

**The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry:
How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World
John Mark Comer and John Ortberg
Book Note ~ Dave Kraft**

What if all you had to do was slow down long enough for the merry-go-round blur of life to come into focus?

“You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.”

Hurry is the root problem underneath so many of the symptoms of toxicity in our world.

Corrie ten Boom once said that if the devil can't make you sin, he'll make you busy.

The famous psychologist Carl Jung had this little saying:

Hurry is not of the devil; hurry is the devil.

The problem isn't when you have a lot to do; it's when you have too much to do and the only way to keep the quota up is to hurry.

The message is clear: slow is bad; fast is good.

We, for every kind of reason, good and bad, are distracting ourselves into spiritual oblivion.

Pathological busyness, distraction, and restlessness are major blocks today within our spiritual lives.

Could it be that Willard was right? That an overbusy, digitally distracted life of speed is the greatest threat to spiritual life that we face in the modern world?

Before Edison the average person slept eleven hours a night. Yes: eleven.

Around 2007, the official start date of the digital age.

Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.

A recent study found that the average iPhone user touches his or her phone 2,617 times a day. Each user is on his or her phone for two and a half hours over seventy-six sessions.

As Gandhi wisely said, “There is more to life than increasing its speed.”

Your drugs of choice are accomplishment and accumulation.

when you get over-busy, the things that are truly life giving for your soul are the first to go rather than your first go to—such

Many have noted that the modern world is a virtual conspiracy against the interior life.

what you give your attention to is the person you become.

I love how John Ortberg framed it: “Hurry is not just a disordered schedule. Hurry is a disordered heart.”

the solution to an over busy life is not more time. It’s to slow down and simplify our lives around what really matters.

Image and dust.

Potential and limitations.

you realize after a while that you started the game from third base; some of your friends started in the parking lot. The game was rigged in your favor.

As Anne Lamott so humorously pointed out, “ ‘No’ is a complete sentence.”

In the language of Henry David Thoreau, we have to “live deliberately.”

Every day is a chance. Every hour an opportunity. Every moment a precious gift.

How do we slow down, simplify, and live deliberately right in the middle of the chaos of the noisy, fast-paced, urban, digital world we call home?

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

The reality is, I want the life, but I’m not willing to adopt the lifestyle behind it.

But Jesus as the truth gets far more attention than Jesus as the way.

I’m struck by how fiercely present Jesus was, how he just would not let anything or anyone, even a medical emergency or a hurting father, rush him into the next moment.

margin is “the space between our load and our limits.”

if your life with Jesus doesn’t have some kind of structure to facilitate health and growth, it will wither away.

But for Jesus, leadership isn’t about coercion

and control; it’s about example and invitation.

To come off the hurry drug and come home to awareness.

A survey from Microsoft found that 77 percent of young adults answered “ ‘yes’ when asked, ‘When nothing is occupying my attention, the first thing I do is reach for my phone.’ ”

This new normal of hurried digital distraction is robbing us of the ability to be present.

The noise of the modern world makes us deaf to the voice of God, drowning out the one input we most need.

Jesus and the quiet place. In seasons of busyness we need more time in the quiet place, not less, definitely not less.

Silence and solitude

First, silence. There are two dimensions of silence—external and internal.

Quiet is a kind of balm for emotional healing.

Internal noise? That's a whole other animal. A wild beast in desperate need of taming. There's no off switch.

Solitude is pretty straightforward. It's when you're alone, with God and with your own soul.

the master teachers of the way of Jesus have agreed: silence and solitude are the most important of all the spiritual disciplines.

Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. ~ Henri Nouwen

If the churches came to understand that the greatest threat to faith today is not hedonism but distraction, perhaps they might begin to appeal anew to a frazzled digital generation.

I say we bring back the quiet time. Rock it like it's 1999.

Our cultural moment of digital marketing from a society built around the twin gods of accumulation and accomplishment.

The Sabbath

But Sabbath is more than just a day; it's a way of being in the world.

The Hebrew word Shabbat means "to stop." But it can also be translated "to delight."

We call them storage units, and they are a \$38 billion industry in the US alone,

We are restless when ordinary life is enough.

A healing contentment from an unhurried, unharried life?

A way of working from rest, not for rest, with nothing to prove. A way of bearing fruit from abiding, not ambition.

People who keep Sabbath live all seven days differently.

Free from the need to do more, get more, be more. Free from the spirit—the evil, demonic spirit—of restlessness that enslaves our society.

Atheism hasn't replaced cultural Christianity; shopping has.

For a lot of people, things aren't just things; they are identities.

Those four thousand ads we see a day have been intentionally designed to stoke the fire of desire in our bellies

Mark Twain perceptively noted, "Civilization is the limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessities."

Because the problem isn't stuff. It's that (1) we put no limit on stuff due to our insatiable human desire for more. And (2) we think we need all sorts of things to be happy when, in actuality, we need very few.

"The drive to possess is an engine for hurry." ~ Alan Fadling

Most of us simply have too much stuff to enjoy life at a healthy, unhurried pace.

Instead of spending money to get time, we opted for the reverse: we spend time to get money.

Basic point? We worry about what we worship. If you worship money, it will eat you alive.

Minimalism isn't about living with nothing; it's about living with less.

minimalism is the intentional promotion of the things we most value and the removal of everything that distracts us from them.

The goal here is to live with a high degree of intentionality around what matters most,

As Richard Foster noted, "A carefree unconcern for possessions" is what "marks life in the kingdom."

1. Before you buy something, ask yourself, What is the true cost of this item?
2. Before you buy, ask yourself, By buying this, am I oppressing the poor or harming the earth?
3. Never impulse buy.
4. When you do buy, opt for fewer, better things.
5. When you can, share.
6. Get into the habit of giving things away.
7. Live by a budget.
8. Learn to enjoy things without owning them.
9. Cultivate a deep appreciation for creation

10. Cultivate a deep appreciation for the simple pleasures.

11. Recognize advertising for what it is—propaganda. Call out the lie.

“Refuse to be propagandized by the custodians of modern gadgetry.”

12. Lead a cheerful, happy revolt against the spirit of materialism.

It was said of Saint Francis and his band of followers that they “led a cheerful, happy revolt against the spirit of materialism.”

We live with what the historian Arthur Schlesinger called an “inextinguishable discontent.”

John Ortberg and Richard Foster both labeled this emerging practice the spiritual discipline of “slowing.”

Here are twenty ideas for slowing down your overall pace of life. Yup, twenty. I warned you, I like rules.

When driving a car:

1. Drive the speed limit.
2. Get into the slow lane.
3. Come to a full stop at stop signs.
4. Don't text and drive.

Some others:

5. Show up ten minutes early for an appointment.
6. Get in the longest checkout line at the grocery store.
7. Turn your smartphone into a dumb phone.
8. Get a flip phone. Or ditch your cell phone all together.
9. Parent your phone; put it to bed before you and make it sleep in.
10. Keep your phone off until after your morning quiet time.
11. Set times for email.
12. Set a time and a time limit for social media (or just get off it).

13. Kill your TV.

Reed Hastings, the CEO of Netflix, shrugged. He said their biggest competition is sleep.

14. Single-task.

15. Walk slower.

16. Take a regular day alone for silence and solitude.

17. Take up journaling.

18. Experiment with mindfulness and meditation.

19. If you can, take long vacations.

20. Cook your own food. And eat in.

“At this point in my life, I’m just trying to not miss the goodness of each day, and bring my best self to it.” ~ John Ortberg

I’ve reorganized my life around three very simple goals: 1) Slow down. 2) Simplify my life around the practices of Jesus. 3) Live from a center of abiding.

These four practices—silence and solitude, Sabbath, simplicity, and slowing—have helped me tremendously to move toward abiding as my baseline.

And the goal is practice, not perfection.