



Daily Devotionals: Rhythms | May 1, 2022

Slowing Down

I remember having one of those “very-philosophical-conversations-thank-you-very-much” with a colleague of mine where we basically concluded that if you can do *nothing*, you can do *anything*.

Ok, maybe that is a bit hyperbolic. BUT we had gotten into a conversation about how busy and hurried our culture is that it feels pretty much downright *impossible* to not be moving and going and doing and making things happen. With phones, social media, notifications, shared schedules, kids, friends, to-do lists, and so on, it feels *impossible* to just *be still*.

We’re used to the expedient, the optimized, the efficient. If a website takes more than three clicks for me to find what I’m looking for, I’m out. If there’s a line in the grocery store, I get slightly perturbed. If someone waits before going at a green light for literally an extra second because they were distracted, my hand slides to my car horn without me even realizing it (yes, I know I have a problem).

It’s because of *all this* that my interlocutor and I concluded that if you can do *nothing*, you can do pretty much *anything* in life.

This past weekend, we talked about the spiritual rhythm of *slowing*. I like John Ortberg’s definition of slowing. He says that slowing is, “Cultivating patience by deliberately choosing to place ourselves in positions where we simply have to wait.”

But we’re not just slowing for the sake of slowing in and of itself. As followers of Jesus, here’s why we’re focusing on this: We don’t want to be the kinds of people who are addicted to hustling and bustling. We don’t want to be workaholics or schedule-aholics, unable to be attuned to the people or the presence of God in our lives. We want to be the kinds of people, like Jesus, who are present to the moment, who can see the image of God in the other, who can notice God’s spirit at work in the world.

That’s what this week’s practices are focused on: slowing. Because we’re embodied creatures, the best way we can slow ourselves internally is to slow ourselves externally. Or, as John Mark Comer writes, “Slow down your body, slow down your life.”



So, take some time to (slowly) reflect on the Scripture and experiment with one of the three practices that you'll find down below.

Scripture

Psalm 46:10: Be still and know that I am God

Below are three practices at ascending levels of difficulty to choose from to try this week to help you do that (note: the goal isn't necessarily to do all of these. The goal of this is to find one or two of these practices and actually DO them this week!):

Practice 1: Driving

Driving, perhaps, is a good place to begin. It's always so tempting to go a little faster, to bypass others, to speed through yellow lights. But driving is also a great time to practice slowing down and to think about God.

For this practice, try, for one day, driving *slowly*. Here's what that would look like...

- Give yourself plenty of time to get to where you need to go.
- Leave early for your desired destination.
- When you start driving, say to yourself, "I'm just going to enjoy this drive. I'm not in a hurry."
- Drive in the slow lane.
- When you come to yellow lights, slow down. Don't speed through them.
- Come to a full stop at stop signs.
- Drive the speed limit.
- Don't text and drive.
- Let others go at stops and turns before you.
- Keep music and podcasts off.
- As you cruise, bring God to your mind.

You might try and do this practice for one commute, one day of driving, or for the whole week. The goal is to try it! What's the worst that can happen!?



So...pick a time slot you're going to try this practice, do it, and then once finished, reflect on your experience using the questions below.

Practice 2: Win the day (morning and evening edition)

This week, begin each morning and end each evening in prayer. We call this “winning the day.” Before we play Wordle, check email, look at our calendars, or peruse the news, we want to start our days in God’s Presence.

Your goal isn’t to spend *hours* in prayer or Scripture in the mornings and the evenings. The goal here is to, before looking at any other words in the morning, we take in God’s words first. And the goal for us before we go to bed is to let God’s words be the last thing in our minds.

To do this, here might be some helpful tips:

- Parent your phone (you tell it when to “get out of bed” and “when to go to bed”)
- Buy an actual alarm clock so you’re not tempted to look at your phone
- Designate a specific quiet space to pray or read your Bible
- Try waking up before others in your house so you do not get distracted
- Know what you’re going to meditate on ahead of time

Find some time this week to meditate on God. Your goal with this practice is to open up your calendar and each morning – whether it’s five minutes, ten minutes, or thirty minutes – it doesn’t matter. The point is for you to intentionally focus on the Lord as you rise and before you go to sleep.

Once finished with the practice this week, reflect on your experience using the questions below.

Practice 3: Daily Office

This week practice what has been traditionally called the “Daily Office.” In our hustle and bustle culture, the Daily Office helps us slow down and be attentive to God in our lives. The practice of the daily office helps us ground ourselves more fully in God’s presence as we pause each morning, midday, and evening for silence, scripture, and prayer. And, again, the goal isn’t to



rush through these times of stopping, but to slow ourselves down intentionally throughout our day!

This practice is similar to practice number two, but with added times of stopping during the middle of your day.

Here are a few tips to help you practice the daily office:

- Set an alarm on your phone at the different points in your day you want to take five minutes for Scripture and/or prayer (you might try 7:30am, 12pm, 5pm, and 10pm)
- Parent your phone (you tell it when to “get out of bed” and when to “go to bed”)
- Designate a specific quiet space to pray or read your bible
- Try waking up before others in your house so you do not get distracted
- Know what you’re going to meditate on ahead of time

Find some time this week to meditate on God throughout each day. Your goal is to make slowing down to be attentive to God’s presence with you a priority—even in the midst of the day’s demands. Sometimes all it takes is an intentional moment of slowing and stopping (even if it’s for 30 seconds to still your breathing and pray, “Help me, Lord Jesus”) to make a difference in how you enter into the day’s tasks.

Once finished with the practice this week, reflect on your experience using the questions below.

Questions for reflection:

1. Which practice did you experiment with this week? What was doing it like for you?
2. How did this practice help you slow down and experience God more? Explain.
3. What takeaways or invitations did you receive from God as a result of using this practice this week?