

Getting off the Hamster Wheel Living a Life of Blessing, not Curses.

Written by Becky Gutschow

I feel like I'm a hamster running on a hamster wheel. Those were the words that a Christian friend recently shared with me. Unfortunately, many people feel that way about life. When asked, "How are you doing?" Many of us answer "Busy!" Is this, however, the abundant life Jesus promised?

Mothers who have children still at home are busy, busy, busy nowadays. There are so many activities available to us that it becomes hard to say "no". There are sports, drama, sports, extracurricular clubs, sports, volunteer work, sports, church work, and don't forget sports! Let's complicate matters by realizing that many families have several children involved in activities. And did I mention that these activities are all in addition to maintaining the house? Some mothers even throw in working another job outside the home. Combine all these factors together, and it's not hard to visualize today's mother as the hamster who is running on the hamster wheel of life. If you love it, have the joy of the Lord, and feel like you have life abundant, then the Lord bless you. If, however, you are like the many people I have spoken to who feel worn out, stressed, and joyless, then may I encourage you to get off the hamster wheel.

When my friend said, "I feel like I'm a hamster running on a hamster wheel", I immediately thought that it was too bad that the hamster didn't realize he could simply stop running and get off the hamster wheel. Then I began to understand that people today are the same; they don't realize they can step off the hamster wheel. When I say "step off the hamster wheel", I simply mean to stop doing all the activities that create the hectic lifestyle many of us lead.

The Lord provides us with choices in life, and the choices we make affect the life we live. Deuteronomy 30:19 states, "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live" Clearly, the Lord allows us to make our own choices. Those choices either result in being blessed or being cursed. Deuteronomy describes some of the curses. According to Deuteronomy 28:65 "There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart." Deuteronomy 28:28 declares, "The Lord will afflict you with madness, blindness, and confusion of mind." These verses remind me of the depression, anxiety, and stress that often accompany the frantic pace of today's life. This is not what the Lord wants for his people, however. He also provides us with the ability to choose life. Deuteronomy 28:1-14 lists the blessing that the Lord will give us when we make the right choices in life. Deuteronomy 28:13 declares, "you will always be at the top, never at the bottom." With which verses do you identify? If you identify with the verses related to the blessings, then keep doing what you're doing! If you identify with the verses related to the curses, then begin to make different choices in your life.

Sometimes even activities that are beneficial and positive must be eliminated. At one time in my life, I was volunteering as a counselor for a crisis pregnancy center, leading a

ministry at church, working part-time at a Christian school, and maintaining a household of three young children. Although all my activities were positive ones, I had to eliminate something in order to 'get off the hamster wheel'. I now try to focus on raising my children, and as time allows being involved in one other ministry, and one sport for my children. Although the world continues to battle for our time, I have found that fewer activities provides greater peace.

If you desire to 'get off the hamster wheel', pray that the Lord will show you what activities should be eliminated from your life. Before you become involved in anything, pray about whether or not this is something the Lord would have you to do. Ask yourself whether or not an activity will cause you more or less stress. Will it create a more abundant or less abundant life for you and your family? Begin today to make the choices that will lead you into a life of blessing, not curses. You CAN live a life of blessing!