



FORMATION PRACTICE: SLOWING

Welcome to The Gift of Slowing this Christmas

This Christmas season, we believe Jesus is inviting us to slow down and practice the formation habit of slowing.

What is slowing?

It is the intentional act of pausing or taking the slow way so you can notice grace and be more attentive to God and others.

Through slowing we build margin into our lives in order to be open to the grace in the present moment. Grace has already been given to us. Jesus' presence is already and always available. But we must slow down and sense it.

Psychologist Bill Gaultiere says, "to live unhurried is not just about the speed at which we're moving, but also about our attitude." Hurry is a symptom of exaggerated self-importance and trying to do too much. Hurry steals from us the precious moment at hand. When we're hurried we miss this encouragement: "Now is the time of God's favor; now is the day of salvation!" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Here's the problem:

Our world wants us to speed up, especially during the Christmas season. We live as if there is a scarcity of goodness and believe we must cram everything into the holidays or we will miss out and not be satisfied.

We invite you to reject this lie and join us in slowing this Christmas Season.





Your Slow Christmas Checklist:

- ▶ Start your morning routine 10 minutes earlier throughout December.
- ▶ Listen to *Menlo Meditations Season 3* every morning to align your heart with God.
- ▶ Entertain the interruptions. When interrupted pause to engage and be present to the person or event interrupting your well-laid plans. Be kind. Be patient.
- ▶ Schedule a do-nothing day in mid-December: This is a day to schedule wasting time. Do this alone, with friends, or with your family. Everyone needs a do-nothing day!
- ▶ Practice a breath pray each time you receive a text message by breathing in and breathing out a 1–2-word prayer. For example: Breath in “Jesus” and breath out “with me.”
- ▶ Schedule a 5-minute break to be with just Jesus on Christmas Day. If it’s appropriate, invite others who will be with you to do the same.
- ▶ Set a date to finish your shopping so you can be finished early and celebrate with a slow meal or drink with friends or family.
- ▶ Seek not to hurry others and say “I’m sorry” if you do.
- ▶ Look people in the eye every day this month so they know you see them, hear them, and value this. Look right at your roommate, coworker, children, spouse, barista, friends, and everyone you encounter.
- ▶ Sit in front of your Christmas Tree each night for at least 5 minutes and reflect on God coming in the flesh (John 1:14). If you don’t have a tree, light a candle.
- ▶ Put reminders on post-its on your mirror, in your kitchen, in your car to think about Jesus throughout the day. Here are some Bible Verses to look up and write down: John 1:14, 3:16-17; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7; Matthew 2:10-12; Galatians 4:4-7; 1 John 1:5-9; Romans 15:13).



Books for Slowing

- ▶ *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* - Adele Calhoun
 - ▶ *Life Without Lack* - Dallas Willard
 - ▶ *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* - John Mark Comer
 - ▶ *Your Best Life in Jesus' Easy Yoke* - Bill Gaultiere
 - ▶ *Slowing Down for Spiritual Growth* - Courtney Joseph
 - ▶ *Scandalous Grace* - Preston Sprinkle
 - ▶ *Gentle and Lowly* - Dane Ortlund
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Media and Short Reads on Slowing

- ▶ PODCAST: *One Handful of Rest* - 14 min
 - ▶ PODCAST: *Gift of Rest* - 13 min
 - ▶ PODCAST: *Menlo Meditations Season 3* - 3-5 min
 - ▶ SHORT READ: *How to Get the Urgent Off Your Back* - Dallas Willard
 - ▶ VIDEO: *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* - 6 min
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Eight Prayers for Slowing

1. Jesus, change my heart
2. Jesus, teach me your way
3. Jesus, teach me about grace
4. Jesus, Your will for me, not mine
5. Have mercy on me, Lord
6. Search my heart, Lord, and reveal what you see
7. Jesus, bless this thing I'm waiting for!
8. Jesus, help me with my (insert big problems that make you anxious)

