

Practicing the Way Series

Hurry: The Great Enemy of Spiritual Life

By JOHN MARK COMER

The Invitation to an Unhurried Life

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

— Matthew 11:28-30

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

— Matthew 11:28-30 (The Message)

A New Lifestyle

“In this truth lies the secret of the easy yoke: the secret involves living as (Jesus) lived in the entirety of his life — adopting his overall life-style... Our mistake is to think that following Jesus consists in loving our enemies, going the second mile, turning the other cheek, suffering patiently and hopefully — while living the rest of our lives just as everyone else around us does... it’s a strategy bound to fail.”

— Dallas Willard

“If you want to experience the life of Jesus, you have to adopt the lifestyle of Jesus.”

— John Mark Comer

Following Jesus is a way of life. It is not just a set of ideas (what we call theology) or a list of what to do and what not to do (what we call ethics); it is a way of living life. We in the West and more specifically in the American church often spend a good chunk of our time talking about theology but very little time talking about lifestyle and practice.

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“A yoke is a work instrument. Thus when Jesus offers a yoke he offers what we might think tired workers need least. They need a mattress or a vacation, not a yoke. But Jesus realizes that the most restful gift he can give the tired is a new way to carry life, a fresh way to bear responsibilities... Realism sees that life is a succession of burdens; we cannot get away from them; thus instead of offering escape, Jesus offers equipment. Jesus means that obedience to his Sermon on the Mount (his yoke) will develop us in a balance and a ‘way’ of carrying life that will give more rest than the way we have been living.”

— Fredrick Dale Bruner

The hardest way to follow Jesus is to try and live like everyone else around you (and to not change any of your routines, habits or your schedule) and then to just kind of add following Jesus to all that. It is so hard that it is basically impossible. ***The easiest way is to radically alter your entire lifestyle and take the pattern set by Jesus' lifestyle and decide that you want to live like that.***

The Need to Slow Down

“Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life (if you want to grow in your discipleship to Jesus).”

— Dallas Willard

“It may be the case that (1.) Christians are assimilating a culture of busyness, hurry and overload, which leads to (2.) God becoming more marginalized in Christians' lives, which leads to (3.) a deteriorating relationship with God, which leads to (4.) Christians becoming even more vulnerable to adopting secular assumptions about how to live, which leads to (5.) more conformity to a culture of busyness, hurry and overload. And then the cycle begins again.”

— Michael Zigarelli

“Today, a number of historical circumstances are blindly flowing together and accidentally conspiring to produce a climate within which it is difficult not just to think about God or to pray, but simply to have any interior depth whatsoever... We are distracting ourselves into spiritual oblivion... pathological busyness, distraction, and restlessness are major blocks today within our spiritual lives.”

— Ronald Rolheiser

The need for us today is a “slow-down spirituality.”

— Peter Scazzero

Smartphone Statistics (from 2016)

- The average smartphone user touches their phone an average of 2,617 times a day.
- The average smartphone user spends over 2.5 hours on their phone a day.
- The average for young adults is over 5 hours a day.
- In every study, those who were surveyed had no idea how much time they spent on their phones a day. Psychologists have classified that smartphone behavior falls under the category of compulsion.

addiction (*n.*) — the relentless pull to a substance or an activity that becomes so compulsive it ultimately interferes with everyday life.

Three Symptoms of Hurry-Sickness

1. You move from one check-out line to another because it's shorter.
2. When you come to a stop-light, you count the cars ahead of you and change lanes.
3. You multitask to the point that you forget one of the tasks.

Ten Signs that You are Moving Too Fast Through Life

1. Irritability
2. Hyper-sensitivity
3. Restlessness
4. Compulsive overworking
5. Numbness
6. Escapist behaviors
7. Disconnected from our identity and calling
8. Not able to attend to human needs
9. Hoarding energy
10. Slippage in spiritual practices

5 Practices to Slow Your Life Down

1. **Sabbath** — set aside one day a week (24-hours) to be and not to do; turn off your phone, unplug from everything internet, don't try to be productive, just slow down, enjoy the day, sleep, play, read, eat a good meal with people you love... do whatever is life-giving to you and your family
2. **Fixed-Hour Prayer** — throughout the day (quiet time in the morning then around noon and later in the day) take a minute to stop, to take a deep breath and to be aware of God's presence with you
3. **Fixed-Hour Schedule** — schedule out an ideal week (work, rest, exercise, spiritual practices, family activities, community, etc.) and stick to it
4. **Simple Living** — strip your whole life down to what really matters and to live deliberately
5. **Slowing Down** — make rules to cultivate a slower pace and rhythm of life (some examples below)
 - Drive the speed limit
 - Come to a full stop at a stop sign
 - Get into the slow lane
 - Show up 10 minutes early to an appointment and don't take out your phone
 - Walk slower
 - Single-tasking
 - Start a journal to record your thoughts down on paper
 - Turn your smartphone into a "dumb-phone" (Google "distraction free iPhone")
 - Read, sleep, make a good meal, put your phone away while you eat, etc.

A *Rule of Life* is a schedule and a set of practices that you order your life around in order to follow Jesus in community. It is a way to structure and support your life around abiding in Jesus.

Being a Disciple

The word *disciple* in our Bibles is always a noun; it is never used as a verb. You don't "disciple" anyone and nobody "disciples" you. You either are or are not a disciple. We cannot put the responsibility on anyone else or on our church. It is our responsibility to be a disciple of Jesus. We have to decide.