

***Caring for Your Soul:***  
*Slowing down and connecting with God*

Mark Godshall, Pastor of Community Life, Bayside Church Granite Bay

**Goal:** To take the foot off the accelerator of our lives, reduce the rpms that may be peaking in the red zone, and slow down long enough to hear from God.

**Invitation:** Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to accept Jesus' invitation to spend time with Him? Were you willing to do whatever necessary to go on the vacation as discussed in the opening activity?

**Confession:** Right up front, let's admit our failure to put God first in our lives, position ourselves to really hear from God on this subject, and then be obedient.

**Promise:** Claim Jeremiah 29:12-14a – "Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord."

**Problem:** Spiritual Attention Deficit Disorder (SADD) – Does the scenario read today describe you? What is the solution?

**ONE TRUTH:** *Psalm 46 - God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah <sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. <sup>5</sup> God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. <sup>6</sup> Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. <sup>7</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah <sup>8</sup> Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth. <sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. <sup>10</sup> "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." <sup>11</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah*

Nature

Nations /People

A Place

A Person = God

**Be Still!!** Cease striving, cease and desist, relax, literally, drop your arms/hands to your side! Put your electronic gadgets down. Turn the TV & radio off, put the tools away!  
Stop trying to do it all; instead, make sometime in your day to get to know Me, and when you do, I the Lord Almighty, will show up and handle all your problems and pressures.

- a) Exodus 14:14 – "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."
- b) Psalm 37:7a – "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him."

**ONE TOOL:** This is not the magic secret to hearing from God. What is? **Be Still!** This is just one tool/method - adapted from Bill Hybels' plan in "Too Busy Not to Pray".

**1) Reading** – God's Word is read in some way shape or form during this time with God: chapter a day, Daily Bread, 5 Psalms and 1 Proverb each day for 30 Days, reading through the Bible in a year, etc. Reading God's Word must occur at some point.

### **2) Journaling**

- Buy a notebook / journal
- Top of page write the word "Yesterday"/Date. Write 1-2 paragraphs recounting yesterday's events – "post-game analysis", reflection, emotions, and activities.

#### **Journaling Helps You:**

- a) Re-examine your life – It forces you to process your thoughts and honestly analyze your life, your feelings, and your spiritual development.
- b) Reduce your RPMS – It forces you to slow down, think and listen.
- c) Redirect your steps – It positions you so God can direct you in amazing ways.

### **3) Praying**

- On the next page in your journal, write the word "Today"/Date. **Write out your prayer to God.** This forces you to slow things down and not try to build a relationship with God on the run.
- Limit prayer to 1 page unless you have extended time.
- Try various prayer models. ACTS is one approach – Adoration Confession Thanksgiving Supplication.
- Verbalize the prayer and other prayer requests to the Lord.
- Kneeling as you verbalize the prayer is an option.

### **4) Listening (most important part)**

- First of all, invite the Lord to speak to you by His Spirit through His "gentle whisper", His "still small voice", I Kings 19:12.
- Write "Listen" in your journal and then stop everything and be still - listen.
- Write down what God is saying to you.

**Question:** Will you make slowing down and listening to God a priority and a habit in your life each day? Will you do whatever is necessary – even if it means saying no to some good stuff – to spend time with God?

**ONE BLOCK OF TIME:** Take the next 30-60 min to actually spend alone with God!

- Commit to this time alone with God - Resist the temptation to leave early, to go shopping, hang out with friends, buy resources, go to the Café, or be distracted in any way! Don't wait until you get home to put into practice what we just discussed.
- Work thru the "Discipline of Silence" sheet or Psalm 46 or whatever direction the Lord leads you.
- Take a Bible if needed but return it at the end of your time.
- Spread out anywhere on campus or stay here in the room.

- You may take your chair but bring it back when finished.
- Please exit quietly and converse only if necessary.
- At the end of your time alone with God, we'd appreciate your feedback using the evaluation form (turn it in here or in the lobby). We'd love for you to include any comments on ways God was speaking to you.
- If you have questions or wish to share how God is working in your life, I will be available after the session is over, at the Care Team location – Room C133, by email at [markg@baysideonline.com](mailto:markg@baysideonline.com), or 916-746-8605.

**OPTIONAL ENDING:** Last 15 minutes gather back to share with us your experience, process this subject, ask questions, and learn from each other.

“When we have met our Lord in the silent intimacy of prayer, then we will also meet him...in the market and in the town square. But when we have not met him in the center of our own hearts, we cannot expect to meet him in the busyness of our daily lives.” Henri Nouwen

## **DISCIPLINE OF SILENCE**

(For 1 Hour Alone with God)

**PRAISE** God for who He is from Psalm 111:1-6.

**ASK** God to search your heart from Psalm 139:23, 24.

**READ** Psalm 51 and list anything that comes to mind on a separate sheet of paper.

**CLAIM** 1 John 1:9. Write out the entire verse across the list and destroy it.

**THANK** God for His cleansing and thank Him for some of the many things He has done for you from Psalm 111:7-10.

**MEDITATE** on Colossians 2:6-15 (LB). What spiritual growth steps does God want you to take based on these verses? List on the back or in a journal.

“And now just as you trusted Christ to save you, trust Him, too, for each day’s problems; live in vital union with Him. Let your roots grow down into Him and draw up nourishment from Him. See that you go on growing in the Lord, and become strong and vigorous in

the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with joy and thanksgiving for all He has done.

Don't let others spoil your faith and joy with their philosophies, their wrong and shallow answers built on men's thoughts and ideas, instead of on what Christ has said. For in Christ there is all of God in a human body; so you have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power." (Col. 2:6-15)

**LISTEN** – Is there anything else God is saying to you? Journal these thoughts and ask for His help in being obedient.

### ***Too Busy Not to Pray* – Bill Hybels**

"The archenemy of spiritual authenticity is busyness, which is closely tied to something the Bible calls *worldliness* – getting caught up with this society's agenda, objectives and activities to the neglect of walking with God. Anyway you cut it, a key ingredient in authentic Christianity is time. Not leftover time, not throwaway time, but quality time. Time for contemplation, meditation and reflection. Unhurried, uninterrupted time." (p.100)

"People who are really interested in hearing from God must pay a price; they must discipline themselves to be still before God. This is not an easy task, but it is essential...Jesus developed the discipline of stillness before God in spite of his extremely busy life. Crowds followed him wherever he went. Daily he preached and taught and healed. It was hard for him to find time alone to pray, and he had to get up long before dawn to do it. 'Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed' (Mk. 1:35)." (p.117-118)

"No one can become an authentic Christian on a steady diet of activity. Power comes out of stillness; strength comes out of solitude. Decisions that change the course of your life come out of the Holy of Holies, your times of stillness before God." (p.120)

## ***The Life You've Always Wanted, Chapter 5, "An Unhurried Life – The Practice of 'Slowing'" – John Ortberg***

John asked his mentor what John needed to do to be spiritually healthy. The response? "You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life. There is nothing else." (p.77)

"We must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from our lives. This does not mean we will never be busy. Jesus often had much to do, but he never did it in a way that severed the life-giving connection between him and his Father. He never did it in a way that interfered with his ability to give love when love was called for. He observed a regular practice of withdrawing from activity for the sake of solitude and prayer. Jesus was often busy, but never hurried. Hurry is not just a disordered schedule. Hurry is a disordered heart." (p.79)

### **Symptoms of "Hurry Sickness"**

- 1) Constantly Speeding up Daily Activities – We are haunted by the fear there aren't enough hours in the day and get frustrated when we get in the wrong grocery line!
- 2) Multiple Tasking – We end up doing this all day long – and too often in the car.
- 3) Clutter – We get weighed down by life demands when we fail to say "No".
- 4) Superficiality – Depth of relationships comes slowly not in a microwave.
- 5) An Inability to Love – Love takes time and hurried people don't have it.
- 6) Sunset Fatigue – Worn out at the end of the day – give family the leftovers.

### **The Cures for "Hurry Sickness"**

- 1) "Slowing" – Deliberately putting yourself in position where you have to wait – slow lane, grocery line, chew food slowly, not wear a watch for a day, etc.
- 2) Engage in Solitude – "Solitude is the one place where we can gain freedom from the forces of society that will otherwise relentlessly mold us."
- 3) Practice Solitude – From 5 minute breaks, to an hour, to half day, one day or several days – see attached.

## **EXTENDED SOLITUDE**

1. Find a place where you can be uninterrupted and alone, such as a park or a retreat center.
2. Spend a brief time the night before to get ready, to ask God to bless the day, and to tell him you want to devote the day to him. This day is your gift to God, but even more, it is a gift God wants to give you. What do you need from the Lord; a sense of healing and forgiveness? Conviction for an apathetic heart? Compassion? Renewed sense of mission? Ask him for this.
3. Arrange the day around listening to God. The following format is adapted from Glandion Carney's book *The Spiritual Formation Toolkit*.

# **THRIVE**

## CONFERENCE 2010

APRIL 29-MAY 1 | BAYSIDE CHURCH | GRANITE BAY, CA

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|----------------------|--|
| <b>8:00 – 9:00</b>   | <b>Prepare your mind and heart, take a walk, or do whatever will help you set aside concerns over tasks and responsibilities. Try to arrange your morning so you can remain in silence from the time you awaken.</b> |
| <b>9:00 – 11:00</b>  | <b>Read and meditate on Scripture, taking time to stop to reflect when God seems to be speaking to you through the text.</b>   |
| <b>11:00 - 12:00</b> | <b>Write down responses to what you have read. Speak to God about them.</b>  |
| <b>12:00 – 1:00</b>  | <b>Eat lunch and take a walk, reflecting on the morning.</b>   |
| <b>1:00 – 2:00</b>   | <b>Take a nap.</b>   |
| <b>2:00 – 3:00</b>   | <b>Set goals that emerge from the day's reflection.</b>  |
| <b>3:00 – 4:00</b>   | <b>Write down these goals and other thoughts in a journal. You may want to do this in the form of a letter to God. Prepare to reenter society.</b>   |

*The Life You've Always Wanted, John Ortberg, p.89*