Today’s Focus:

- We are plagued by hurry sickness which reflects a disordered heart and disrupts our life-giving connection with God
- The discipline of slowing and the practice of solitude are antidotes

1) Warm up

a. Opening
b. “Margin” by Dr Richard Swenson, MD
c. “Tyranny of the Urgent” by Charles E. Hummel
d. Stress Test by Scott Morton
e. Questions to think about (Participant’s Guide-p30)
   i. How many times a day do you estimate you think to yourself, Oh, I’d better hurry and…? What are some of the reasons you feel you have to "hurry" through life?
   ii. If someone were to say, "I think you would benefit from a day of solitude," how would you respond? What do you think such a day would be like?

2) DVD – Session 2 (Part 1) – An Unhurried Life

3) Video highlights (p32)

a. Why is "hurry sickness" so harmful to our spiritual growth?
b. Many of us tend to avoid solitude. Which characteristics of solitude offend us? Which of our attitudes cause us to resist solitude?

4) Small Group Discussion (p34)- Confronting Our Hurry Sickness

It’s no secret that most of us lead hurried, harried lives. John Ortberg describes the American lifestyle as being so rushed and preoccupied that we don't actually live life, we just skim over it! Yet racing through life at breakneck speed isn't healthy physically or spiritually. Hurry sickness is more than a disordered schedule; it reflects a disordered heart. Hurry disrupts our life-giving connection with God, so if we want to grow spiritually we must train ourselves to eliminate hurry. We have no greater example of this than the life of Jesus. Let's see how Jesus faced his busy life and consider what we can change to eliminate hurry in our lives.

a. Read Mark 6:30-46, which is an account of a day in the life of Jesus.
   i. What kind of day did Jesus have?
   ii. How do you think you might have handled that day if you had been in Jesus' shoes?
iii. What is significant about what Jesus did at the end of this busy day? (See Luke 5:15-16 also.)

b. Two friends of Jesus (the sisters Mary and Martha) shed some light on the impact of hurry sickness on our lives. Read Luke 10:38-42 and note what is happening spiritually and relationally. Note also how Jesus viewed this situation.

c. When John Ortberg says we must "ruthlessly eliminate hurry," he doesn't mean we just cross things off our to-do list. We eliminate hurry by setting the priorities of our heart in order. The Bible frequently cautions us against being consumed (or disordered) by the priorities of this world—accumulation of wealth, concern about food and shelter, desire for recognition or power—all of which drive us to be hurried people. The following Scripture passages provide perspective and instruction on how to "order" our hearts. What do they reveal is beneficial or harmful to us?

i. Matthew 16:26

ii. 1 Timothy 6:6-7

iii. Philippians 3:18-21

d. If we don't want hurry to rule our lives, we need to take steps to slow down. John Ortberg calls these steps the discipline of slowing down and the practice of solitude.

i. When we feel hurried, when we are pressured and pressed from every angle, what does the Bible tell us to do? What is the result? (See 1 Peter 5:7 and Philippians 4:6, respectively.)

ii. In addition to quieting our spirit by giving our cares to God and trusting him to enable us to accomplish all we
need to get done, we can deliberately choose ways not to hurry. We can, for example, place ourselves in positions where we have to wait or do things more slowly, such as driving in the slow lane. What is a good way for you to practice deliberate slowing?

iii. Every day, responsibilities pull us in many directions, so we each need times of solitude—times to withdraw, take a deep breath, focus on God, recharge, and evaluate. When can you find (or carve out) a daily moment for solitude? Identify at least two possibilities for regular, longer times of solitude.

5) Group Discussion/Report Back

6) Personal Journey—Do Now (p42) - Spend a few minutes alone with God to review the key points and begin considering how what we've explored today can make a difference in our daily lives.

a. We are a people plagued by "hurry sickness", and hurry causes great harm to our spiritual growth. Hurry is not merely a shortage of time; it is a disease of the soul. It is not just a disordered schedule; it reflects a disordered heart. Hurry lies behind much of the anger and frustration of modern life. It disrupts our life-giving connection with God and prevents us from receiving love from the Father or giving it to his children. If we want to grow spiritually, we must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from our lives.

In what ways has hurry sickness hurt you, people around you, and your relationship with God?

b. The discipline of slowing and the practice of solitude are antidotes to hurry sickness. To eliminate hurry from our lives doesn't mean we won't be busy. Jesus was often busy, but he was never hurried. His priorities were always ordered according to his life-giving connection with his Father. By practicing the discipline of slowing, we too can learn to become unhurried people. When we practice solitude, we remove ourselves from the forces of daily life that other wise mold us. We withdraw from noise, people, activities, and responsibilities in order to restore our connection with God.
Consider how different your life would be if you approached it from an unhurried perspective, if you ordered your priorities according to your relationship with God. Write down specific things you can think or do to eliminate hurry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms of hurry sickness</th>
<th>Our perspective when we are hurried</th>
<th>My alternative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constantly speeding up daily activities</td>
<td>There aren’t enough hours in the day so we try to do things faster and become impatient when we have to wait</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-tasking</td>
<td>We do or think about more than one thing at a time, packing as much into our day as possible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clutter</td>
<td>We trade wisdom for information and exchange depth for breadth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superficiality</td>
<td>We trade wisdom for information and exchange depth for breadth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset fatigue</td>
<td>By day’s end, we are too tired drained, or preoccupied to receive love from the Father or give it to people around us</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7) PERSONAL JOURNEY(P45): To Do ON YOUR OWN

Knowledge is not what makes us unhurried or joyful people. We have to train-practice being who we want to become. Set aside some time to practice the disciplines of slowing down and celebration.

The Practice of Daily Solitude: Reviewing the Day with God

It can be difficult to carve out times of extended solitude, but every day you can practice solitude a few minutes at a time. Here’s how:

a. Be still for a moment and quiet your mind.

b. Acknowledge that Jesus is present. Invite him to teach you.

c. Go back in your mind to when you first woke up and watch that scene, as if on video. This may lead you to pray for patience, greater love, courage, forgiveness, or other virtues.

d. Continue to reflect on the day, going from scene to scene.
Some scenes may fill you with gratitude, others with regret. Speak to God about this. You might pray for people with whom you interacted.

e. End with a prayer of thanksgiving for God's mercy and love. Ask him to refresh you as you sleep.

Planning a Time of Extended Solitude

Planning a Time of Extended Solitude

In *The Life You’ve Always Wanted*, John Ortberg shored a plan for eight hours of solitude. Remember that this practice may not be easy for you. You may feel as if you are wasting your time because you are not doing something. Or you may feel intimidated, which is why the following structure may help you.

1. Find a place where you can be uninterrupted and alone, such as a pork or retreat center.

2. Spend time the night before to prepare, to ask God to bless the day and to tell him that you want to devote the day to him. This day will be your gift to God, but even more, it is a gift God wants to give you. What do you need from him? A sense of healing and forgiveness? Conviction for an apathetic heart? Compassion? A renewed sense of mission? Ask God for this.

3. Arrange the day around listening to God. The following format is adopted from Glandion Carney’s book *The Spiritual Formation Toolkit*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:00</td>
<td>Prepare your mind and heart, take a walk, or do whatever will help you set aside concerns over tasks and responsibilities. Try to arrange your morning so you can remain in silence from the time you awoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-11:00</td>
<td>Read and meditate on Scripture, taking time to stop to reflect when God seems to be speaking to your through text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-12:00</td>
<td>Write down responses to what you have read. Speak to God about them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>Eat lunch and take a walk, reflecting on the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-2:00</td>
<td>Take a nap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-3:00</td>
<td>Set goals that emerge from the day’s reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-4:00</td>
<td>Write down three goals and other thoughts in a journal. You may want to do this in the form of a letter to God. Prepare to reenter society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>