

2 Truths That Can Save Your Life in Your Darkest Season

I was running on empty for longer than I realized. I had been draining my internal spiritual and psychological reserves over the course of many miles crossed and many hours spent. When it all finally caught up to me, the timing couldn't have been more perfect, at least from the perspective of the enemy of my soul.

The powers of darkness are always waiting for an "opportune time" (Luke 4:13). I knew how to recognize demonic activity, and I knew how to minister deliverance. I often taught on spiritual warfare. But my lack of self-awareness gave ample room for the enemy to overtake me.

Sadly, and with great regret, I came to discover the fragmentation, the gap, between my body and my soul. Now, on this side of my dark season, I have two statements that I return to again and again, statements I believe are lifesaving truths:

- Slow down to the speed of life.
- Slow down to the speed of revelation.

We tend to live in the fast lane. We want everything, and we want it now! If we must wait for it, it can't be worth it. We try to get everything done as quickly as possible. Because we've grown so accustomed to a life of instants, waiting has become foreign to us. We rarely "stop and smell the roses."

Believe me, it is difficult to unlearn that urge to hurry and then slow down to the speed of life. And slowing down to the speed of revelation is equally demanding. Conditioned by the rapid pace of societal change and the exponential increase of knowledge, we live fast and furious, expecting and demanding everything immediately and in an instant. And we're mostly

unconscious of how damaging that is to both our minds and our bodies.

When I came out of my dark season, having had to deal with the dynamics of my entangled thinking, I began to learn not just how to slow down to the speed of life but also to the speed of revelation. What did that mean? It meant I had to learn to come to a place of inner stillness and watchful silence.

Over time, because I was ignoring the warning signals that my body gave me, I lost touch with my own heart. I gradually lost perspective and it became hard to remember *who* I was apart from *what* I did. So, I had to learn all over again that it is only the watchful silence of contemplative prayer that brings me to a readiness to hear the deep, inner voice of my Creator—the Spirit of Christ, moving from the hidden depths of my inmost being into every fiber of my life.

I know it was impossible for me to untie the knot of perplexity, apprehension, and anxiety until I owned that I felt that knot in the pit of my stomach and could not get rid of it! It was there morning, noon, and night—and all through the night. It contributed to my chronic insomnia and the need for medications, which didn't always work even though I took them regularly for a long time. Indeed, the medications are a story all by themselves.

You don't want to ask me about the "black box labels" and the possible negative side effects: I experienced them all! My anxiety and depression worsened. It was utter hell. But I found myself with no choice: I needed them as a bridge to heal so I could be "dialed-down" enough to find some relief and rest. My mind and body had to be reintroduced to each other in ways that were so foreign to my "normal" existence. Believe me, it was a *tough* pill to swallow.

My pride was devastated. I had to come to terms with the reality that my problem was not merely in my head but also in

my body. I had to learn all over again how to present my body—and, if you will, how to be present to my body—as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

I had to learn to offer truly spiritual worship so I wouldn't be conformed to the elemental spirits of this world, and so I could experience the transformation of the mind that enables me to prove that which is good, acceptable, and perfect—the will of God! And trust me, beloved, that proving is a process, not a technique—a process of faith, obedience, and patience in suffering.

I am persuaded that most of us pay little to no attention to our fragmentation. We make excuses for it, presuming that grace glosses over it, ignoring the warnings of our own bodies, and running roughshod over many portions of the Sacred Text to justify our failure to be brutally and ruthlessly honest with ourselves and with God. We get locked in a vicious cycle, trapped on a treadmill of sorts, running fast but going nowhere; easily distracted, never maturing; never growing up, never showing up; quoting Bible verses as if we've arrived, all the while we're only amusing ourselves to death!

I began to realize in the middle of my dark season that I had to slow down to the speed of life and to the speed of revelation. I began to acknowledge the hard truths I had tried to ignore for so long. I began to break free of so many unhealthy and ungodly habits because I had been reminded by God's grace that I live this life He has given me in a body that is imperfect and vulnerable, a body that needs to be taken care of and heeded.

Slowing down and paying attention made a world of difference. Thanks to my dream, which was a gift from the Spirit, I realized that the knot in the pit of my stomach would not go away until I was willing to accept its presence and to learn the deep, visceral realities it was endeavoring to show me.

My prayer is that you will give yourself the space to slow down to the speed of life and revelation and listen. I promise, it will be worth it! {eo}

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