

Last week we discussed the benefit of rules as they give us guidelines to live a Godly life and a life with schedules that free us to be proactive. We also discussed gamification which can make things we don't want to do fun and helpful. Some examples of things to practice are: drive the speed limit, stay off of your phone for periods of time, dumb down your smart phone, limit tv time, walk slowly, don't multi-task, and get into the longest line. Have you experienced any of these this week?

Continuing from last week:

**Gamification** - the application of typical elements of game playing (e.g. point scoring, competition with others, rules of play) to other areas of activity, typically as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service.

“Basically, the idea is to turn your personal growth into little games.” Here are some modern-day rules to follow in order to slow you down and make your spiritual journey a game in a fun and proactive way.

**16. Take a regular day alone for silence and solitude.** – Take a full day to be alone once a month. Go out of town where you can be alone or book a room at an abbey where you can read, pray, meditate, listen in silence, and spend time with yourself & God.

**Habakkuk 2:20** – “But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.” Habakkuk was a prophet in Judah who lived possibly between 640 – 598 BC during the reign of Josiah and the attack by the Babylonians on Jerusalem. His scripture is known for it's “wrestling with God” theme and his confession. What do you think Habakkuk is telling us when he says, “be silent before him.” Why would we be silent before God?

**17. Take up journaling.** – “The slow and cathartic act of writing your life down is grounding, a tether for the soul in the hurricane of the modern world.” Writing your thoughts down during your alone time helps you get an outside perspective on your life. “The point is to slow down long enough to observe your life from the outside.” Do you keep a journal now or ever considered starting one? Have you ever thought of the books of the Bible as being journals of God's people?

**18. Experiment with mindfulness and meditation.** – “Mindfulness is just silence and solitude for a secular society.” “You don't just empty your mind, but you fill your mind with Scripture, with truth, with the voice of the Holy Spirit.”

**Mark 1:35** – “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”

**Mark 6:46** – “After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.”

**Luke 5:16** – “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

**Luke 6:12** – “One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.”

**19. If you can, take long vacations.** – Taking short vacations like a long weekend can often make you more tired than restful. It takes a while for you to slow down and get into a vacation pace. 14% of Americans take a vacation that last over 2 weeks and 37% take fewer than 7 days off per year. Happiness levels peak on day 8 of a vacation. Israel had 3 festival holidays per year lasting 8 days each. What would be your ideal vacation and how long do you think you could stay away?

What vacations do you usually take and which have been your favorite?

**20. Cook your own food. And eat it.** – Real food takes time. Don't rely on fast food. Spend time together at the table. Some of the best moment for a family are around the table. Can you spend time with your love ones around a meal or plan to do so if you have a family of your own some day? Were you raised like this or is this something you have to start?

**The Heart** – “There's more to life than an increase in speed. Life is right under our noses, waiting to be enjoyed. We must ruthlessly eliminate hurry, and that's best done gamefully.”

**Matt. 11:28-30** – Jesus said: **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,”**

What is Jesus saying here? What is Jesus telling us to do and how are we to do it?

**“and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”**

Why does Jesus mention “rest” in this scripture? Why do we need rest? Rest from what?

**“For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”**

What does Jesus mean here about having an easy yoke and a light burden? What is he comparing his way of living to?

What is the alternative to living by way of Jesus's yoke?

**1 Theth. 4:11** – Paul wrote: “Make it your ambition lead a quiet life,…”

What is a “quiet life” in our modern day? How does slowing down and eliminating hurry in your life lead to a quiet life?