



How to Slow Down in a Fast-Paced World

Introduction

Modern life often feels like a race against the clock. Many of us juggle work, family, and constant digital connectivity, barely pausing to catch our breath. Surveys confirm this relentless pace: nearly half of employees worldwide say their workloads have increased significantly in just the past year, and over half feel changes at work are happening *too* quickly ¹. Likewise, a majority of Americans report being busier each year than the last, feeling trapped in a constant “time crunch” ². This chronic rush isn’t just an inconvenience—it’s taking a toll on our well-being. Psychologists even have a name for it: **hurry sickness**, a pattern of continual rushing and anxiousness, often accompanied by irritability and a sense of urgency for no apparent reason ³.

The costs of living at breakneck speed are high. Physically, our bodies react to perpetual stress by pumping out stress hormones and keeping us in “fight or flight” mode. Blood pressure stays elevated, hearts overwork, and tension builds in our muscles. Over time, **continual stress can literally “wear out” the body**, contributing to fatigue, headaches, insomnia, and weakened immunity ⁴. Emotionally, a hurried life breeds anxiety, impatience, and burnout. *“We can try to sustain living at breakneck speed, but sooner or later, we fall apart,”* writes one psychologist, noting that our minds and bodies were never meant to endure unending stress ⁴. Research has even found that in cities with the fastest pace of life, rates of heart disease are the highest, linking chronic hurry to serious health risks ⁵. In short, a fast-paced world may promise productivity and success, but it often delivers exhaustion and illness instead.

For Christians, there’s an even deeper concern: **what does constant hurry do to our soul and our relationship with God?** Dallas Willard, a respected Christian philosopher, once called hurry *“the great enemy of spiritual life in our day.”* His advice was blunt: *“You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.”* When a mentee asked if there was anything else, Willard responded, *“There is nothing else. Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day.”* ⁶ In our rush, we risk missing the voice of God and the simple joys He gives. We may find ourselves doing more for God, but **being** less with God. A hurried heart has little room for the **“love, joy, and peace”** that mark a deep relationship with Jesus (Galatians 5:22).

The good news is that God offers us a better way. Scripture and science agree: slowing down is not only possible, it’s essential for a healthy, joyful life. In this article, we’ll explore **how to slow down in a fast-paced world** – drawing on biblical wisdom, pastoral insights, and even neurological research. We’ll see why slowing down matters, how it can be done through practical steps (from Sabbath rest to deep breathing), and how modern tools like therapy or medication can play a supportive role. By embracing God’s design for rest and using proven tools for stress relief, you can break free from the burnout cycle and rediscover a life of **peace** and **purpose**.



The Pressure to Hurry and Its Costs

Why are we always in a rush? From an early age, we're taught that being busy equals being successful. Our culture prizes productivity – more accomplishments, more output, more hustle. We often tie our self-worth to how much we can get done. This “hurry culture” drives us to cram our schedules and multi-task constantly. As one church leader observed, *“From a young age, we are taught that our worth is tied to our performance and how much we can accomplish.”* This relentless pursuit of productivity creates a baseline of stress and anxiety ⁷ ⁸. We start believing that slowing down is slacking off, and rest must be “earned” (and rarely is).

However, **the human body and mind have limits**. God did not create us as machines for ceaseless output. The physical manifestations of chronic stress are warning lights: tension headaches, chest pain, fatigue, irritability, insomnia, and frequent colds or illnesses. Emotionally, constant rush can lead to anxiety and depression. As one Christian counselor noted, *“Stress manifests in headaches, muscle tension, chest pain, fatigue, and sleep problems. Emotionally it leads to anxiety, irritability, and even depression. These symptoms indicate we are not living as God intended. We were not created to manage such high levels of stress.”* ⁹ When we notice these signs, it's a clear indication that something is out of balance. We're exceeding the healthy limits God set for us.

Tragically, the very technologies and conveniences that promised to *save* us time often end up *stealing* it. We live in an age of astonishing technological speed: instant communication, information at our fingertips, endless entertainment on demand. Yet rather than feeling more relaxed, we feel more hurried. Smartphones are a perfect example. The average person touches their phone **2,617 times per day** (taps, swipes, clicks) according to a study by the research firm Dscout ¹⁰. We spend about 2.5 hours a day on our phones over 76 sessions ¹¹ ¹² – essentially fragmenting our attention from waking to bedtime. We've gained the ability to connect with anyone or do anything in seconds, but lost the **“spare time”** and quiet moments that earlier generations enjoyed ¹³. Instead of using freed-up time to rest, we fill it with more tasks, scrolling, and stimuli. The result is a pervasive feeling of being hurried and distracted, even during what should be leisure or family time. (Think of families sitting together, each staring at a screen – physically present but mentally elsewhere.) Our always-on lifestyle leaves us *“with no leisure even to eat,”* as the Gospel of Mark describes the busy disciples (Mark 6:31).

Ultimately, living in perpetual hurry exacts a spiritual toll. When our days are **“highly demanding, exhausting, and chaotic”** ¹, we struggle to hear God's gentle whisper. Joy and peace in Christ are replaced by frantic activity and worldly worry. We might resemble Martha, “anxious and troubled about many things,” rather than Mary, who sat quietly at Jesus' feet to listen (Luke 10:38–42). The pace of life can crowd out prayer, scripture, and fellowship – the very rhythms that sustain our souls. In the words of Corrie ten Boom, *“If the devil can't make you sin, he'll make you busy.”* Hurry is a thief that steals the best of what God has for us.

But it doesn't have to be this way. To reclaim a life of balance and faith, we need to recognize the costs of hurry and then make a countercultural choice: the choice to slow down. That decision is not easy – it may even feel impossible in our circumstances – yet it is one that God invites us to make, and He promises to help us in it. Before looking at practical solutions, let's consider the biblical foundation for a slower, more peaceful pace of life.



Biblical Insights on Rest and Stillness

Scripture speaks frequently about the importance of rest, stillness, and trusting God's timing. In fact, **rest is one of the first things God calls "holy."** In the creation account, God worked for six days and then *"rested on the seventh day"* (Genesis 2:2-3). He didn't *need* to rest, but He set a pattern for us – a rhythm of work and renewal. Later, when God gave the Ten Commandments, He included a command to rest: *"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work."* (Exodus 20:9-10). This wasn't just a suggestion for a day off; it was a divine mandate. The Sabbath principle taught Israel that they were **not slaves anymore** – not in Egypt and not to their own work. They had been delivered from a culture of unrelenting labor (making bricks for Pharaoh) and brought into a relationship with God where their worth was not measured by production ¹⁴. By resting every seventh day, they declared, "We trust God to provide for us, even if we stop working." The Sabbath was an act of faith and a gift of grace.

Jesus reinforced the heart of the Sabbath when He said, *"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath"* (Mark 2:27). God designed rest for our benefit – to restore us and refocus us on Him. It's not about legalistically doing nothing; it's about **worship and renewal**. In the Gospels, we see Jesus Himself modeling a life that balances action with solitude and rest. Yes, Jesus was often busy with ministry, teaching and healing from dawn to dusk. Yet He **never appeared hurried**. He moved through life with a sense of peace and purpose, always responding to interruptions with love. The Gospel of Luke notes, *"Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed"* (Luke 5:16). In the midst of great crowds and needs, Jesus would slip away early in the morning to be alone with His Father (Mark 1:35). He also encouraged His disciples to step away from the crush of work: *"And [Jesus] said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat."* (Mark 6:31 ESV). Imagine that – even when there was urgent ministry to do and people lining up for help, Jesus said: *Stop. It's time to rest.*

Jesus understood that our souls require regular stillness with God. He enjoyed unrushed meals with friends; He took long walks; He even slept in the middle of a storm on the Sea of Galilee. Far from condemning rest, Jesus modeled it. As one author put it, *"If you want to experience the life of Jesus, you have to adopt the lifestyle of Jesus."* ¹⁵ And Jesus' lifestyle included margin, silence, and Sabbath. He knew that doing the Father's will was a marathon, not a sprint, and that intimacy with God is nurtured in quiet, unhurried moments.

One of the most beautiful invitations in Scripture comes from Jesus regarding our hurried, burdened lives: **"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."** (Matthew 11:28). He continues, *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me... and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* (Matthew 11:29-30). In Christ, rest is more than just physical relaxation – it is *rest for your soul*. It's the deep relief of knowing you are loved apart from your performance. It's the peace that comes from handing over your worries and to-do lists to God, and trusting Him with the outcomes. Jesus contrasts the heavy burdens we tend to heap on ourselves (or that others heap on us) with the lighter burden of living in God's grace. He doesn't call us to laziness or irresponsibility, but to a pace of life that is sustainable and rooted in trust.

Biblical rest, therefore, is not merely taking a day off so you can work harder tomorrow. It's a *state of heart* that persists even as you go about your day. One pastoral article described biblical rest as *"a state of being that stays with us throughout the day... finding peace and contentment in God, regardless of our circumstances."* Such rest is *"deeply tied to trust in God and understanding that our worth is not based on our productivity."* ¹⁶ In other words, true rest comes when we fully believe that God is God and we are not. *"Be still, and know that*



I am God,” Psalm 46:10 urges. Stillness (literally, “cease striving”) is an act of acknowledging God’s sovereignty. When we pause our constant doing, we remember that the world keeps turning because **He** sustains it, not us. This injects sanity back into our lives – we realize we don’t have to play savior of the universe. We have a Savior already, and He invites us into His rest (Hebrews 4:9-10).

Importantly, embracing biblical rest may require us to confront some idols of our culture and our hearts. The first of the Ten Commandments is *“You shall have no other gods before me.”* In a hurried life, **productivity, success, or people-pleasing can become false gods**. We sacrifice our health, relationships, and time with God on their altars. But God gently calls us to lay those idols down. Our value comes from being His beloved children, not from how much we achieve. When we really believe that, we are freed to slow down. We no longer live under the tyranny of proving ourselves. We can say “no” to some opportunities, “off” to our devices, and “yes” to the quiet whispers of the Holy Spirit. As the Psalmist wrote, *“In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for He grants sleep to those He loves”* (Psalm 127:2 NIV). God *wants* to give us rest. It’s a gift wrapped in love.

The Science of Slowing Down: Your Brain and Body on Rest

It’s fascinating to see how modern science echoes these ancient truths about rest. Our bodies and brains are literally wired for rhythms of activity and recovery. When we live in chronic stress, we override those natural rhythms – and consequences follow. Understanding a bit of the **neuroscience and physiology** of stress can motivate us to prioritize slowing down.

When you perceive constant pressure (deadlines, traffic, an overflowing inbox, etc.), your body activates the **sympathetic nervous system**, often called the “fight or flight” response. Your heart rate and blood pressure go up, stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline flood your system, and your body stays in a state of high alert. This response is great for short-term emergencies, but it’s not meant to be **continuous**. If the stress response stays stuck “on,” it wreaks havoc on your health. Chronic activation of fight-or-flight leads to what researchers call *allostatic load* – basically, wear and tear on your organs and brain from being in overdrive too long ¹⁷ ¹⁸. Over time, this contributes to conditions like hypertension, heart disease, anxiety disorders, depression, and even memory problems. It’s telling that anxiety and chronic stress are associated with increased risk of a host of issues, from metabolic disorders to immune dysfunction ¹⁷. Living in hurry is literally **hazardous** to your health.

In contrast, when we intentionally slow down or practice relaxation, we engage the **parasympathetic nervous system** – the “rest and digest” mode of our body. This is the state in which we recover, heal, and recharge. Techniques as simple as slow, deep breathing can trigger this calming system. Medical research shows that *“effective breathing interventions support greater parasympathetic tone, which can counterbalance the high sympathetic activity intrinsic to stress and anxiety.”* ¹⁹ In other words, **deep breathing physically shifts your body out of fight-or-flight** and into a calmer gear. Your heart rate slows, blood pressure lowers, digestion improves, and your brain receives a signal that it’s safe to relax. Over time, regularly activating the relaxation response can reduce baseline stress levels and improve resilience to future stressors. God designed our bodies with this wonderful capacity to unwind – but we have to pause and allow it to happen!

Chronic hurry also impacts the brain. When we are perpetually scattered and rushed, our brain’s neural pathways actually adapt to that norm. We can become conditioned to jump from task to task, craving constant stimulation (ever feel “bored” in silence?). This makes stillness and focus more difficult. However,

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the brain also has the ability to rewire itself – a concept known as **neuroplasticity**. If we repeatedly practice slowing down and refocusing, we can carve new “paths” in our brain that make a calmer state more natural. One psychiatrist explained that negative thought patterns (like anxious ruminations) cut deep “ruts” in the brain over time, making it easier to fall into those ruts. But by intentionally doing things like reframing our thoughts, practicing gratitude, or meditating on Scripture, we can begin to fill in those ruts and form healthier pathways ²⁰ ²¹. It’s encouraging to know that even if you currently feel addicted to busyness, your brain can learn a new way.

Speaking of gratitude, research in positive psychology has highlighted it as one of the simplest yet most powerful ways to improve mental and emotional health. Slowing down often goes hand-in-hand with noticing blessings and giving thanks. Scientific studies consistently show that **gratitude can lower stress, improve sleep, and boost overall happiness** ²². In fact, a recent review of multiple studies found that people who regularly count their blessings experience **better emotional well-being, better relationships, lower rates of depression, and even favorable markers of physical health** (like healthier heart rates and blood pressure) ²². One long-term study of 70,000 women even found that those with the highest gratitude scores had a significantly lower risk of dying in the follow-up period, suggesting gratitude might lengthen life by protecting health ²³ ²⁴. It appears that a thankful, slowed-down heart actually benefits your body chemistry – perhaps by reducing toxic stress and promoting a more positive mindset. Of course, as Christians we know gratitude is commanded in Scripture (“*Give thanks in all circumstances,*” 1 Thess. 5:18), and now we see how wise that command is for our health.

Finally, from a **clinical psychology** perspective, there is evidence that incorporating rhythms of rest can help prevent burnout and mental fatigue. For instance, one international workforce survey found that employees who felt able to disconnect from work (i.e. not constantly tethered to email after hours) had much better well-being than those who didn’t ²⁵. Many therapists encourage setting boundaries on work hours and technology as part of stress management. Even short breaks during the day – a brief walk, a five-minute meditation, or prayer – can reset your mood and improve concentration when you return to tasks. In fact, working without breaks is counterproductive: our attention and performance decline when we’re fatigued or overwhelmed. By contrast, regular pauses **enhance** productivity by refreshing our mind. This aligns with God’s design that we work **from** rest, not until we collapse.

In summary, science affirms what Scripture has long taught: “*a heart at peace gives life to the body*” (Prov. 14:30). Slowing down is not just some nostalgic ideal; it has measurable benefits for our nervous system, brain function, and emotional health. It positions us to live in a healthier equilibrium. In the next section, we will look at practical strategies – both spiritual and practical – that can help us step off the treadmill of hurry. These tools are **clinically backed** and, more importantly, aligned with biblical principles for living a fruitful, joyful life.

Practical Strategies to Slow Down

Slowing down in a fast-paced world **will not happen by accident** – it requires intentional choices and habits. The following are practical strategies, grounded in both Scripture and scientific research, that can help you cultivate a slower, more meaningful pace of life. You don’t have to implement everything at once;



even one or two small changes can make a big difference over time. As you read these, ask the Holy Spirit to highlight which practices could benefit you the most right now.

- **Honor the Sabbath – Schedule Regular Rest:** One of the most countercultural (and biblical) things you can do is establish a rhythm of *Sabbath* in your life. This means setting aside one day a week for rest, worship, and activities that refresh you. Guard it as a sacred appointment with God and family. Use that day to **cease** from your work and hustling. This might involve turning off email notifications, letting chores wait, and doing things that nourish your soul (prayer, reading, leisurely time in nature, quality time with loved ones). Jesus practiced the Sabbath and reminded us it's made for our benefit (Mark 2:27). Think of Sabbath as a weekly reset for your body and soul – a day to realign with God's grace. If a full day is too challenging at first, start with a half-day or an evening dedicated to rest. Remember, **rest is a command and a gift**, not a reward for finishing your to-do list. When you honor the Sabbath, you are trusting God to take care of what you *don't* accomplish in that time. Remarkably, many people find that observing a Sabbath makes them *more* productive on the other days because they are rejuvenated and focused. As an old Jewish proverb says, "More than Israel kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath kept Israel." Let God's gift of rest keep you.
- **Start Your Day with Quiet Time (Prayer & Scripture):** How you begin the morning sets the tone for the day. Instead of immediately checking news or jumping into tasks, try to spend the first minutes of your day in **quiet communion with God**. This could be reading a passage of Scripture, writing in a prayer journal, or simply sitting in silence with a cup of coffee, offering the day to God. Jesus modeled this by rising early to pray in solitary places (Mark 1:35). This practice isn't about legalism; it's about anchoring your mind before the chaos hits. Even 10-15 minutes of unhurried prayer can significantly reduce anxiety and help you feel centered. Neuroscience shows that regular prayer and meditation can actually lower stress reactivity in the brain and strengthen areas associated with focus and compassion. If your mornings are hectic (e.g. busy parent life), consider if you can wake up a bit earlier or find a pocket of calm later in the day. Protect that quiet time fiercely – make it a non-negotiable part of your routine. Over time, you'll likely notice that this "appointment with God" becomes the wellspring of peace that carries you through even the busiest schedules.
- **Practice Deep Breathing and Stillness Breaks:** When stress hits during the day, one of the simplest **tools** to slow down your body and mind is your breath. Taking slow, deep breaths (inhaling through your nose for a count of 4, filling your belly, and exhaling through your mouth for a count of 6-8) activates your parasympathetic nervous system, which tells your brain it's okay to relax ¹⁹. Try incorporating short breathing exercises at natural transition points in your day – for example, before you answer a batch of emails, after a meeting, or in the car before you walk into the house after work. Even a few minutes of diaphragmatic breathing can noticeably decrease tension and clear your mind. Some people find it helpful to visualize breathing in God's peace and breathing out their worries, or to repeat a brief scripture as a breath prayer (e.g., inhale "Be still," exhale "and know that I am God" from Psalm 46:10). These mini rest stops during the day prevent stress from accumulating. Research has shown that just 5-10 minutes of daily slow breathing can improve heart rate, blood pressure, and anxiety levels ²⁶. In addition to breathing, give yourself permission to be still at least once a day. You might sit on your porch and watch the birds, or close your office door and listen to a worship song, or take a slow walk without your phone. Think of these as spiritual "selah" moments – pauses to reset your rhythm and remember that God is with you in the present.



- **Limit Digital Distractions (Create Tech-Free Spaces):** Our smartphones, computers, and TVs often drive us into a hurried mindset by bombarding us with information and expectations to respond. Setting healthy **boundaries with technology** is crucial to slowing down. Consider picking a cutoff time in the evening after which you put your phone on “Do Not Disturb” or leave it in another room. If possible, avoid checking work email after a certain hour. Designate certain activities as **phone-free** (for example: meals with family, church, the first hour after waking, or the last hour before bed). By doing this, you reduce the mental clutter and pressure to always be “on.” You might be amazed how freeing it is to not be constantly available. Studies have found that people who disable non-urgent notifications or limit social media use feel significantly happier and less stressed. It can also help to carve out at least one longer stretch each week with no screens – maybe a Sunday afternoon walk or game night with the family. Use that time to connect with God, nature, or loved ones without digital interference. Remember the statistic that average users touch their phones **2,600+ times daily** ¹⁰ – every tap is a tiny pull on your attention. Reclaim your attention by controlling your devices instead of letting them control you. As you cut down digital noise, your mind will gradually become more attentive and present. Boredom will turn into creativity or prayer. Eye contact and conversation will improve. These are huge payoffs for your soul.
- **Simplify Your Schedule and Prioritize:** Often our pace is frantic because we’re simply trying to do *too many things*. It’s time to prayerfully evaluate your commitments. Which activities or responsibilities are truly important, and which could be scaled back or eliminated? It might help to write down everything you’re involved in and ask: *Is this essential? Is this life-giving? Is this something God is definitely calling me to right now?* You may discover that you’ve been saying “yes” to things out of guilt, habit, or fear of missing out, rather than God’s leading. **Give yourself permission to say no.** Dropping one weekly commitment or delegating a task at work could open up much-needed breathing room. Similarly, look at your *daily* routines: Do you leave any margin between appointments, or do you book things back-to-back? Try to build in a buffer of 5-10 minutes between tasks and meetings, so you’re not perpetually rushing and arriving frazzled. If you tend to overestimate how much you can do in a day, practice planning for a little less – and actually celebrating when you’ve done *enough* and it’s time to rest. Jesus did not heal every sick person in Israel nor visit every town; He did exactly what the Father gave Him to do (and often **slipped away** when crowds tried to demand more). In the same way, you have limits. Embracing your God-given limits is not failure – it’s humility and wisdom. When you prioritize the *best* things and let the rest go, you’ll find yourself living at a more humane pace.
- **Cultivate Gratitude and Contentment:** An hurried heart is often fueled by a sense of *lack* – *I haven’t done enough, I don’t have enough, I might miss out*. Gratitude directly counteracts this by refocusing on what you *do* have and what **God has done**. Make it a daily habit to count your blessings. You could keep a gratitude journal, or share “one thing I’m thankful for today” with your spouse or a friend each evening, or incorporate thanksgiving into your prayers (“*Lord, thank you for...*”). When you consciously thank God for even the small things – a good meal, a kind word at work, strength to get through a tough day – it shifts your mindset from frantic to fulfilled. Contentment begins to replace the constant striving. From a mental health perspective, gratitude exercises are proven to improve mood and reduce stress hormones. As mentioned earlier, research indicates that **giving thanks can lead to better sleep, lower stress, and improved relationships** ²⁷ ²². Spiritually, gratitude tunes our hearts to God’s presence in the present moment. It’s hard to be hurried when you’re pausing to appreciate God’s goodness around you. In 1 Timothy 6:6, Paul writes, “*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*” Slowing down is much easier when we’re content with what we have rather than



anxiously chasing what's next. Try starting your morning prayer not with requests but with thanksgiving, and see how it frames your day.

- **Embrace “One-Thing-at-a-Time” and Mindfulness:** Multitasking is often a myth – our brains actually switch rapidly between tasks, which can degrade performance and increase stress. If you struggle with doing three things at once (and feeling none get done well), experiment with *single-tasking*. Give your full attention to what you are doing in the moment. If you're eating lunch, truly **eat** and taste your food (don't also scroll through work messages). If you're talking with your child, truly listen to them (don't mentally rehearse tomorrow's agenda). By being present in each activity, you may find time “slows down” a bit, because you're actually experiencing it rather than racing to the next thing. A practical tip is to schedule short blocks of time for specific tasks and *only* do that task in that window – e.g., 20 minutes to answer emails, then stop; 15 minutes to just play with your dog, no phone. Using timers or reminders can help you stick to one focus. Another aspect of mindfulness is periodically checking in with yourself: *What am I feeling right now? Why am I rushing?* Sometimes simply pausing to acknowledge *“I'm feeling overwhelmed”* and taking a few breaths can prevent you from blindly speeding ahead into burnout. The Bible encourages this kind of reflection: *“In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be your strength”* (Isaiah 30:15). Quieting our internal drive and trusting God moment by moment builds inner strength and resilience.
- **Invest in Relationships (People over Pressure):** One reason to slow down is that hurry is the enemy of love. When we're rushed, we become impatient with people and miss opportunities to connect. Make a conscious effort to prioritize relationships over your to-do list. This might mean lingering a bit longer at the dinner table to talk, or scheduling a relaxed coffee with a friend (and not watching the clock), or reading an extra bedtime story to your child instead of squeezing in one more household chore. Yes, it takes time – but these investments pay eternal dividends. Love **requires** unhurried time. The Apostle Paul's famous description of love begins with, *“Love is patient...”* (1 Cor. 13:4). You cannot be a patient, present spouse, parent, or friend if you're always hurrying the conversation or thinking about the next task. Challenge yourself: the next time you're with someone, put away distractions and really *be* with them. If your mind urges, *“We need to rush to the next thing,”* gently tell yourself that the person in front of you is the priority at that moment. Interestingly, nurturing close relationships also reduces stress – knowing you have support makes the burdens of life feel lighter. God often ministers His rest to us *through* loving community. For example, when Moses was overwhelmed, God provided Aaron and Hur to hold up his arms (Exodus 17:12). Don't try to do everything alone; share life with others. It will help you slow down and recognize that being with people can be more important than being efficient.

Each of these strategies is a practical way to slow your pace and cultivate a more joyful, Christ-centered life. They are “tools” you can use, backed by both clinical research and biblical wisdom. To implement them, it may help to treat it as an ongoing experiment: try one or two strategies at a time, and note the effects. Be patient with yourself – breaking the hurry habit might take time. You might even involve someone else for accountability (perhaps a friend from church who also wants to slow down, so you encourage each other). Remember, small changes add up. For instance, simply getting an extra hour of sleep or praying for 5 minutes at midday can start a positive domino effect in your well-being. Speaking of sleep, it's worth mentioning: **adequate sleep is non-negotiable for a rested life**. Health experts recommend at least 7 hours of sleep for adults for optimal functioning ²⁸, yet many chronically busy people skimp on rest, thinking they're gaining productivity. In reality, consistent sleep deprivation slows you down mentally and physically, and can even mimic or worsen anxiety and depression. So if you've been burning the midnight



oil, consider this your permission to prioritize sleep as holy rest. As Psalm 127:2 reminds us, sleep is a beloved gift from God.

Embracing Help: When to Seek Counseling or Medical Support

Sometimes, despite our best efforts to slow down and practice healthy habits, we may find ourselves **struggling with anxiety, depression, or chronic stress** that we just can't shake. It's important to recognize when additional help is needed – and to know that seeking help is a wise, godly step, not a failure of faith. God can work through modern medicine, therapy, and other resources to bring healing and balance to our lives. As a Christian theologian who is also knowledgeable in psychology and medicine, I want to **firmly encourage** anyone who feels overwhelmed or mentally unwell to consider professional support *without shame*.

First, let's talk about counseling or therapy. Working with a Christian counselor or a reputable therapist can provide you with tools to manage stress and address deeper issues that contribute to your hurried life. For instance, therapy can help uncover if your drive to overwork is linked to insecurity or past hurts, and then guide you in processing those in a healthy way. Techniques from cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) can teach you how to challenge perfectionistic or anxious thought patterns (e.g., "I must do more or I'm a failure") and replace them with truthful, grace-filled thoughts. Sometimes we need an outside perspective to identify blind spots and set boundaries. **There is no contradiction between prayer and therapy** – they can work beautifully hand-in-hand. In the Bible, we see wisdom in seeking counsel: *"By wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory"* (Prov. 24:6). If stress is a war on your well-being, wise counselors (including trained therapists) can help you win that fight. Many people find that **combining spiritual support with counseling** leads to significant improvements in mood, relationships, and life balance.

Now, regarding medication: If you are experiencing clinical anxiety, depression, or another condition that makes it very difficult to slow down or find joy, medication can sometimes be a helpful tool. For example, if you've been chronically anxious to the point of panic attacks or unable to sleep, a doctor may prescribe an anti-anxiety medication or a short-term sleep aid. Or if you're severely depressed and can barely function (no energy, persistent sadness, etc.), an antidepressant might provide enough relief to enable you to engage in therapy and life routines again. **Taking medication for mental health is not a sign of weak faith or "giving up on God."** In many cases, it's analogous to taking insulin for diabetes or blood pressure medicine for hypertension – it's addressing a physical aspect of a problem. A Christian perspective from counselor Ed Welch puts it well: *"The choice to take medication is a wisdom issue. It is rarely a matter of right or wrong. The question to ask is, 'What is best and wise?'"* ²⁹. In other words, we make such decisions prayerfully and with good counsel, but without stigma. Wise Christians do not put their ultimate hope in medicine (our hope is in the Lord), but they recognize medication as a **blessing** that can relieve suffering, while also recognizing its limits ³⁰ ³¹. Medicine can lift the fog of physical symptoms – for example, improving sleep, restoring some energy, reducing the crushing feeling of anxiety – but it **cannot** by itself resolve spiritual issues or teach new habits ³² ³². That's why a holistic approach is best: use medication if needed, *and* continue seeking God, counseling, community support, etc.

If you're considering these options, here are a few tips: consult with a trusted physician or psychiatrist who understands mental health (many primary care doctors can start the conversation too). Don't be afraid to ask questions about the benefits, side effects, and expected course of treatment. Medications often take a few weeks to show effect, and sometimes a short trial is enough to get you over a hump. Also, involve a



wise friend or mentor from church – not for *permission*, but for prayer and encouragement. James 5:14 encourages us to seek prayer when we're unwell. You can both pray for God's healing *and* take practical steps toward recovery; these work together. In the case of depression or severe anxiety, **best practice** in the medical community is often a combination of therapy and medication, especially beyond mild cases ³³. Lifestyle changes like rest, exercise, and diet are extremely valuable (and biblical, as caring for our body as God's temple), but if your symptoms are more than mild, don't hesitate to combine those with professional treatment ³³. The goal is to get you to a place where you can fully engage with life and with God again. Sometimes medication might be for a season; sometimes longer-term – either way, there should be no guilt in using what God has provided through medical knowledge.

A quick note: some Christians worry that relying on medicine indicates a lack of faith in God's power. However, consider this: If you have a headache, do you doubt God by taking an aspirin? Probably not – you thank Him that relief exists! The same can be true for psychiatric medicine. The key is to use these tools **with wisdom and gratitude**, not looking to them as a magic cure or as a replacement for God, but as one part of God's toolkit for healing. As John Piper has said, medications are "gifts of God's grace" that can be misused but, when used rightly, can help us experience God's goodness and serve Him better.

In summary, **defending the use of modern medicine and therapy** is about affirming that all truth is God's truth, and He often works through ordinary means. Scripture itself acknowledges the role of medicine: "*Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?*" (Jer. 8:22), implying that normally one would seek a balm for healing. Luke, the author of one Gospel and Acts, was a physician by trade. So, if you need that "balm" or that physician's help to slow down and regain joy, do not hesitate. Far from showing weak faith, taking care of your mental health is an act of stewardship – you are caring for the temple of the Holy Spirit (your body and mind) so that you can better glorify God (1 Cor. 6:19-20). **You are not alone** in the struggle, and God's provision may come through prayer *and* Prozac, scripture *and* support groups. It's not either/or. Use the wisdom of all the tools God has put in your path.

One practical example: perhaps your anxiety about slowing down is so high that when you try to rest, you feel panicky or guilty. This could be driven by an anxiety disorder or an overactive thyroid or some other issue. By consulting a doctor, you might discover a treatable condition. Or a counselor might help you uncover that you have a deep-seated fear of failure stemming from childhood that drives you relentlessly; working through that could set you free from the need to prove yourself. **There should be no stigma in the church about getting this kind of help.** On the contrary, it's something to be commended, as it shows courage and a desire to live in the fullness of life God intends.

Case Study: From Burnout to Balance

To see how these principles can play out in real life, let's consider a brief case study. While this is a composite scenario, it's based on real patterns many people have experienced (and perhaps you'll see a bit of yourself in it).

Meet John: John is a 38-year-old devoted Christian, husband, and father of two. He works as a project manager in a fast-paced tech company. John genuinely wants to honor God through hard work and providing for his family, but over the years, he has gradually started running on fumes. **Baseline (Before Slowing Down):** John's typical day involved waking up to a flurry of work emails on his phone, rushing to get the kids to school, gulping coffee, and commuting while already stressed about the day's meetings. He often skipped breakfast and at times lunch. At work, he prided himself on being the first in and last out of

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the office. However, this meant 10-11 hour days, and he felt he could never catch up. He was constantly multitasking between projects, and even at home in the evenings, he was mentally still at work (often checking emails during dinner). John also volunteered at church and said yes to helping with every event, which left many late nights of preparation. By 11pm he would crash into bed, mind racing with tomorrow's tasks, and sleep fitfully ~5 hours. Spiritually, John's life suffered – he squeezed in a quick verse of the day but couldn't remember the last time he sat quietly with God. His mood had deteriorated: he was irritable, frequently anxious (rating his daily stress 8 or 9 out of 10), and joyless. Physically, he had high blood pressure (150/95 mmHg, well above the healthy 120/80) and tension headaches almost daily. He joked about running on adrenaline and caffeine, but it wasn't really a joke. Importantly, John's wife noticed he was withdrawn and rarely truly “present” with the family. Even on a rare day off, he was on edge. **In short, John was on the brink of burnout.** By objective measures, his outcome metrics were poor: chronic hypertension, stress 9/10, burnout inventories at high risk, and spiritual engagement near zero.

John reached a turning point when one Sunday his pastor preached on Matthew 11:28 and the promise of rest in Jesus. John felt God speaking directly to his heart that day, telling him that the way he was living was not sustainable or honoring God. He realized he was *weary* – and that Jesus was offering him a yoke that is easy and a burden light. After a tough but honest conversation with his wife, John decided to make concrete changes.

Interventions Implemented: John began by setting **boundaries at work** – he talked to his manager about the overload, and while it was scary, he found some understanding. He delegated a couple of projects to colleagues and agreed not to respond to emails after 7pm. He also stopped taking on extra church duties for a season, with his pastor's support, focusing instead on attending to his family and personal walk with God. John and his wife worked out a new routine: he would spend 30 minutes each morning in prayer and Bible reading (she happily handled the kids during that time, since it made a big difference in John's demeanor). He used a reading plan and journal to keep him on track. Initially, his mind raced during quiet time, but as weeks passed it became a treasured anchor point. John also started going to bed by 10pm, aiming for around 7 hours of sleep. This was tough at first (he felt “unproductive” turning in early), but within a month he noticed his concentration improving at work and fewer headaches.

Crucially, John adopted **Sabbath Sundays** for his whole family. After church, they would share a meal and then intentionally *do nothing “useful.”* They might take a nap, play board games with the kids, or take a leisurely walk in the park – phones off, no house projects. At first John felt twitchy, like he needed to get something done, but he reminded himself that enjoying God and family *was* the “something” to do that day. Over time, this became the highlight of his week.

John also saw a Christian counselor, who helped him unpack some perfectionist tendencies. In therapy, John realized he had a deep fear of letting people down which drove him to never say no. Together they worked on setting healthy boundaries and challenging the lie that “if I slow down, I'll be a failure.” John even learned some relaxation techniques – his counselor taught him a breathing exercise and progressive muscle relaxation, which John began practicing in the evenings instead of late-night email.

After six months of these changes, **John's outcomes improved dramatically.** Subjectively, he reported his average daily stress had dropped to about 3/10 – he still had busy days, but he no longer lived in a state of panic or agitation. Objectively, his blood pressure came down to 125/80 (with no medication, purely from lifestyle changes – his doctor was pleasantly surprised!). John's wife noted he was laughing more and seemed “present” at home. He regularly had time to play with his kids on the floor, without thinking about



work. Spiritually, John's relationship with Christ was rejuvenated: he felt like he was *hearing* God's voice again in Scripture and experiencing real joy in worship. He joined a men's small group that met for Bible study biweekly, giving him community and accountability to maintain his new pace. At work, an interesting thing happened – his productivity **did not drop**; in fact, with better focus and rest, he performed more efficiently in less time. (He even got a promotion for his improved leadership, ironically after he stopped overworking!). But most importantly, John's countenance changed. Friends at church commented that he seemed more relaxed and full of life. John would humbly share that he learned the hard way that “*busy*” is not always “*best*,” and that God taught him how to “*lie down in green pastures*” and “*restore his soul*” (a nod to Psalm 23).

This case illustrates that change *is* possible. John's “before and after” metrics – from blood pressure to mood scales to hours with family – all showed significant improvement once he made slowing down a priority. It took a combination of spiritual surrender (realigning his identity with Christ, not work), practical lifestyle adjustments, and some professional help. Not everyone's story will be identical, but the principles carry over. If you feel like John did, know that you're not alone and that with God's help and wise choices, you too can see transformation. It might be gradual, but each step in faith and rest will bring you closer to the abundant life Jesus promised.

Conclusion: Living in God's Rhythms of Grace

In a world that moves at a breakneck pace, choosing to slow down is a radical act of faith. It's a declaration that *you believe God is in control and you are not*. It's prioritizing being with Jesus over merely doing for Jesus. And as we've seen, this choice is not only spiritually sound but also beneficial for your mental and physical health. To slow down is to align with the way God designed you and to open yourself to receive His best gifts: peace, joy, and deep relationships.

Let's recap the key insights we've covered:

- **Hurry is costly** – it harms our bodies (from high blood pressure to burnout) and our souls (robbing us of joy and intimacy with God). The modern culture of hurry, driven by constant connectivity and productivity pressures, must be recognized for what it is: *a threat to a Christ-centered life*. Even secular research calls chronic hurry an “epidemic” of our time, linked to stress, anxiety, and health issues ⁴
⁵. Spiritually, hurry can be an enemy that keeps us from hearing God.
- **God invites us to rest** – not as a luxury, but as a necessity. The Bible is rich with the language of rest: Sabbath, stillness, trust, peace. Jesus Himself extends the invitation, “*Come to me... and I will give you rest*” (Matt. 11:28). We are finite creatures who need regular pauses. Embracing rest honors God's creation design and acknowledges our dependence on Him.
- **Slowing down is holistic** – it involves practical habits (like breathing exercises, scheduling downtime, improving sleep, etc.), heart posture (like gratitude and contentment), and often some tough choices (like scaling back commitments or breaking our tech addiction). The steps outlined—Sabbath-keeping, daily quiet time, deep breathing, simplifying schedule, limiting tech, practicing gratitude, focusing on one thing at a time, and nurturing relationships—are all pieces of the puzzle. Backed by clinical evidence and biblical wisdom, these practices help recalibrate our nervous system and our spirit toward a sustainable pace.

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- **Help is available** – For those battling anxiety or depression in the midst of busyness, seeking counseling or medical intervention can be life-changing. There is no shame in getting help. In fact, it's often through such means that God delivers His healing. Taking an antidepressant or learning coping skills in therapy can give you the margin you need to then fully engage in spiritual practices and life again ²⁹ ³⁴ . It's all part of loving God "with all your mind and strength" as well as heart (Mark 12:30) – sometimes loving God with your strength means admitting your weakness and accepting help.

Above all, remember that slowing down is a **journey, not a one-time fix**. You will have seasons where you drift back into hurry, and you'll need to gently course-correct. That's okay. God's grace is there for you each morning. When you find yourself stressed and striving, take a moment to pause and pray, *"Lord, teach me again to be still and know You are God."* It can be as simple as stepping outside, taking a breath of fresh air, and reminding yourself that **the world is in His hands** – you don't have to carry it. The famous Psalm 23 paints a picture of what life can look like when we let the Good Shepherd set our pace: *"He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul."* Notice that God sometimes **makes us lie down** – because we might not do it on our own! But when we do, He faithfully restores us.

As you implement changes, celebrate the little victories: a night of good sleep, an hour without checking your phone, a peaceful meal with family, a moment in prayer when you sense God's presence deeply. These are not small things; they are the stuff of life as God intended. Jesus said that He came to give us life "to the full" or "more abundantly" (John 10:10). A hurried, harried life is not abundant life – but a paced, purposeful life, walked in step with Jesus, *is*. Don't be conformed to the frantic patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2) – a renewal that often happens in the quiet, unrushed moments at the Savior's feet.

In closing, hear the gentle words of Jesus one more time, as rendered in *The Message* paraphrase (which captures the spirit beautifully):

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest... Learn the unforced rhythms of grace... Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (Matthew 11:28–30)

Those "unforced rhythms of grace" are what we've been talking about – living in a cadence that God sets, full of grace, not grind. You **can** slow down, with God's help. Your life can have margin and meaning again. As you step out in faith to apply these principles, may the Lord bless you with His peace that passes all understanding, guarding your heart and mind in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7). **A slower, simpler, more joyful life in Christ is possible – and it's worth it.** Walk with Jesus at His pace, and you will find rest for your soul.

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