

# Metamorphosis

## Discussion Notes 5



***Activism and overwork are a pervasive form of contemporary violence. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps its most common form of violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fullness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom, which makes work fruitful.***

***- Thomas Merton (Quoted in Kirk Byron Jones, Rest in the Storm)***

## GROUP INTRODUCTIONS

This group discussion is based on the sermon at [www.ichurch.net.au](http://www.ichurch.net.au)  
You might start with one or two of these questions:

- *What is the weirdest food you have eaten?*
- *What person in the Bible do you closely identify with?*
- *What is your favourite way to waste time?*

# SLAVES ARE SHAPED BY: SPEED, GREED, BUZZ & DREAD!

Reflect on the four things that shape slaves, then discuss using the questions that follow!

## **SPEED (URGENCY AND HURRY)**

Slaves do not get to choose their own pace. Their pace is determined by the needs of others. They become shaped by hurry, immediacy, and if they do not meet the master's needs quickly trouble comes. Speed is certainly not all bad. But when it shapes your life it's a problem.

*Our lives are nonstop, lived at a breathless pace. We walk fast, talk fast, eat fast, and then excuse ourselves by saying, "I must run." Time urgency is a national emblem. Hastiness and superficiality- these are the diseases of modern life!" - Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*

*"God did not create hurry." - Old Finnish Proverb*

*"People pursue pleasure with such breathless haste that they hurry past it." - Soren Kierkegaard*

## **GREED (CONSUMERISM & MATERIALISM)**

Human cultures create slavery because of greed - production becomes more important than relationships. We may think ourselves free, but we need to be careful that we do not become shaped by greed - the greed of others and the greed of the consumerism around us!

*When we are exposed to thousands of advertisements a day (and have been from childhood), and consumerism is promoted in most of the mental inputs we receive, this can trap us within a consumerist bubble and can mould our entire worldviews – our aspirations, views, lifestyles and many other things. And this trap is very difficult to escape from. Indeed, such is its power, we may not even realise we are caught in a trap. So, the real power of consumerism comes from its cumulative effect - the fact that it has seeped into every aspect of our lives, and that these elements of our culture continually reinforce each other. - Rosen, Larry D. Ph.D.. iDisorder*

## **BUZZ (ALWAYS ON CALL)**

A slave is always on call - conditioned to respond. If they don't respond there are consequences. So a slave can never sleep properly. A slave can never rest without the possibility they may be called on, activated, called into activity!

*If you can make use of something that makes your life easier while maintaining enough inner strength and freedom to avoid dependence, you are the master. If you do not cultivate this inner strength and freedom, you become the slave. - Ulrich Weger, University of Kent, quoted in iDisorder*

## **DREAD (WORRY AND FEAR)**

Slaves live in fear. They don't have choices. Anxiety is considered normal for slaves (not for those who are free). So if anxiety is now considered normal for Aussies, what does that make us?

False self worth... MY WORTH = WHAT I ACHIEVE + WHAT OTHERS THINK OF ME

Real self-worth... MY WORTH = THAT GOD LOVES ME

## DISCUSS SPEED, GREED, BUZZ AND DREAD!

- Which of the four do you most see in modern Australian culture?
- Which of the four has hurt you?
- Which of the four do Christians need to more actively speak out against?
- Which of the four have you found growing freedom from? How?

## MOVING FROM SLAVE TO HEIR

Reflect quietly on this verse. Soak it in. Speak it to yourself in silence!

### ***Romans 8:15-17a***

***For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as children, by whom we cry, "Papa! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ...***

- What did you hear? What did you notice? What is God saying to us in this?

## OUR DECLARATION OF FREEDOM

The Old Testament is a story of an entire nation moving from slaves to heirs. The first very time we encounter 'The People Of Israel' they are falling into the oppression of slavery (Ex 1:7-14). But when God saves them from slavery in Egypt, he gives them the gift of a covenant (agreement) and this covenant has within it a DECLARATION OF FREEDOM known as 'the Sabbath'. Read and discuss...

### ***Exodus 20:8-11***

***Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.***

- What do you notice?
- Why was 'the Sabbath' a declaration of freedom for Israel?
- What do you find radical about what they were asked to do?
- How would this Sabbath rhythm shape life and thought?

# SLAVES ARE SHAPED BY SPEED, GREED, BUZZ & DREAD. BUT HEIRS ARE SHAPED BY SABBATH REST.

*Hebrews 4:9-11*

*So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labours, just as God did after creating the world. So let's do anything we can to enter that rest.*

Grace means we rest in what God has done for us! You can't earn God's love or salvation, you can only receive and rest in it. Sabbath is not a command to 'do or die'. It is a beautiful gift and a reminder of our freedom! To practice a Sabbath (it doesn't matter on what day) shapes you in grace. It is holy resistance of the world's speed, greed, buzz and dread!

My sabbath includes no mobile phone, no internet, no unnecessary spending, no managing of finances, and doing something non-productive! I *attempt* to find a 'savouring pace'.

Fill in the grid together. How does Sabbath say 'no' say 'yes'?

	<b>SPEED Activity</b>	<b>GREED Avarice</b>	<b>BUZZ Arousal</b>	<b>DREAD Anxiety</b>
<b>How could Sabbath rest practically say "no" to this?</b>				
<b>How could Sabbath rest say "yes" to God in the face of this?</b>				

## CLOSE IN PRAYER

*Awaken us to delight in your praises, for You made us for Yourself,  
And our hearts are restless until they rest in you.*

*- Augustine of Hippo 354-430AD (from justprayer.org)*