

CCC SLOWING DOWN P3

When You're Running On Empty - Part 3

We're going to continue today in this series we started on Easter called "When You're Running on Empty." You don't have to be a prophet to know that technology has - made three things happen in the world today. Our world has gotten smaller. Our world has gotten more complex our world has speeded up; it's going faster. You live a much faster lifestyle than your parents did and your children it looks like will live an even faster lifestyle than you did. Let me ask you a question... How many of you have ever gotten a speeding ticket?

The world is getting faster. McDonald's now offers a fast track option so that when you go through the drive-through it will automatically bill your fast track and shave

you fifteen seconds off getting your burger. As if it's that essential for your purpose in life.

I read the other day that frozen juices are declining in sales because people don't want to wait for them to thaw. They're now buying prepackaged juices instead of frozen juice.

Of course if you go out on the Highway you figure out pretty quickly that everybody is A, in a hurry, and B, multi-tasking while in the car. Isn't it amazing what you see people doing while they try to drive down the road?

Make-up. Shaving. Eating. Watching TV. Drying your hair! Smoking and talking on the cell phone – who's holding on to the wheel? Changing shirts. Reading the newspaper. Reading emails. Painting fingernails. Play games on their Iphone. You get the point. People are trying to save time and they're going faster and faster and faster.

I read in News Week that, “Today people are souped up, stressed out, and over scheduled. In this brave new world boundaries between work and family are disappearing. Everybody is mobile and every moment is scheduled. How we are living now... This fast paced, pressure cooker lifestyle is so new to the human race that anthropologists are now studying to see how it will affect us long term. God’s word, the Bible tells us that hurry and worry and scurry have dramatic negative effects on our life style. I’ve written four of them down on your outline today – Effects of a Hurried Lifestyle. The first is you...

1. Feel more stress. The Bible says, “*Overwork makes for restless sleep.*” When you’re always in a hurry, your personal reserves get depleted, you cannot keep charging without recharging. You have to periodically slow down. There’s nothing wrong with going fast unless

it’s fast all the time. You go fast and you go slow. There are ebbs and flows in life. You go fast and you go slow. You are not the energizer bunny where you’re going and going and going and going. Even the energizer bunny eventually stops. It causes stress in your life. Another effect of a Hurried Lifestyle. When I run at a high speed

2. I lose my joy. That’s the second thing. The faster you go in life the less time you have to enjoy. You can’t enjoy things at a fast pace. You have to enjoy them at a slow pace. Think about it... You cannot enjoy something fast. Enjoyment comes slow. If your life is just constant pressure, and a fast, fast, fast pace, you’re not enjoying anything. Let’s be honest about it. You may think you are but you’re not really enjoying it... Why, because you’re missing the details of enjoying in fast, fast, fast. A third thing that happens when you’re going at a fast speed, you

may not realize this and it may surprise some of you, but

3. I'm less productive. I'm less productive when I'm going fast. Every creative person know... You have to have slow times in your life. You have the law of diminishing returns. You cannot stay fast all the time. Otherwise you lose your creativity. You're just not that creative. Notice Job 9:25 *"My days go faster than a runner; and they fly away without seeing any joy."* That could be said, I lose my joy. And then I'm less productive. I saw a bumper sticker a while back: "The hurrier I go the behinder I get." That's actually a biblical principle. Proverbs 21:5 *"Careful planning puts you ahead in the long run; but hurry and scurry puts you further behind."* This is the law of diminishing returns. You have to pace yourself. You're actually less productive if you're going, going, going all the time. You have to have breaks. You

have to slow down. Now the fourth Effect of a Hurried Lifestyle. When I'm running at a high speed...

4. I can't hear God. If you're moving at a fast pace in your life all the time you don't know God. You get to know God when you slow down. When you be quiet. When you become still. Psalm 46:10 says this *"Be still and know that I am God."* Be still! When you're not still and your busy busy... all your circuits are busy and it's like you've got God on call waiting. The circuits are on overload. You can't hear God because you're too busy and there's too much noise in your life. That's just another reason why we have small groups meeting all through the week for you to get involved in... that small group will slow you down and focus you to the real things in life. I meet people who say well I would like to be involved in a small group but I just don't have time... What a shame...

“*Be still, and know that I am God.*” If you are not still you will never get to know God.

Now before we go on... I want you to know that the strategies were going to look at today from God’s word, the bible on slowing down your lifestyle... on having a more rational, more reasonable, human pace life is counter-culture. I want you to be ready for this because it is exactly opposite of what our culture teaches today. But if you incorporate these into your life... If you do these things you will find the joy going up in your life and the stress going down in major ways. The first thing is:

1. Learn contentment.

If you’re serious about slowing down you don’t start with your schedule. You start in the heart. Paul says this about contentment. Philippians 4 “*I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*” Notice the verse says “*I’ve*

learned to be content.” You are not by nature a contented person. Neither am I. I’m a discontented person by nature. It is my nature to want things to be different; It is my nature to want things to be better. It’s my nature to want them to be something other than what they are. You have heard the old saying the grass always looks greener on the other side. It is not my nature or yours to be contented. But if you’re going to slow down your life, you’re going to have to learn contentment. The Apostle Paul says “*There is great gain in godliness with contentment.* [In other words it’s a valuable thing if you’re godly and contented at the same time.] *For we brought nothing into the world and we can’t take anything out of the world. So if we have food and clothing we will be content with that.*” He’s saying life isn’t about things. I didn’t have anything before I was born. I’m not going to have anything after I die. So

things... yeah, I can use them. But life is not about things so I'll just be content with what I've got.

Let me explain what contentment is *not*. Contentment is not having no ambition. You ought to have ambition. You ought to want to make the most of your life. You ought to make the most of what you've been given by God. God says it's good to have godly ambition. So it's not saying I don't have any goals, I don't have any dreams, I don't have any desires, I don't have any plans, I don't have any ambitions. That is not contentment. You ought to have goals and dreams and ambitions.

Contentment means this: I don't need *more* in order to be happy. I'm not waiting for *more* in my life in order to be happy. I'm choosing to be happy right now. I have dreams and I have goals but I don't need *more* in order to be happy. That's contentment.

Happiness is a choice. I've told you many times, you're as happy as you choose to be. You can't blame it on your circumstances. If you're not happy with these circumstances you're not going to be happy with any other ones. There will always be something wrong. We live on a broken planet, with broken people and nothing is perfect. You need to learn to be happy in spite of situations.

Contentment is I don't have to have any more than I've got right now in order to be happy. Jesus said it like this, "*A man's life consists not in the abundance of things he possesses.*" "*What would it profit a man if he gained the whole world and lose his soul.*" I know lots of people who have lots of things but they're still quite unhappy. The myth that says, having more will make me more happy. That myth keeps you from being contented, which

keeps you driving and driving for more and more things.

Why, because you think more will make you content

Another myth is that doing more will make me more worthy. In other words, if I do more people will love me more. They'll like me more. I'll be more valued. I'll be more appreciated. I'll be more admired. I'll be more respected. I'll be more approved if I do more and more and more. So I will prove my worth as a person... by my work. If you get your work and your worth confused, you're going to be stressed out your entire life. If you get your worth and your work confused you're going to be running on empty your entire life. If you get your work and you're worth confused you're going to be running at a fast speed your entire life.

2. You must listen before speaking.

Learn to listen before speaking. That's the second strategy from God's word for slowing down. It's very obvious if you watch television that we have become a nation of interrupters. Have you noticed that? People don't let others complete their sentences. They talk over each other all the time. You see it on talk shows. You hear it on radio programs. You watch it on TV news. People interrupt each other, three or four people talk at the same time and nobody's listening. Everybody's talking at once and nobody's listening at all.

Why is that? Why has America gotten so rude?

One of the answers is because of the speed of life we have become impatient and we're unwilling to let other people finish a thought. So we butt it. We're so eager to say our piece, to get our point across, that we won't even take the time to let somebody leisurely finish a thought before we

butt in. Everybody does this. It's something we need to work on. The Bible says this in James 1:19 *"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."* Notice a couple things on this verse. If you do the first two the third is automatic. If you are quick to listen, and if you learn to be slow to speak I guarantee you, you will be slow to become angry. If you've got an anger problem this is your solution, the antidote to your anger. Learn to be quick to listen, and slow to speak. If you do that, you will learn to deal with your anger.

In God's word, the bible, it says in Ecclesiastes 5:2 *"Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God's in heaven, you're on earth, so let your words be few."* He's saying here you need to watch your words and be slow to speak.

Did you know that slowing your speech will actually slow down your life? It will give you more credibility.

Proverbs 29:20 says this *"Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him."*

3. Pause and pray before deciding.

I'm talking about decisions you have to make on a regular basis. I call them microwave prayers, let me give you an example your sitting talking with your kids and your just not sure how to respond... you pause and you shoot up a little microwave prayer, you say something like, "God, what do You want me to do in this instance?" And you wait. "God, is there anything with, you just say something like, "God, help me to make the right decision." And you wait. You don't say, "Excuse me a minute. I want to pray." I can't tell you how many time I have said this prayer while sitting and talking with people and just in a

split second while they're looking at me I'm going, "What do You want me to do, Lord? Give me wisdom."

The reason you do this is because when you stop to pray in that pause you get perspective. And perspective is what helps you make wise decisions.

4. Trust God's timing.

Let me say this, if you're serious about slowing down your life you've got to learn to trust God's timing. If discontent is one cause of hurry and it is, then impatience is the other cause of hurry. You know what impatience is? It's a lack of trust. When you're impatient you're saying, "God, I don't really trust You. I don't think You have my best interest at heart. You don't know when I need it and I'm in a hurry." You get worried and you get hurried and you start scurrying because you don't trust God to do it at the right time in the right way. You struggle and strive.

Is fast always better? No. It is not. Not always. The Bible says this in Ecclesiastes 3:10 "*God does everything just right and on time*, [Circle that. "Just right and on time."] *but people can never completely understand what He's doing.*" God has a plan for your life. You know that. But He also has a timetable for your life. Did you know that? God has not just a plan for you life He has a timetable for your life. Here's the rub. God never explains His timetable. Doesn't that just tick you off sometimes? As I've said many times the most painful thing is when you're in a hurry and God's not. Part of maturity in growing up is to learn the difference between No and Not yet. A delay is not a denial and as an adult follower of Jesus Christ you have to learn the same thing with God – a delay is not a denial. And God knows the right time and the right way. He has a plan and a timetable.

One day the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Lord, when are You coming back to earth?” and Jesus said, “It’s none of your business.” He did! They asked about the second coming when it was going to happen and He said, *“It’s not for you to know the times or the seasons.”* It’s not for you to know. Don’t worry about it. He said, *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the whole world.”* They wanted to talk about prophecy and God said forget it. Let’s talk about evangelism. He said, It’s none of your business. Let’s talk about evangelism.

You know when Jesus is coming back? Here’s what He said, *“No man knows the day nor the hour. Neither the angels nor the Son but only the Father which is in heaven.”* Jesus said I don’t even know when I’m coming

back. If Jesus Christ didn’t know what makes me think that all my charts will figure it out. Anytime anybody starts pulling out their charts and starts telling you this is when Jesus is coming back, you can know for certain that’s one time it’s not going to happen. Because no man knows the day or the hour.

If you’re really interested in Jesus coming back here’s what Jesus said, *“And this gospel shall be preached into all the world to every nation [that’s ethnic, every people group] and then the end shall come.”* Jesus is not coming back until every person He wants to hear has heard the good news and been able to respond to it. So if you want Jesus to come back you can stop focusing on prophecy and start focusing on The PEACE Plan. It isn’t going to happen until everybody’s had chance to hear.

God's timing is perfect. This verse is the verse that God encouraged me with for fifteen years when we went the first fifteen years of this church without a building and the church kept growing. The Bible says, *"These things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed."* That vision that God has given you that hasn't happened yet, it's coming. It's coming on God's timetable. You've got to learn to trust God and to slow down and stop complaining.

Prayer: If you've ever been to a NASCAR race or any kind of a sports car race you know that there's a pace car at the track. You need a pacesetter for your life and His name is Jesus Christ. Father, I know that there are a lot of hurried, worried and scurried people here today. Tired

people. We're not living with margin. We're stretched beyond capacity. Everything in our culture says go for more, go for better, go for faster. But we instinctively know where that kind of insane lifestyle leads. Today as a church family, as a group of people supporting each other, we want to make a counter culture decision together. Jesus, we want to enjoy the life You've given us not just endure it. We want to bring sanity and simplicity back into our schedules. We want to live balanced, healthy lives. We want to have time for the relationships that matter most – with you, with those we love, with each other in our church family.

Now you pray. Say, "Dear God, thank You for bringing me here. Thank You for our church where You can speak to me. I want to slow down and live more. Help me to learn contentment and to stop comparing myself to others.

Help me to listen before speaking. I want to obey You and observe a Sabbath day of rest every week. Help me to pause and to pray before making decisions. Help me to be patient and to trust Your timing. Jesus, forgive me for the times You've put up signs that I missed because I was too much in a hurry. I invite You to be the manager of my life. Not just setting the direction but also the pace. I want to spend time alone with You every day so You can set my pace. In Your name I pray. Amen.