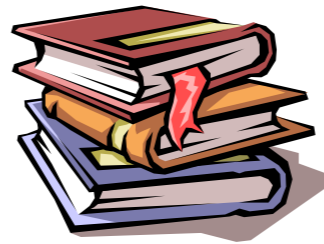
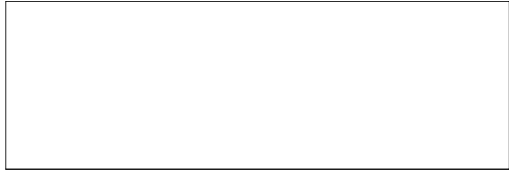
Personal Bible Study & Correspondence
Course are available :
Contact us at: (850) 432-0736
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Also visit our web page for
more information:

www.northsidechurchofchrist.net

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Oracles of God

“If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God.”

I Peter 4:11

CONQUERING THE RAT RACE

There are many things we face in life that can rob us of the joy that we desperately long for. The key to conquering these joy robbers is found in our theme verse Romans 8:37 which says, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." A relationship with Jesus Christ is the key to conquering any joy robber.

Do you ever feel your life is out of control? Do you have too many irons in the fire? Do you burn those candles at too many ends? Are you busier now than ever before? Do you ever feel there are just not enough hours in the day? Does fatigue frequently set in? Are you on the verge of burnout? Well, welcome to the rat race, one of the most common joy robbers.

"Rat race" is an idiom that has its roots in the early 1900s referring to a rat's desperate struggle for survival. A Dictionary of Idioms describes rat race as "fierce competition to maintain or improve one's position in the workplace or social life; an exhausting routine that leaves no time for relaxation."

We're all too busy, aren't we? And we take a lot of pride in how busy we are. How many of us have so many things going, we have to make a list daily to try to keep up with them and attempt to accomplish them. We often talk about the twenty things we have to accomplish today, as if our overloaded schedules will impress our colleagues. Have we turned this busyness into a form of addiction? The term we all use today when joking and talking about it is workaholic. We may think that our never-ending, ever-growing assignments are impressive or unavoidable. But they are not. Or that we can't control them or do anything about it. The rat race will hinder our spiritual growth, damage our walk with Christ, and suck every ounce of joy from our life. It is healthy for us if we can daily say "I can be active and pray; I can work and pray"; but can we be too busy and pray?"

So what's the solution?

We could just move into some desolate area and become a hermit. That would not be spiritually, medically or psychologically best for us. There's got to be a better answer. Perhaps it is better to take the premise that we can never eliminate the stress in your life, but we can do a better job of managing it. So let's mention a handful of practical things we can do to conquer the rat race. Make deliberate efforts to slow down.

Food for Thought:

**God shows no favorites
And makes no exceptions**

**Many a person saves
everything
Except his own soul.**

**Brighten up the life
of someone else
Put a fresh shine on your
own.**

**"Be still
and know that I am
God"
(Psalm 46:10).
That says it all.**

**Slow down.
Take some time to
plan.
Find your spiritual
pathway.
Be in worship
and bible study.
Laugh a lot.
Spend time with
God each day.**

**Stop letting the rat
race rob you of joy.**

**In Christ
there is hope and
help.**

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ship and bible study. Laugh a lot.
Spend time with God each day. And
make room for our family and friends.
And remember, in Christ you are more
than
conquerors.**

**Stop letting the rat race rob you of joy.
In Christ there is hope and help.**

**"I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the
LORD" (Psalm 122:1). God is always
present. Why wouldn't we want to be
there every possible moment?**

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Study the life of Jesus. He did more to change the world than any other. Yet He was never in a hurry. Even when one of his best friends was on

His deathbed, He didn't frantically change His course and say to His followers, "Lazarus is dying. We've got to hurry." On another occasion the crowds were coming and going, all wanting their needs to be met by Jesus and His men. They didn't even have time to eat. Finally, Jesus said, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" ([Mark 6:31](#)). Jesus recognized that they could not maintain that hectic pace.

We can not maintain these hectic pace schedules. But we can slow down. There are some things we can say "NO" too. We can establish some greater margins in our lives so that we aren't always pressed for time and worn to a frazzle. Walk slower. Drive slower. Stay in the same lane for a longer time. Leave for appointments about 20 minutes earlier. Take a handful of two-minute vacations during the day. Stop and talk to your next-door neighbor, your children and your spouse. Take a walk with your mate or child. Watch a bird or a butterfly making their daily rounds. Slow down.

Second, start each day with some minutes with God. The Bible is filled with examples of key leaders who spent time with God in the early morning hours. Jesus is the prime example: "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" ([Mark 1:35](#)). To start the day with some minutes with God will require that we get up maybe a few minutes earlier, which might be the problem for many of us. Or at least it might mean that we make some other adjustments in our morning routine. Starting the day with God starts the day right. It gives us spiritual strength to face the challenges for the day. It helps us focus on the most important things of life. Even if it's just five minutes, before we leave the house, start our day by spending some time with God.

Third, don't take life too seriously. Laugh a lot. One of my favorite verses is [Proverbs 17:22](#) "A cheerful heart is a good medicine; But a broken spirit drieth up the bones". When we're in the thick of the rat race, sometimes we are so into an agenda that we lose our cheerful edge. Laughter is good medicine. Smile! Have fun. Get that serious look off our face. Life is to be enjoyed. Don't take it so seriously. Laugh out loud. And laugh a lot.

Fourth, make time for friends. One of the casualties of a rat race lifestyle is that precious time with friends and family gets crowded out of our busy schedule. One of the things that should impress us about the early church in the book of Acts was the spirit of community that they shared with each other. They were devoted to fellowship. King Solomon said it well—"If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble. A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken" ([Ecclesiastes 4:10-12, NLT](#)). Time for others is the one point where most of us probably need the most work. We get so caught up in other things and don't make enough time to spend with family or friends. Don't let the rat race lifestyle rob you of the joy of friendships. Make time for our friends. Build new friends.

Fifth, plan our week. The Bible says, "Careful planning puts you ahead in the long run; hurry and scurry puts you further behind" ([Proverbs 21:5, Msg](#)). When we get deep into the rat race, we don't know whether we're coming or going. And as busy as we are, we are not accomplishing the things that are most important in life.

It's amazing what fifteen minutes of planning on a morning, afternoon or evening can do to get your life more targeted. If you don't plan your week, someone else will be glad to do it for you. So what happens is we let all the pressures dictate how we spend our hours each day. Do we allow others to force us to schedule things around their time, taking us away from time for God and worship? Do we end up letting others force us to schedule doctor appointments, school functions, clubs & community activities, and hair appointments at times that will take us away from worship times and time for God because that is the only time slot "they" have? Time in the schedule for God should be first. Plan our weeks far enough ahead to include time for worship and service to God. Include our quiet time on the schedule. Include time with family and friends. Planning will make some order out of your chaos and restore joy.

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" [Psalm 122:1](#). God is always present. Why wouldn't we want to be there every possible moment?"

Sixth, it is good if we can discover our spiritual pathway. Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" ([John 15:5](#)). The key to conquering the rat race is to stay in a vital union with Jesus Christ. God has wired us all differently. But it's important for us if we can discover the pathway that most effectively moves you toward this vital union. Some people feel most closely connected with God through relationships. Being alone is like solitary confinement to them. Other pathways include the serving, contemplative, activist, creation, and worship. Some people can get a respite from the rat race, by putting on a CD with soothing music and sit on their screened-in porch, to help them feel closer to God. For some of us, that wouldn't do a thing for us. We might feel closer to God if we were out enjoying nature, another person busy helping someone in need. While some of us might need in depth bible study or reading from the bible for hours on end. We're all different. But whatever our spiritual pathway is, we need to discover it, and not let the rat race crowd out this important element of our life. Whatever it takes to keep us focused on our goal to be with God.

Seventh, **place high priority on weekly worship.** Our attitude and habit should be like that expressed in one of David's songs, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" ([Psalm 122:1](#)). God is always present. Why wouldn't we want to be there every possible moment?

The rat race gets pretty hectic. Through the week you get all beat up by the world. Worship in God's house on Sunday and Wednesday should be like a filling station. You meet with God in praise and worship, and we are encouraged by being with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Your spiritual engine gets filled with the strength and courage to face the challenges of the week ahead. Don't neglect this most important aspect of your lives.

"Be still and know that I am God" ([Psalm 46:10](#)). That says it all. Slow down. Take some time to plan. Find your spiritual pathway. Be in worship and bible study. Laugh a lot. Spend time with God each day. And make room for our family and friends. And remember, in Christ you are more than conquerors. Stop letting the rat race rob you of joy. In Christ there is hope and help.

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" ([Psalm 122:1](#)). God is always present. Why wouldn't we want to be there every possible moment?"