



Slow Down

Residing in a town that functions largely on an academic calendar, our year is about to kick off full speed. Even for those not associated with the university, kids are going back to school, summer vacations/trips are reaching their conclusion. Our focus will be shifting back to a daily task completion mindset. As we move from a leisure season into task-to-task monotony, it is easy for us to become tunnel visioned on completing the next task.

One of the values of summer/vacation seasons is the ability to slow down and look at the world around us and God's creations. When we are in our normal schedule, we often inflate the importance of our school and work responsibilities in relation to our spiritual and personal lives. It is easy to look at our situations and say I am the only person that can do "_____", my responsibilities are critical for things to move forward. When we look at jobs and careers around us, they are all equally important for our society to function productively. The doctors are critical for healthcare and saving lives. The teachers are important for developing our future doctors and workers. The construction workers are important for us to have houses to protect us from the environment and structures to work within. The sanitation workers are important for removing rubbish to keep our space clean, preventing the spread of disease and illness. Missing any one of these and all other careers disrupts the function of our society. Even so, everyone in each of these roles is replaceable. If the person in the role cannot perform their responsibilities, they will quickly be replaced to maintain society's function. As much as technology advances and ideation creates new things, the goals and desires of humans have remained constant. Ecclesiastes 1 describes there being nothing new under the sun. All the work we put into new technologies, ideas, and methods considered as

revolutionary, continue in the direction of ancient human goals and will in the future be seen as silly and archaic. These changes help gradually progress society but often provide limited impact globally in our lifetimes.

While we should strive to improve the world around us and grow upon the ideas and methods that have come before, what is truly important and irreplaceable is our relationship with our God, and our families, friends, loved ones. These relationships are not as easily and quickly replaced as all employees are in their various roles. At the end of day regardless of what is happening or not happening in your career or in your school, God and these people love you and care for you. As we move back into the normal hustle and bustle of our university centered community, let us slow down and pay attention to the people around us and let us notice the beauties God has put around us.

Our God, the creator of all things, has blessed our lives with meaningful relationships and created beauty all around us. Everyone should be encouraged daily to slow down for at least a few minutes and look at the beauty around us. See the beauty of a blue sky. Hear the joy in children's laughter. Feel the warmth of a warm sunny day. Smell the flowers blooming in spring. Taste the sweetness of a ripe apple. Look to Matthew 6:25-33, see the beauty described in God's care for the grass and the birds then look around where you are and see this beauty in real life. These are all daily reminders of God's love and care for us. A brief moment of slowing down may totally change your perception.

- JohnEric Smith