

Why You Need to Slow Down to Hear God's Voice

It's not popular—or easy—but slowing down is essential to hearing God's voice.

We must break free from our overstimulated culture. Phones buzz, screens flash and distractions come at us almost constantly. There is almost no time to rest. In our busy world, there's always more to do, more to see, more to think about. We rarely take time to be still.

Unfortunately, it's hard to cultivate a deep, inner life with God when we live this way. It's difficult to get below the surface and really get to know Him if we're always in a rush.

Look at the Trees

Picture, if you will, a tree with shallow roots. The tree may look OK on the surface, but it doesn't bear much fruit because it's struggling to get enough water itself. Over time, the tree may show signs of weakness or even become sick, and could be toppled at any time by a strong storm. This is not a tree others could safely climb or eat fruit from. It is not reaching its full potential.

What if the same is true for us? How many of us live hurried and worried, stressed and frantic, on edge and grasping for a sip of refreshment, barely able to get enough water for ourselves—much less give it to others?

The Lord, our Good Shepherd, has promised to lead us to green pastures. He wants us to lie down and drink from the still waters (Ps. 23:2), but how many of us resist Him? We may be Christians, know the Lord, and call Jesus our Savior, but where is the deep intimacy and our trust in His leadership to do this?

Finding Water in the Desert

If you're struggling, know that God hasn't left you. He's not mad at you for being busy, but His heart may be calling you to slow down and step closer to Him.

The Lord has promised to meet us according to our hunger. Scripture is full of exhortations for God's people to call to Him so that He can answer (Isa. 58:9; Jer. 33:3). His provision is strong and secure, but we have to access it.

That's what the spiritual disciplines are all about (prayer, fasting, reading the Word). God is perfectly good and has promised to supply all our needs (Phil. 4:19); our part is to position ourselves to receive the fulfillment of that promise, which includes spending time with Him.

It's a Choice

Ultimately, slowing down and seeking God is a choice. Our plates may be full, but we can ask the Lord for wisdom on how to create space for Him. A good place to start is with entertainment. While this is to have a place in our lives, "it's a small place," says Mike Bickle, IHOPKC's director. Unfortunately, our culture often makes it a priority.

We can start by reversing this trend, putting aside a show we like or favorite movie to attend a prayer meeting, worship as a family or spend time in God's Word. It may start slowly, but these activities can quickly become more enjoyable than the entertainment we're forsaking, since knowing the Lord is our greatest pleasure.

It's not only about discipline, but delight. Jesus loves us and wants us to be with Him where He is (John 17:24). We can choose Him daily, in ways big and small, which delights His heart. And since God wants us to draw near, don't be surprised if He quickly pours out favor on your times with Him, encouraging you to do it more (and even invite others into the

same thing).

The Point

The more we feast on God's Word, the deeper our roots will go, as described in Psalm 1. This tree, which is "planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither," symbolizes a healthy believer, "and whatever he does shall prosper (Ps. 1:3).

Pray and ask God for this: to come out of busyness and make time to seek Him more. Distractions can wait, but the Lord is waiting on us, beckoning us to seek Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength (Luke 10:27). He is our first love and source of life, ready to receive all who come to Him.

How can you slow down to hear God's voice? {eo}

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