



**the
ruthless
elimination of
*hurry***

Session 5: Slowing

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: Physically slowing down trains our souls to resist hurry and increases our capacity to be present with God and others.

Head Change: To know that our bodies are essential to who we are and physical discipline can help us connect more deeply to Jesus.

Heart Change: To feel peace in waiting while learning how to slow down.

Life Change: To incorporate focal practices that help you be present with God and those around you.

OPEN

Do you prefer a fast-paced lifestyle or one that's slow? What do you like or dislike about the pace of your life?

In general, we all move at a fast pace. Life is busy and it's rare that we don't have someplace we need to be. And, let's face it, we've all experienced frustration when having to wait for something we want—whether it's for our food, long lines at the grocery store, or being put on hold with customer service.

But when we look at the life of Jesus, we find that he was not in a rush. He didn't get frustrated with waiting and, no matter where he was, he was totally present. To be more like Jesus, we need to slow down. In this final session, John Mark will discuss the ways physically slowing down helps us learn to be present with God.

VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in John Mark Comer's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

In what ways are our bodies just as important as our souls?

What were three of the focal practices John Mark discussed?

What reasons does John Mark give for our phones being a major obstacle to an unhurried life?

Watch Session 5: Slowing (14 minutes).

REVIEW

John Mark started the session with the Hebrew word for “soul”: *nephesh*. It describes the entirety of a person, including their soul and body. This definition is different from our cultural idea that our souls—our “true” essence—have no real connection to our bodies.

How would you define a soul? Why do you think it’s important to understand that God cares about our whole person, body, and soul?

You are not a soul with a body. In many ways, you are your body. For this reason, it is essential that we offer our physical activity to God. **What do you think it looks like to, as Romans 12:1 says, present your body to God as a sacrifice?**

If we want to resist hurry, we will have to physically slow down. John Mark defined “slowing” as “cultivating patience by deliberately choosing to place ourselves in positions where we simply have to wait.” **What makes slowing down difficult for you? Do you think there could be benefits to slowing down?**

John Mark mentioned multiple practical ways we can incorporate slowing into our lives. One way to begin the journey of slowing down is to change our relationship to our phones. **On a typical day, how often do you fill your “empty” time with checking notifications, talking and texting on the phone, or watching television?**

Many of us have an unhealthy relationship with our phones. John Mark encouraged us to “parent our phones” or put our phones “to bed.” **In what ways could a “dumb phone”—a phone without apps or constant access to the internet—help break our dependence on our screens? What worries you about turning off your notifications?**

What would it look like for you to parent your phone more effectively?

John Mark encouraged us to find a focal practice like painting, playing music, gardening, or exercising to counter our digital distractions and multi-tasking. These practices help us center our minds and attention while grounding ourselves in the moment. **What is a focal practice you could incorporate into your current lifestyle? What would it take for you to begin this focal practice within the next week?**

By learning how to be present in the moment and centering our attention through focal practices, we can also increase our soul’s capacity to be present to God in prayer. **Is it difficult for you to remain present during prayer? What distractions grab your attention the most?**

Which could focal practices improve your prayer life? What would it look like to implement those practices into your daily life?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Sometimes we’re put in situations that force us to slow down and wait. When slowing down is the only option, it can have a great impact on our ability to remain patient. Read James 5:7–8.

Farmers have to wait for rain without any guarantee of when it will come. Their entire livelihoods hang on something they cannot control. **What need in your life is beyond your control? What would it look like to be present with God rather than spending energy worrying about the future while you wait?**

In many cases, waiting patiently is hard because we have no idea how long we’ll be waiting. But just like the farmer knows it will rain at some point, we know that God will come through for us in our waiting. **How have you typically responded to God’s timing in the past? In what ways does God’s timing help us learn to slow down?**

James reminds us to be patient by strengthening our hearts because Christ’s return is coming sooner than we think. But, for many of us, it seems like God is slow in returning. (Second Peter 3:9 can be helpful if you find

yourself thinking God is slow in fulfilling his promises.) **In what ways might our sense of hurry skew our view of God's perfect timing?**

Forcing ourselves to wait may be hard, but when God asks us to wait, it can make us angry with him. Read Psalm 33:13–22.

There are times when we might feel like God isn't listening because he is not working fast enough. We want our prayers answered quickly and don't like waiting on his timing. **How do you feel when God makes you wait? What is your reaction to God when he makes you sit in an uncomfortable situation?**

As we're learning how to be patient, we wonder if God sees us in our waiting. But in verses 13–15, the psalmist explains that God sees it all—there is nothing he cannot see, and no person he has overlooked. **In what ways is it comforting to know that God sees your waiting? How does God being all-seeing impact your ability to be patient?**

When we truly believe that God watches over us, it becomes easier to believe that he will come through for us. He is not a God that chooses to ignore us as we wait for him to fulfill his promises. **What have you been waiting patiently for? How could you remind yourself that God does not ignore you, but will come through for you in his timing?**

This passage changes from personal to general, exclaiming that our soul waits for the Lord, and he is our help and our shield. Waiting on God is a common and collective occurrence for all believers. **What could it look like for you and your friends to support one another while you wait on God? Is it possible that you are the answer to a friend's prayer?**

LAST WORD

Learning to live at a slower pace expands our ability to be present with God and patient with our circumstances. But patience doesn't come easy—we must practice slowing down through intentional methods as we've learned in this session.

Think about your current spiritual life and how it has been impacted by a hurried lifestyle. The practices of silence and solitude, the sabbath, simplicity and slowing, will not only help you rest and give you peace but also will connect you intimately with Jesus. **Which of these four practices can you add to your weekly schedule? What would it look like to practice all four?**

DEEPER WALK

Pray: Ask God to help you figure out what distractions in your life are hindering your overall ability to slow down. Pray for the courage needed to address those areas head-on.

Slow: Use what you've learned in this series to practice slowing down. Pick one or two focal practices to try this week.

Challenge: Accept John Mark's challenge to "level up" by getting an old school alarm clock to replace your phone alarm clock. Use the time in the morning you would normally devote to your phone to be present with Jesus in prayer or through reading a passage of Scripture.

