

THE SPIRITUAL SOLUTION

Week #2 of the 3-Week Series, "The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry"

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So how many people feel like you never have enough time to do all the things you want to do? How many people? So, what if I could magically give you four or five more hours per day? What if a day -- it's like 24 hours -- it'd be like 28 hours. How many people feel that more time would definitely help you get all you need done and you wouldn't be rushing as much? How many people believe that?

How many people believe, even if I gave you eight hours more a day, you'd still be busy, still exhausted, and still doing a lot?

You know, it seems obvious that the solution to hurrying and rushing and not having enough time would be more time, but it's not! Because time is not the problem. *We* are, really. How many people know that you could use your time more efficiently and effectively than you're currently using it now? You know, Benjamin Franklin said, "*Do not squander your time, for time is the stuff that life is made of.*"

So, we are continuing with Week #2 in our three-week series inspired by a fabulous book entitled *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. And the author, John Mark Comer, says that hurry is an epidemic. Hurry is more harmful to our health, our happiness, and our relationships than we realize, because hurry is this mindset of urgency. Putting pressure on ourselves of having to get done; thinking busy is always better. And always in a rush to get all these things done. The constant daily pressure of hurry is harmful.

And it is especially the great enemy of our spiritual life, because it disconnects us spiritually; it drains us emotionally; and distracts us mentally.

Last week we talked about three things. The **awareness** is the way to begin. Eckhart Tolle says the only way to change and transform something is to be aware of what isn't working, and what isn't going well by asking ourselves the question of: Where am I always in a hurry? Why am I always busy in this area? And what kind of impact is being in a hurry all the time affecting my health, my peace of mind, my happiness, and my work life?

The second thing we talked about was also the power of **intention**: have an intention to live a life without hurry. To have an intention of living a life of ease and grace.

"I choose to live my life with ease and grace."

Together: [with congregants] "*I choose to live my life with ease and grace.*" Take a deep breath into that and feel how much more relaxed life can be.

"Centered in God, I do all things calmly, efficiently and joyously."

Together: [with congregants] "*Centered in God, I do all things calmly, efficiently and joyously.*" Take a deep breath.

And the last thing we talked about was **reducing the distractions**. We are a distracted culture. And we have got so many toys! I mean, iPhones and the internet and social media, television, that distract us over and over again. And that robs us from feeling a spiritual connection. So, the assignment was to turn off your phone, your cell phone or television or social media for 24 hours. How many people did it? Only two people did it in the last service. Anybody? Apparently, it's one for this service! [Laughs] Or two.

And the thing is: it's tough, all these attractions, but we need to begin. If we are serious to have a deeper spiritual life, we have to learn how to reduce the distractions.

Today, we're going to go a little further in looking for solutions in the process of living an unhurried life.

So let me ask you: Is there an area in your life that isn't working as well as you'd like? Anybody have an area in life that isn't as happy or as fulfilling? An area where you might feel stuck or frustrated?

There's a business saying that says every system is perfectly designed to get the result it gets. [Laughs] Now this is for widgets and bottom lines, but I think it's about life, too! That whatever results that we are getting, it is because of our system -- our thoughts, our intentions, our ideas, our actions. Our system is creating that. And if we aren't getting the results we want, it means that the system we have is a bit out of whack or out of kilter. It's not clicking and we need to get it back in whack or get it back on track.

You know, that definition that they say of insanity -- doing the same thing over and over again and expecting or hoping to get different? So, the fact is: in our lives, we have similar patterns to repeat themselves. You know, the same arguments, the same financial trouble, the same level of dissatisfaction. And we end up not doing anything differently. You know, not changing our system; not changing our beliefs; not changing or letting things go that we're holding on to.

Lee Lococca said, "*If you want to make good use of your time, you've got to know what's important to you.*" And so my question for you is: What's important to you? What matters to you? What are your top priorities? What are your goals and dreams? What are your values?

Because the truth is that we will not be able to use our time well until we know what is important to us, and aligning our time with those things that are important to us. To live a life without hurry means to calmly, effectively and joyously do that which matters. So, to use our time best, we need to know what's important. And to not live with hurry, we need to know what really matters.

You know, John Mark Comer is saying for all of us to eliminate hurry in our lives, we need to develop a strong spiritual system -- a strong spiritual foundation and practice and structure -- if we want to get the results we want to get in life.

Jesus in Matthew 11, Verse 28-30 says, "*Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*"

And so, basically, Jesus is saying to everyone that's exhausted, to everyone that feels like a hamster on the wheel, for everyone who feels burnt out: "*Come to me and I will give you rest. Come to me and I'll show you how to slow down and know what really matters. I will give you peace, and I will shoulder with you the burdens and the weight of life with ease. I will show you a new way. I will show you a better way.*"

And so, you know, our lives, the level of happiness, our level of success, really is a product of our lifestyle; a product of the system that we have; the mindsets that we have. And Jesus in this is really inviting us into a deeper spiritual system; into a deeper spiritual lifestyle.

Again, John Mark Comer says:

"An easy life is a myth. Life is hard, full stop. All wise men and women of history have said as much. There is no escaping pain. People all over the world, outside church and inside church, are looking for an escape; a way out of the crushing weight of life this side of Eden. But there is no escaping. That's why Jesus doesn't offer an escape. He offers something far better: 'equipment.'"

Or I would say spiritual practices. A system.

"He offers his apprentices a whole new way of life to bear the weight of our humanity: with ease. At his side, like two oxen in a field, tied shoulder to shoulder, with Jesus doing the heavy lifting, at his

pace, Slow, unhurried, present to the moment, full of love and joy and peace. An easy life isn't an option; an easy yoke is."

And by yoke, meaning our ability to shoulder the heaviness and the of the experiences of life.

So, this morning I just want to share with you three more ways that we can apply to help us live an unhurried life.

And the first is to **CREATE A STRUCTURE AND A SCHEDULE OF OUR PRIORITIES**. John Maxwell said, *"If you want to change your life, change your priorities."* That if our lives aren't working -- if things aren't improving -- we need to ask ourselves, based on what our priorities are right now, the Dr. Phil question: How's that working for you?

And so, are there some priorities in your life that might need to shift? That some that have not been our priorities might need to become one, and the ones that we have been focused on might need to be lowered and changed.

You know, monastic orders do something called "the rule of life." And the rule of life is a schedule or a structure of set practices that the order has to live around in a way that Jesus lived in a communal living. You know, it is a way to really focus on what matters and not get distracted by life. It is a way of slowing down and focusing on our priorities.

And so, those monastic orders would have the rule of life -- the structure -- and it would be: prayer is structured and timed. Work is. You know: service, community time, eating. It's all structured to hit the highest priority -- prayer and their spiritual practices -- and then build other things around it. But to create that level of structure to help support us in deepening our practice; to help support us in not saying, *"Oh, I was just too busy to pray today."* To actually have it as a part of our calendar, have as a part of our daily activities.

How many people have a calendar with all your activities on it? And how many people have a calendar with all your spiritual practices on it? Any? A couple of people. We say how important it is, but it doesn't really make its way on our calendar. On the things that we say we're going to do: this and this and this today. There are appointments; there's work; there are meetings that we will always have.

But when it comes to our spiritual life, are we scheduling? Are we creating structure? And are we committing ourselves to certain practice on a regular routine in our daily lives? And so those are the things that they would structure first and *then* add in the other things like and including sleep, exercise, work, play, and reading. All the important things -- the priorities of life -- get scheduled and created in our brain: *"This is important stuff for me."*

You know, Jesus had a committed schedule in his mind and in his life of doing his spiritual practice on a regular, consistent basis every single day. And he's inviting us all into that same practice; all into that same commitment and dedication and daily programming for our spiritual lives.

You know, the rule of life is that structure for all of us to follow of our priorities. Interestingly, the word "rule" from the Latin means a straight piece of wood or a trellis. And do you remember in John 15, when Jesus was talking about abiding on the vine? And so, what he is saying in this is: that to have a really good vine, you need to have a good trellis. That the trellis supports the vine and allows it to grow and to bear fruit. And so, for us to have good wine or grapes, we need a good vine. And to have a good vine, you need a trellis for the vine and the structure to grow. You know, without a trellis, a vine would die.

And so, with this structure: if we don't have one, that we absolutely limit our spiritual potential. We limit the level of joy and peace that we can have and experience in our lives.

How many people would agree that there's at least maybe one or two errors in your life where a little structure and order might help improve things for you? And so, this is the invitation for all of us, except on our spiritual life: with the spiritual life being the focus.

And we immediately think, *"Oh my God, that's too much time. I can't commit all that. That's just great."* You know, it's to say, *"Before my coffee, I'll do ten minutes of meditation."* *"At lunch, before I eat, I will have two minutes of silence."* *"In the afternoon, I will do 10 affirmations. In the evening, I will listen to a guided meditation and read the "Daily Word."*

It is much simpler than we think! The question is: Are we committed to creating a schedule and a set of practices that we will commit to, just like we would do for work? Just like we would do for meetings? Just like we would do for all sorts of different appointments?

And again, we say, *"Oh, it'll take so much time!"* You know what? We've got the time. You know how many hours a day we watch TV or are on social network? I mean, over five hours a day we do that stuff! We have time. I love John Mark Comer; he says, *"We need to seek the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of entertainment."* [Laughs]

We love to get distracted! Do you know there was a survey they did, and they said 77% of young adults, when something isn't occupying their mind, grab and reach for their phones. Bored for a minute; grab the phone. Could you imagine if 77% of the time if you were bored, we thought about God? Or we thought about a quick little meditation? Heck; not even 77! If we could get seven, we would be further ahead!

I mean, are you willing to commit to create a schedule of your spiritual practices like the rule of life that the monastic orders do? Are we willing to make that commitment the same way Jesus had his consistent commitment to his personal prayer life and spiritual practice? Are we willing to do that?

And then the the second thing I want to talk about is **THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE**. Nobody likes discipline, but discipline is so valuable and important. How many people would agree that, if you were a little bit more disciplined, it would make key difference in at least some areas of your life? Absolutely! Every single one of us.

Discipline really is the bridge between goals and accomplishments. Everyone can have goals, but it takes discipline and dedication and consistent work for us to accomplish, complete and achieve the things that we want to in our lives. It takes action -- consistently doing the right things, even when we don't feel like doing them -- that gets us to higher levels of achievement in all areas.

You know, the fact is: the more disciplined we become, the easier our life gets. The more disciplined we become, the better our lives get. Again, we think discipline is onerous; it's like a punishment; it's so hard. You know immediately we think: *"Discipline ... I have to do all that? Just, like, maybe I don't want this as much as I thought."* And the truth is: we all deserve it. We just have to get over our own thing about thinking discipline is bad!

You know, discipline is our ability to do something on a consistent basis and get something we currently don't have. So, let's say I want to get stronger. I would have a discipline of maybe doing five push-ups a day; then move it to 10 push-ups; and 15 push-ups; 25; 50; up to 100, or whatever it is. And then I'd be stronger! It is that discipline which actually gave me access to more power. It gave me access to more ability and capability.

So that is what discipline is! Is when we discipline, we are accessing and calling forth more power for ourselves! More benefits, more options for us living a full life. That's what it is! We need to shift our

mindset: it's not a bad thing! It's a good thing; it's an important thing, and a valuable thing to exercise our discipline.

And then the thing about *spiritual* discipline that's even better is that, when we practice our meditation or our silence on a consistent basis, what happens is we become more disciplined. You know, we become more strong. We have better concentration and focus. But we also open ourselves to a Higher Power to move through us. We not only bring more peace and love and joy, but more ideas; more wisdom; more creativity. Depths of knowledge and wisdom and genius from Spirit begin to flow through us, because we were willing to take the discipline to quiet our minds; the discipline to turn within.

The amount of benefits we get with the discipline of spiritual practice is so much more significant than we realize! We are underselling ourselves so much by not utilizing this incredible gift of spiritual practice and spiritual discipline.

And Jesus: his discipline was so amazing! He said, *"The Father and I are one."* He achieved the Christ consciousness! And when he says, *"My yoke is easy"* ... his yoke is easy because he's always turning to God! He's always surrendering to God; seeking God; listening to God; tuning in to God. He knew the answer to bearing the burdens and the challenges and the pain of life: turn to Spirit; seek a greater oneness and awareness of the living Spirit of God. But it requires spiritual discipline to get to that level.

And the last thing I want to share is the first of the four spiritual practices the book says to help us live an unhurried life. I'll do the last three next week. But the first one -- and the most important one -- is something you might have heard before ... and that is **SILENCE AND SOLITUDE**.

It is the greatest and the most important spiritual practice. And some of you are probably thinking, *"Every week the guy keeps mentioning and saying ..."* You know why? Because every week it's always going to be the most powerful practice and the greatest thing we could do to help our lives!

We have the ability to tap into the Genius that created the sun and the earth and the stars, and every cell of our body, and created this amazing world! We have the ability to tap into it by being still. By listening. By opening our hearts. By surrendering. By going deep within ourselves and just opening our hearts. It is incredible how much power there is in silence! How much power there is in solitude.

Jesus said ... It said in Mark 1: *"Very early in the morning, while it was dark, Jesus got up and left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."*

Mark 6: *"Come with me by yourself to a quiet place and get some rest."*

Jesus often and consistently prayed in a quiet place; a solitary place. The Bible mentions at least nine times; it's repeated over and over again. Quiet is a spiritual discipline. Quiet is a kind of emotional balm that heals us and it opens us up to a greater spiritual life.

You know how powerful silence and solitude is? John Mark Comer says a really interesting thing. Remember when Jesus was baptized, and it said then Jesus was led by Spirit to the desert to be tempted by the devil? Here's what [Comer] says about the importance of silence and solitude in that role of temptation and difficulty. He says, *"Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness because it was there and only there that Jesus was at the height of his spiritual powers. It was only after a month and a half of prayer and fasting in the quiet place that he had the capacity to take on the devil himself and walk away unscathed."*

And so, what he's saying is that that most difficult time, he needed to be in silence and solitude. Because it is in the silence and solitude he was able to connect with the greatest power within himself. It is that silence and solitude we all need. If we're serious and want to get better results -- if we want to feel

deeper levels of beaming and connection and joy in our lives -- the truth is: solitude and silence is an inside job. No one can do it for us. No one can go there for us. And we're all being invited to go deeper.

Henri Nouwen said, *"Without solitude, it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. We do not take the spiritual life seriously if we do not set aside some time to be with God and listen to Him."* He's saying it's not possible to live a spiritual life unless there's solitude and silence. And if we are not taking time consistently, regularly, to be with God, then we're really not taking the spiritual life seriously.

But if we do, we will get to that place where we see God all around us, aware that we are truly one with each other, with God, and with the world. It is to be able to acknowledge God in every single thing we do, whether it's the laundry or whether it's going out for a walk. We feel that connection; that One is so much, it radiates through every single thing that we do, and we are connected to it.

And what happens? The more time we are centered in God, connected in God, the less we are attracted to the drug of hurry. And the more aware and centered and grounded we will be in all that we do.

Do you know that the more in demand Jesus was, the busier he was, the more he went to the quiet place; the more he prayed; the more he was still?

A doctor starts up a practice in a quiet town and decides to challenge himself and puts out a sign that says, *"I will cure any sickness for only \$100, but if I can't, I'll pay \$500."*

The town's cynic named Fred thought, "Oh, I can trick this guy. I'll make 500 bucks easy." So the next day he goes to the doctor and he says, "Doctor, I have lost my sense of taste. I can't taste anything."

The doctor thinks for a second; he said, "Well, what I think you need is Vial #43." He leaves for a moment, comes back, puts two drops from Vial #43 on the tongue of Fred, and he immediately makes a face and spits it out.

He said, "Oh, this is the nastiest, most disgusting thing I ever tasted." [Congregants laugh]

The doctor smiles and says, "You're cured. That'll be \$100." [Congregants laugh]

But Fred comes back the next day and he says, "Doc, I think I've lost my memory. I can't remember anything."

Doctor says, "No problem." He says, "Well, I think you need is Vial #43." [Congregants laugh]

And Fred said, "That's the nasty thing you gave me yesterday."

And the doctor smiles and says, "You're cured. That'll be \$100." [Congregants laugh]

But I tell you, this Fred; he's persistent. He comes back the third day; thinks he's got the thing that will fool the doctor. He says, "Doc, I think I lost my sight. I can't see anything. I can't recognize and can't see."

And the doctor ponders and he said, "Well, Fred, you know, it seems like I can't help you. So I'll just give you your money back." So he goes to the cash register and the doctor pulls out five ones and he gives it to Fred.

Fred said, "Hey, that's only five bucks."

The doctor smiles and says, "You're cured. That'll be \$100." [Congregants laugh] Alright.

You know, our culture truly, truly suffers from pathological busyness. Because I think we've all sold ourselves a story that you have to be busy to be happy and successful. And not that we don't have time to be busy and do work, but we have taken it way to the extreme that it's causing us harm in our own health, our own relationships, our own level of fulfillment. And it prevents us from going deeper spiritually.

So, the three things we can work on this week to help ourselves not lose such a busy, hurried life is to create structure and a schedule and make priorities of our spiritual practices. Are you willing to put that in there before you have coffee? A little ... maybe read the *Daily Word*? You know, are you willing, before you eat, to have a time of silence? You know, are you willing to put some spiritual practices in the course of your day and be committed -- like you are committed to your work appointments? Because this is your spiritual life: the most important priority in life.

The second thing is practice discipline. Know that discipline is a great thing; you are accessing more power; accessing more capability from within you!

And then the third one is silence and solitude. It is the most powerful thing you could do for improving any area of your life.

You know, the best way to eliminate hurry is to use a powerful solution. It's to use the *most effective* solution, which means to use a spiritual solution. God bless you all!

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