

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: Living Like Jesus

We live in the digital age with access to more information and modes of communication than ever before. There is always more to read, see, watch, and do in the deluge of news, social media, streaming platforms, and alerts. Many of us are left feeling behind, hurried, stressed, and just plain rundown.

But what is this hurried pace of life doing to our souls?

Join us this fall as we explore "how to stay emotionally healthy and spiritually alive in the chaos of the modern world." That is, how to slow down and connect with our God, our community, and even our souls. Jesus invites us to follow a way of love that is incompatible with a hurried lifestyle. Join us, as we adopt practices that will help us slow down and experience rest and life with Jesus.

Message description:

We live in a fast-paced world with many people rushing from one thing to the next, trying to fit more into an already busy schedule. We face demands from work, kid activities, family commitments, and more church meetings, and constantly inundated with news and notifications demanding even more of our attention. The result is what some experts are calling a "hurry sickness," a malaise in which a person feels chronically short of time, and so tends to perform every task faster and to get flustered when encountering any kind of delay. What is this pressure and hurry doing to our spiritual lives? For many of us, it means we feel run town, tired, burnt out, and disconnected from God, each other, and our own souls. And yet, into this cultural context, Jesus' invitation still speaks: "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. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

An easy yoke? How can that be? Jesus' invitation is for us to become his apprentices, that we may learn his "yoke" and set of teaching and model his lifestyle, and so find a rest, peace, and freedom that he demands of this world can never give. Follow his way and habits and we just might find we are able to shoulder our load of our daily responsibilities a little easier.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 11:27-30

Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. Do you feel in a hurry and don't know why? [For fun, listen in here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAZOCgR6pmM>]
2. At this point in your life, what demands the most of your time and/or attention?
3. In her teaching, Rachel shared a definition of "hurry sickness" as a behavior pattern characterized by continual rushing and anxiousness.
 - a. Where do you observe this hurry sickness today, either within yourself or in our world?
 - b. Do you ever feel this rushed, hurried, or anxious?
 - c. Have you experienced any symptoms of hurry sickness [irritability, hypersensitivity, restlessness, workaholism, emotional numbness, out of order priorities, lack of care for your body, escapist behaviors, slippage of spiritual disciplines, isolation]?
4. How did you hear Jesus' invitation differently to come and find rest with him? What do you think he means by an easy yoke?
5. What do you hope to gain from this series?

Going Deeper: A little more context

From the companion guide of John Mark Comer's "The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry"

"The way of Jesus is a way of life. It's not less than a faith made up of theology and ethics, but it's certainly more. It's a whole new way to be human; a set of values, dispositions, relational dynamics, and habits. And it's by these—our habits in particular—that the ideas of Jesus become a reality, not only in our minds, but in our very bodies.

That's why it's not enough to simply read a book, or even read the Bible. If we want to enter the kingdom that Jesus opened to us; we have to also "follow" or "apprentice under him" into its reality. Hence, his ongoing invitation to "Come, and follow me."

In the late modern West, we're a bit more familiar with reading a book or listening to a podcast than we are to following a rabbi. We've grown accustomed to reading a book full of ideas, setting said book into the shelf, and then moving on, without doing much of anything about it.

Buckminster Fuller, the architect who invented the geodesic dome, later became a futurist and systems theorist. In his book *Critical Path*, he came up with the "knowledge doubling curve." He estimated that if you could measure the cumulative knowledge of human civilization, from the year of Jesus birth, it took 1,500 years for it to double. But from there, it doubled again by 1750. From there, it doubled every hundred years, up until WW2. After the way, it doubled in 25 years. By the 80's, it was every 12 months. Some current estimates put the number at every twelve hours.

So, if you were born the same year as Jesus, it would be a millennium and a half before the cumulative knowledge of the human race would double; if you're born today, it's doubled twice before dinner. Hence the moniker for our era—"the information age." And yet, while we have more information than ever before, we don't seem to actually live much better. In fact, many of us feel more anxious, scattered, and distracted than just a few decades ago.

The cultural critic and professor of media at NYU, Neil Postman, in *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, widely

considered the seminal work on the effect of TV on our culture, coined the phrase “low information-to-action ratio.” By that he meant, we’re overloaded with information, so much so that we rarely do anything with what we learn. He said it this way: “The tie between information and action has been severed. Information is now a commodity that can be bought and sold, or used as a form of entertainment, or worn like a garment to enhance one’s status. It comes indiscriminately, directed at no one in particular, disconnected from usefulness; we are glutted with information, drowning in information, have no control over it, don’t know what to do with it.”

To sum up:

1. We have more information than any other generation in human history.
2. In fact, we have so much information we often feel overwhelmed as vast terabytes of “news” constantly assail us via our phones and devices.
3. This creates a paralysis in us. We then grow accustomed to this paralysis and live with it as our default. We’re used to hearing new information, even being moved by such information, and then doing absolutely nothing about it.

This simply won’t do for following Jesus of Nazareth, who ended his Sermon on the Mount with a stark warning about those who “hear these words of mind and don’t put them into practice.”

So, with the simple goal of moving from the “idea” of the ruthless elimination of hurry, to the practice of it – getting it from our mind into our muscle memory itself – We set out four practices for un-hurrying your life:

1. Silence and Solitude.
2. Sabbath.
3. Simplicity.
4. Slowing.

The point of these four practices isn’t to “do it right,” much less to curry God’s favor. It’s simply to un-hurry to the pace of Jesus, and tap into his life-flow of love and joy and peace. The last thing I would want is for you to ... come away with a stressed-out soul, ten-page to-do list, guilt complex, or sense that there’s no hope for you. But neither would I want you to read this, and walk away inspired, but ultimately unchanged.

Questions for reflection:

- Do you agree with John Mark Comer’s evaluation above of our age of information? Do you agree that we are overwhelmed by so much information that it creates a paralysis in us and rarely changes us?
- What are you looking forward to practicing the most?