

## **Slowing Down to See and Consider**

Every day is a new day with God. His mercies are new every morning, giving us a fresh start. As the Apostle Paul wrote, we must forget those things which are behind and reach forward to what's ahead. When we're too preoccupied with the past, we can't effectively move forward into what God has for us.

### **Why We Get Stuck in the Past**

Many people can't move forward because they're weighed down by past experiences. They take today and add all their past failures to it, which overwhelms their faith and wears them out. This trick of the enemy prevents them from having the energy, strength, and vision to move ahead.

The moment we start moving forward is the moment we forget what's behind us. Think about athletes - when they make a mistake, they must quickly analyze it and then move on. Teams that dwell too much on their victories or defeats often end up losing their advantage.

### **The Danger of Distracted Living**

It's amazing how we can physically be doing one thing while our mind is somewhere else. We can be reading the Bible but thinking about something completely different. We can be driving while staring in the rearview mirror, unaware of what's right in front of us.

So much of what we do in life happens out of habit - without much thought. One part of us operates on autopilot while another part isn't present at all. This isn't how God wants us to live.

### **What Does Full Engagement Look Like?**

God wants us to be fully present in everything we do. When we worship, we should worship with our whole spirit, soul, mind, and body. As Jesus said, we should "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."

This requires training ourselves to concentrate despite the many distractions in life. Otherwise, we'll just go through the motions spiritually - attending church, worshiping, and listening to teaching without truly engaging.

## **How Jesus Demonstrated Thoughtful Living**

When Jesus saw the multitudes, "He was moved with compassion for them, for they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." His compassion led to action - healing and delivering people.

Jesus didn't just go around laying hands on people without thinking about them as individuals. He took time to understand their situations. Consider the woman who had been bent over for 18 years. When religious leaders criticized Jesus for healing her on the Sabbath, He responded by asking them to think about her situation: "Should not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

## **The Difference Between Surface Knowledge and Wisdom**

Knowledge loves to talk, but wisdom waits and considers how knowledge, if spoken or acted upon, will affect things. Wisdom sees ahead and thinks before it speaks.

Isaiah prayed for "the tongue of the learned" to know how to speak a word in season to those who are weary. Ecclesiastes describes this as "words fitly spoken" that are "like apples of gold in settings of silver."

## **Why We Need to Slow Down**

We live in a rat race world because the god of this world is a "speed demon" - restless, going to and fro. If we're not careful, we get sucked into this pace and lose our ability to think deeply.

Job encourages us to "stand still and consider the wondrous works of God." Proverbs tells us to "consider the ant" and learn from it. These instructions require us to slow down and observe carefully.

## **Becoming People Who Honor Others**

To be honorable people, we must slow down and consider details. We must appreciate moments and all that's in front of us. This means thinking beyond the superficial and considering the value of people and things.

When someone gives you a gift, do you consider what went into it - the cost, the heart behind it, the love shown? Or do you treat it lightly? Honorable people value things and esteem others.

## **The Story of the Woman Who Washed Jesus' Feet**

In Luke 7, a woman known as a sinner came to Jesus while he was dining at a Pharisee's house. She wept at Jesus' feet, washed them with her tears, dried them with her hair, and anointed them with expensive oil.

The Pharisee thought to himself, "If Jesus were really a prophet, he would know what kind of woman this is." But Jesus knew exactly what was happening. He told a parable about two debtors who were forgiven different amounts, then asked the Pharisee, "Do you see this woman?"

That question wasn't just about physical sight. It was about truly seeing her as a person - her heart, her situation, her love. Jesus pointed out how she had shown him honor that the Pharisee had neglected to show.

## **Finding Your Way in a Distracted World**

In Luke 10, Jesus tells his disciples, "Go your way... Greet no one along the road." This wasn't about being rude but about staying focused on their mission. He also told them, "Do not go from house to house," encouraging them to settle in one place rather than constantly moving.

Many people jump from church to church, never settling down to grow. God wants us to be focused, not scattered. We need to know where we're supposed to be and what we're supposed to be doing.

## Life Application

This week, challenge yourself to slow down and be more thoughtful in your daily life:

- Start each day acknowledging it as a new day with fresh mercies from God.
- Practice being fully present in whatever you're doing - whether reading the Bible, praying, working, or spending time with loved ones.
- When interacting with others, truly "see" them as Jesus did - not just their outward appearance but their situation, their heart, their value.
- Take time to consider the details around you that you normally overlook - the beauty of creation, the effort behind someone's work, the love behind a gift.
- Resist the urge to rush from one thing to the next. Instead, ask yourself: "Where am I supposed to be? What am I supposed to be doing?"

Ask yourself these questions:

- In what areas of my life am I living on autopilot instead of being fully engaged?
- Who in my life needs me to truly "see" them as Jesus saw people?
- What distractions keep me from focusing on what God has called me to do?
- How can I create more moments of quiet reflection in my busy schedule?

Remember, "If you don't think very far, you're not going to go very far in life." But when we slow down and engage thoughtfully with God and others, we position ourselves to experience the full life God intends for us.

## Quotes

1. "Every day with God is a fresh start."
2. "The moment we start moving forward is the moment we let go of what's behind."
3. "Many people can't move on because they say, 'I've tried that many times before.'"
4. "It's amazing how much of life we do out of habit, without much thought."
5. "We're to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength—total focus."

6. "Jesus didn't bless people mechanically. He cared deeply about each person."
7. "We need to be skilled at meditating—at sitting back, getting quiet."
8. "Even the Bible tells us to pause. Selah. Stop and think about what you just read."
9. "If you don't think very far, you won't go very far. To go places with God, you must think deeply."
10. "Wisdom is the ability to see ahead. Before it moves, it asks, 'Where will this lead? Where will this take me?'"
11. "Knowledge loves to talk. Wisdom waits—considering how speaking or acting will affect things."
12. "Wisdom gives you skill. It makes you sharp. But to have it, you must think past the surface."
13. "Many people destroy their lives simply because they're not thinking. They just go with the flow."
14. "Sometimes you just need to stop and notice the flowers."
15. "To be honorable, you must value people and things. An honorable person values what others overlook."

## **Verses**

1. 2 Corinthians 5:17
2. Lamentations 3:23
3. Psalm 118:24
4. Philippians 3:13
5. Matthew 22:37
6. Matthew 9:36

7. Luke 13:16

8. Psalm 46:10

9. Proverbs 6:6

10. Isaiah 50:4

11. Ecclesiastes 12:11

12. Genesis 3:9

13. Job 37:14

14. Luke 7:36-50

15. Luke 10:2-7