HOW TO MAKE A PICKLE
Chapter 9

The primary focus of this chapter is that to live an authentic and effective Christian life, we must slow down the pace of our lives and become aware of the present moment.

Main points are:

1. Most of us live under the tyranny of the urgent; a constant sense that we must be doing more in order to be effective.
2. We equate effectiveness and productivity with personal worth and value, which is a great lie.
3. Thanks to clocks and other machines, we live as if time is running out, so we had better be as efficient as possible.
4. Humans are not machines, but unfortunately that is the dominant narrative in our culture.
5. Technology was supposed to increase our leisure but has decreased it because we have added more to our schedules (aka no margins)
6. We will not accomplish anything in our spiritual lives by hurrying. Jesus lived a perfect life of balance between rest and action.
7. We must ruthlessly eliminate hurry in our lives if we are to be effective disciples of Jesus.
8. If we stop, look and listen, we will find the presence of God in all kinds of unexpected places (even in our backyards).
9. Not only must we slow down, we must also realize that growth is a slow process.
10. Making a disciple is like making a pickle---both have to soak a long time, one in brine, the other in the narratives and practices of Jesus.

Reflections:

1. The first part of the chapter, pages 173-179, explores how humans' view of time evolved into the "tyranny of the urgent" and even how humanity became viewed as a machine designed to produce tasks with efficiency. Think about your own experiences in the workplace and expectations placed on your performance. Did you ever sense that your performance was more valuable than your person?
2. We are reminded on page 180 that "we cannot love, think, eat, laugh or pray in a hurry. Looking back over recent days, what did you attempt to do in a hurry that can't be done in a hurry? When did you slow down and experience some of the blessings of slowing down, being in the present?
3. Read Jesus' narrative about placing listening and serving in the right order where he describes different choices made by his followers Mary and Martha when He was in their home (page 181). Why do you think we are tempted to put things in the wrong order

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and serve God without first listening to God? Are you holding on to any old narratives that drive you to place service over listening? What motivates you to slow down and take a moment to be with Jesus?

4. Reflecting on your spiritual journey over the past year, when have you experienced growth and when have you experienced solidifying? (see page 186 for quote from A. H. Strong, theologian and President of Rochester Theological Seminary in the early 20th century).

SOUL TRAINING

Slowing down is the way our soul works. The deepest part of the soul seeks to savor rather than accomplish. Christians today need spiritual disciplines to slow down and savor God. Creating margins in our schedule allows us to slow down and be in the moment where God is found. Margins is a soul training exercise discussed on pages 128-130.

In slowing down, we become aware of surroundings; see colors, smell smells, hear hushed sounds; and feel the wind in our faces. We "show up" and experience the fullness of life. And that includes, not the least of all, being present to God.

If we are to live as Christians, we must be connected to God. Hurry is not part of a well-lived life. (page 183-184)

Selah, pause and think, let it sink in!