

# Ideas to Help Us Practice “Slowing”

Choose one of these five options to commit to daily this week. Keep in mind that *the purpose of the disciplines is to help us to become more attentive to the presence of God and others in our lives*—don’t allow them to become a legalistic burden. Have fun with them, and if you miss a day (or more), don’t worry, just try it again the next day. As the week progresses, ask yourself, “What is God revealing to me through these practices?”

## **1) Noise cancellation**

-Commit to a week of no radio on in the car, no background music, no phone usage every time there’s a lull. Cut out technology as much as you possibly can.

-During the time that you are usually distracting yourself, become mindful of God’s presence with you as well as the people around you. Read a book, write a letter to a friend, spend time in prayer—do something that helps you become more mindful of God and our call to love others.

## **2) Stop and smell the roses**

-There are a lot of cool things happening all around us that are beautiful, awe-inspiring, and life-giving.

-Throughout your week, take time to appreciate the simple things in life: the warmer weather, the wildlife in your yard, the taste of your food, the sound of kids playing. Take time to soak in the moment until it fills you with joy (at *least* 20 seconds) and thank God for those gifts.

-If it’s helpful, keep a journal of all the things you are grateful for.

## **3) “After you”**

-Willingly choose to move at a slower pace and allow others to take priority

-Anytime you have the urge to go a little faster get in line before someone else, resist the impulse, and allow the person to go ahead of you. Slow down and let people cut in traffic. If there’s only one piece of pizza left, let someone else have it. Let someone else make the decisions for a change. Hold the door for people. Let someone else talk for a change. Etc.

## **4) Solitude**

-Jesus often left the crowds of people to be alone with his Father to be attentive to his will.

-What's a good time of day for you to get away and be alone for a while? Schedule it the way you would if you made a coffee date with a friend—physically put it on the calendar.

-During that time, review the past day with God:

1) Be still and quiet your mind

2) Acknowledge that Jesus is present and invite him to teach you

3) Replay your past day like a movie in your imagination. This may lead you to pray for patience, greater love, courage, forgiveness, or other virtues

4) Continue through the day, going from scene to scene. As you reflect on them, some scenes may fill you with gratitude, others with regret. Speak directly to the Lord about this. You may also be led to pray for some people you were interacting with during the day

5) End with a prayer of thanksgiving for God's mercy and love, and ask him to refresh you and prepare you for the day ahead.

## **5) Obstacles = opportunities**

-There are always obstacles getting in the way of what we want and causing frustration. When you start to feel yourself becoming irritated that something is taking longer than it should, use that feeling of frustration as a prompt to see the situation as an opportunity to practice patience.

-Breathe a little prayer, asking the Spirit to give you patience in that setting.

-Is it a person that is causing you frustration? Ask the Spirit to help you to see that person as Jesus sees them.

-This could be one of the most important exercises because the true test of the Christian life is how we live in the ordinary, mundane moments—especially when it's hard to love.