

## Overcoming Boredom

### Introduction

1. One of the problems of life is “Boredom”.
  - a. It is a problem of all age groups.
  - b. It is a problem of all races, all economic groups, all occupations, all educational levels, etc.
2. In many ways this problem is the opposite of "anxiety" though boredom can be created by anxiety.
  - a. Here is a striking contrast.

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|--|---|
| Anxiety is a state of uneasiness and apprehension.                         | Boredom is a condition of mental weariness, listlessness, and discontent.                           |
| Anxiety is often the cause of thinking we have too much to do at one time. | Boredom is the result of thinking there is nothing to do  |
| Anxiety is more often the blight of adults.                                | Boredom is often the complaint of children (what parent hasn't heard their child say, "I'm bored"?) |

- b. Like anxiety, boredom can have a debilitating effect in our relationship with God and on our usefulness to Jesus Christ.

### 3. Here are some areas where boredom occurs in life.

|   |             |                           |                              |        |
|---|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| School<br>Lack of challenges<br>Lack of understanding | Bible Class | Assembly is not exciting. | Work                         | Family |
| Marriage  | Friends     | Entertainment             | Doing anything over and over | Sports |

## Understanding Boredom

### 1. Defining Boredom

- a. According to self-proclaimed boredom expert, Garfield the Cat offers these tips on how to tell if you are really bored:
  - 1) You paint little faces on your toe nails, and pretend each toe is a person.
  - 2) You spend hours watching bread mold.
  - 3) You braid your eyebrows.

- 4) You watch a 3-hour documentary on sewage treatment.
  - 5) You spend time wondering if you're really bored.
- b. More seriously, boredom is: "a condition of mental weariness, listlessness, and discontent" (American Heritage Dictionary)

## 2. Causes of Boredom.

- a. Boredom is often the result of **too much wealth, too much education, and too much time on our hands**
  - 1) Boredom is epidemic among children today, and according to one source:
    - a) A major cause of this is television, videos, computer games, a desire to be entertained all the time.
    - b) Such activities which bombard children with fast-moving stimuli do not give them the chance to slow down, reflect thoughtfully, or learn to process new information. (Nancy Samalin, Parent Guidance Workshops)
  - 2) Boredom and depression are side effects of wealth.
- b. Modern man has been very successful in inventing labor-saving devices, but this extra time has created a lot of boredom.
- c. Boredom can also be traced to these things.
  - 1) A lack of faith in God ("Boredom: the consciousness of a barren, meaningless existence." - Eric Hoffer)
    - a) Why am I here?
    - b) Is my existence meaningless?
  - 2) A pre-occupation with self to the neglect of what is around us.
    - a) "Boredom: what happens when we lose contact with the universe." - John Ciardi
    - b) "When people are bored, it is primarily with their own selves." - Eric Hoffer
- d. Boredom has also been attributed to...
  - 1) Un-challenging jobs
  - 2) Unfulfilled expectations
  - 3) Lack of physical activity
  - 4) Being too much of a spectator and too little of a participant in activities.
  - 5) Not making adequate preparation.
- e. Boredom is caused when one finds it difficult to concentrate and focus regardless of the activity.

- f. It can be and often is caused by fear and anxiety. Fear and anxiety about important things that need to be done cause one to postpone them and turn to un-fulfilling things that never satisfy.
- g. Boredom is created by a lack of direction and the inability to focus on one's goals and desires.
- h. Impatience, selfishness and lack of purpose also create boredom.

### The Danger of Boredom

1. When listless and discontent, we are susceptible to what promises excitement.
  - a. "Boredom has made more gamblers than greed, more drunkards than thirst, and perhaps as many suicides as despair." (Charles Caleb Colton)
  - b. Boredom can become a serious problem that has led to a multitude of sins in mankind and has led to many sins and problems in the Christian life.
2. When a Christian is "bored" it leads to many problems

|  |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| He is not very active in the service of the Lord & is not very useful      | <b>Worship</b><br>1. He may lose interest in worship<br>2. He may seek to change worship to satisfy his boredom | He may develop a like for violence. (Do anything for more excitement). | <b>School</b><br>1. He may drop out of school.<br>2. He may underachieve<br>3. He may act up. | He may cheat on his mate or divorce his mate.  |
| He may participate in sinful or questionable entertainment for excitement. | He may become involved in dangerous activity.   | <b>Rebel</b><br>1. Against God<br>2. Against law<br>3. Parents         | <b>Job</b><br>1. He may quit his job.<br>2. He may do a poor job.                             | <b>Attitude</b><br>1. Become grumpy<br>2. Depressed<br>3. Angry<br>4. Indifferent<br>5. Very Selfish |
| Leads to overeating  | Leads to impatience expecting everything to happen quickly.   | He may become involved with drugs or alcohol                           | He may become prone to suicide.   | Leads to under achievement in all areas of life.   |

3. Boredom is a chronic symptom of a pleasure-obsessed age, but it can be overcome through faith in God and Jesus.

### Overcoming Boredom Through Faith In God And Jesus

1. We can overcome boredom by believing in God and having a higher purpose.
  - a. Solomon tried in vain to find happiness through education, wealth, pleasure, etc.
  - b. He concluded that there is no happiness without God. (Eccles. 1:14, 17; 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4; 12:13, 14).

ECC 1:14 I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind.  
 ECC 1:17 And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind.

ECC 2:11 Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.

ECC 2:17 So I hated life, for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind.

ECC 2:26 For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in God's sight. This too is vanity and striving after wind.

ECC 4:4 And I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor. This too is vanity and striving after wind.

ECC 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

ECC 12:14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

2. We overcome boredom by changing the focus of our life to Jesus.

a. Boredom is the result of an obsession with self and material possessions.

b. Yet Jesus teaches us to:

1) Deny self (Lk 9:23-24).

Luke 9:23 And He was saying to {them} all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

Luke 9:24 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

a) People who are obsessed with self are never happy

b) People who lose themselves in service to God are never bored!

2) Change the object of your affections. (Matt. 6:19-21).

Matt 6:19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Matt 6:20 "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

Matt 6:21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

a) The pleasure of earthly things is fleeting at best, followed by the inevitable letdowns.

b) The Bible speaks of "the passing pleasures of sin." (Heb. 11:25).

c) The only permanent possession we have is in heaven, and our affections should be placed on it

c. Jesus' teachings are designed to give us great joy. (Jn 15:11).

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and {that} your joy may be made full.

1) If we have enough faith in Jesus to follow His teachings, we will be attacking one of the root causes of boredom (a pre-occupation with self).

2) Jesus teaches us by word and example to help and be considerate of others. (Acts 20:35).

Acts 20:35 "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the

words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

**d. Jesus enlists us in service designed to truly satisfy.**

1) Many people are bored because they know their efforts mean very little

2) The Lord Jesus would have us enlist in a service with eternal consequences:

a) The saving of one's soul, and that of those around them! (Mk 16:15-16).

b) The saving of the soul is more important than gaining the whole world! (Matt. 16:26).

Matt 16:26 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

3) The apostles found their service to God to be a source of great joy

a) When John saw the fruits of his labors, he wrote he had "no greater joy" (3 Jn. 3-4).

3 John 1:3 For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, {that is,} how you are walking in truth.

3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

b) The prospects of seeing his converts in the presence of the Lord gave Paul hope and joy for the future! (1 Thess. 2:19-20).

1 Thess 2:19 For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?

1 Thess 2:20 For you are our glory and joy

c) The work of the Lord is the greatest work in the world because it has eternal consequences - the saving of souls.

3. We can overcome boredom by setting goals big and small.

a. Achieving small goals leads to excitement and confidence and renewed motivation.

b. This excitement and confidence keeps one motivated to achieve even greater goals.

### **Conclusion**

1. It is vital that we seek to overcome boredom by devotion to God and His Son. (Matt. 22:37).

2. Jesus came to deliver us from any sense of listlessness and discontent and to give us joy and fulfilment.

3. He does so by giving us purpose and direction in life, that we might find great joy in serving God and His children!

4. When people are willing to believe in Jesus and become His disciples, there is no reason for boredom in their lives!

### **5. Here Are Some Interesting Observations About Boredom**

- Life is never boring, but some people choose to be bored. Boredom is a choice.

- The opposite of happiness is not sadness. It's boredom.
- Bored is being bored because being bored is boring.
- Boredom - God's way of telling you that you're wasting time.
- I can stand defeats, pain, anger. But I can't stand boredom.
- The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.
- Work spares us from three evils: boredom, vice and need.
- Boredom is a the feeling that everything is a waste of time; serenity, that nothing is.
- Boredom is for lazy people who have no imagination.
- There is nothing more hazardous to my health than boredom.

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