

## ***SLOW CLUB, ISAIAH 30:15-18***

Stop the World I wanna Get Off #2

♦**Intro:** How is it with your soul? Really. How is it with your soul? I suppose some of us are not sure what part of us our soul even is. The soul is the part of us that hopes. Its the part that feels deep emotion, that notices beauties, that feels true goodness. Sociologist Tony Campolo would ask his students how long they have lived. They would answer with their age but he



would clarify: no, really lived, like the moments at a sunset (**pict:sunset**) when you almost feel like crying because of the beauty, or the moments when

someone's kindness really touches you and you think "life is good.", or when you're really marveling at life (**pict:drop**) and



you think "this is living!" Then the students respond, "Oh, well then maybe we've lived about a half hour or so." Those I think are healthy soul moments. Really

living is basking in goodness. Really living is in the soul of you.

How is it with your soul?

♦As I've said, we're considering God's commandment to keep the Sabbath day. It's not just stopping one day out of seven. It's a whole way of living that God is encouraging of us. The ancient Jews knew that it wasn't so much them keeping the Sabbath as the Sabbath keeping them!

♦**1. Stopping is good for the soul.** Have you noticed how often in Scripture God keeps telling people to be still?

♦In a Psalm about the mountains collapsing into the sea he says ""*Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted*

## ***SLOW CLUB, ISAIAH 30:15-18***

Stop the World I wanna Get Off #2

*among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”” Psalms 46:10, NIV.*

◆ To the Hebrews caught on the Red Sea with the Egyptian army descending on them he says *“The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”” Exodus 14:14, NIV.*

◆ Our text puts it *“This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength...” Isaiah 30:15, NIV.*

◆ It’s a scientific reality that is also a spiritual reality. All living things need stillness. No bird can fly forever. Even sharks sleep. If you keep walking on grass the earth becomes hard and it will no longer grow. They call those “trails.” How hard is your trail? People without sleep become dizzy and crazed. Sleep deprivation is a form of torture.

◆ **A. Much of the time we ignore the command to be still, and it’s killing us.** That’s what was happening in our text from Isaiah. The Israelites would not be still and wait on God (v15). The enemy is coming? We’ll flee. We’ll get on the move. We’ll hurry and do (v16). And the result? Fear and anxiety.

◆ *“A thousand will flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you will all flee away”” Isaiah 30:17, NIV.)*

◆ When do a thousand run for the hills when one fighter shows up? When they’re anxious, and worried, and fretting and on edge, that’s when.

## ***SLOW CLUB, ISAIAH 30:15-18***

Stop the World I wanna Get Off #2

◆The busy life murders your heart. The Chinese pictograph for busy is “heart” + “knife”. Busyness stops us from thinking about spiritual things, and from being present with God. When we are busy we are not attentive. Two friends and I workout three days a week. One usually jokes around, and smiles a lot. Last week he wasn’t himself. Quiet. Expressionless. What’s wrong. He had to do a presentation after the work out and he was *busy* thinking it over and so he was understandably, not present.

◆Non-stop may sound good for a transatlantic flight, but it’s no way for a home to live. Roy is a midwest professional. He writes,

◆“The first 10-12 years after our kids were born, work took me away quite a bit. My wife was really good about it, and did a great job of raising our 3 kids. When they hit early adolescence, it suddenly dawned on me I missed out on a great deal. I did something I never thought I could do: I quit that high-paying job and found a new job that would keep me close to home. But despite all did, it was too late. No matter how hard I tried to put myself back in my kids lives, nothing worked. Dad wasn't necessary." Focus on Fam p.6, 9/92]

◆It’s easy to spend most of your life breaking the Sabbath principle for life, and never figure out that this is part of the reason your work’s unsatisfying, your friends uninteresting, and your vacations exhausting. Though being busy is the only addiction people are actually proud of, like all addictions, busyness shrinks your world. You don’t notice, much less enjoy,

## ***SLOW CLUB, ISAIAH 30:15-18***

Stop the World I wanna Get Off #2

little things. You don't notice or enjoy people and relationships. Curiosity fades before the all consuming want you have for your idol, be it alcohol, heroin, porn, or achievement at work. It's all the same result.

◆B. The practice of resting (sabbath) is God's demand that we really live. Mark Batterson describes the busy life:

◆I've been in a hurry most of my life. Always rushing to get from where I am to where I'm going. Always cocking my arm to check my watch, doing that habitually, mechanically, mindlessly. Always leaning heavy on the gas, in the passing lane, angry that the driver in front of me doesn't share my sense of urgency, that she's in no particular hurry and can't seem to imagine a world where anyone would be. Always fuming over having to wait in bank lines and grocery checkouts and road construction zones.

◆Here's my question. Not "Can you relate?" because I know you can. But "Does that sound like really living?"

◆**2. Stopping is an act of trust.** It's just like tithing. God says to do it, and trust that he will take care of the rest. It is an act of trust not to keep working. It is an act of trust to obey things God says even when it looks like it costs you more in the end.

◆A. While the sabbath principle is true across the board of life, such that people who don't follow God also benefit from the practice of it, for those who worship God, sabbath rest is a living out of their faith that God will be God so they don't have to be. See, the busy life is a result of our belief that we must be our

## ***SLOW CLUB, ISAIAH 30:15-18***

Stop the World I wanna Get Off #2

own god, and our own savior. If we don't do it, it won't get done. Or, if we don't do it, it won't get done our way and we can't live with that. In the face of all the "what ifs" we feel better, safer, trusting ourselves.

- ◆ What if I don't make the team? (Could that be OK? Could that be in God's will for me?) What if my child dies? (Could I live through that? Would there still be a sovereign God?) What if I lose my job? (Will the love and plan of the Almighty God for my life be thwarted?) What if I don't work seven days a week? (Is it not possible that I will still eat when I retire? Do I *have* to retire? Is God no longer active once I retire?). These all make us want to take God's place.
- ◆ B. Busyness is the silent whisper in the back of our minds that we really must be God for ourselves. If we do not do it, fix it, warn them, prepare, oversee – whatever it is that I want will not happen. So, if you think about it, busyness is a show of unbelief. Observing the sabbath principle of rest is believing that Roman 8:28 is actually true.

◆ *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us,*

## ***SLOW CLUB, ISAIAH 30:15-18***

Stop the World I wanna Get Off #2

*who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" Romans 8:28-32, NIV.*

### **◆3. Sabbath starter ideas as a way to stop the world.**

Every morning Mark Yaconelli tried to get his two sons ready for school and every morning it ended with him having to make a run for it to make it on time. The biggest reason for their delay was that his youngest son Joseph(4) just couldn't hurry. He walked slowly, enjoying every fallen leaf, an odd shaped piece of bark, a yogurt cup in the bushes that would make a perfect pirate mug. (Whoa, I'm totally keeping this!) One evening Joseph announced he was starting a new club: Slow Club. The two rules of Slow Club were that you couldn't hurry, and you couldn't run. Joseph was the president of the club and for the first year the only member. Then one day at a retreat, Joseph offered his dad a one day pass to the Slow Club which he reluctantly accepted. Later they were watching the teens play a game when the campground dinner bell rang. Mark writes

◆I was hungry and wanted to get a place in line. Joseph reminded me, however, that I'd accepted his one-day club membership and would need to reduce my speed drastically... "You see Dad, when you slow down, you notice things. Just look around as we walk, and you'll see things everyone else has missed." Quietly we strolled through the campground, looking carefully at our surroundings. Suddenly, I saw something move off to the side of the path. "Joseph!" I whispered excitedly. "Look over there." He turned and we both saw two

## ***SLOW CLUB, ISAIAH 30:15-18***

Stop the World I wanna Get Off #2

jackrabbits standing on their hind legs watching us. Joseph gave me a knowing smile and said, "I bet we're the only ones who noticed those rabbits." We walked on stopping to look at butterflies, strange purple wildflowers, enormous beetles, and a lizard with half a tail. When we joined the rest of the family, we both talked excitedly about the treasures we'd seen." (Contemplative Youth Ministry, p.199)

◆As another author observes, if we keep hurrying, keep doing, keep being busy, we lose that sense of **wonder**. We lose the deep peace and satisfaction that wonder can bring. Ultimately, we lose the connection with our soul, with who we are. There's nothing wrong with working hard, with doing things for God. God has given us all gifts and talents and He enjoys it when we use those for His glory (We thought about that in part 1 last week). But He doesn't want us keep running without ever taking a break. He doesn't want us to be so busy doing, that we never have time to just BE. God wants us to wonder. It's God who has created our souls with that very longing. His Son Jesus demonstrated this very thing. He went all over the country healing, preaching, casting out demons, speaking with the low and the high. Yet...

◆"Jesus... withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place." Matthew 14:13, NIV.

◆"Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake..." Mark 3:7, NIV.

◆"Jesus... withdrew again to a mountain by himself." John 6:15, NIV.

◆"*Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come*

## ***SLOW CLUB, ISAIAH 30:15-18***

Stop the World I wanna Get Off #2

*with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”” Mark 6:31, NIV.*

◆ Jesus’ ministry flowed from a soul at rest and at peace with his Father and our Father. Lets think about some things we could try that might aid us in discovering the blessing of sabbath rest for ourselves. Practicing sabbath is like a one-day pass to the Slow Club each week.

◆ **A.** Once a week, take a day off of all the usual stuff. Schedule it as unscheduled. Do whatever you find refreshing. Ie, keep a sabbath.

◆ **B.** Walk more. To the office, or a meeting. Take late night strolls under the stars. Meander and notice things.

◆ **C.** Sit still on your back porch without a book or your phone. Or pretend you’re a telephone company worker and park your van in the back of an empty parking lot. Eat your lunch there basking in the sun. Ask God what he wants you to notice.

◆ **D.** Stay in the lane you’re in as you drive, as a spiritual exercise. Don’t look for the shortest check out aisle, just wait in the one you’re in.

◆ **E.** Play with your kids and others. Don’t hold back your laughs.

◆ **F.** Write a poem.

◆ **G.** In your prayers, thank God for twice as many things as you ask him for. In rehearsing the great things he has done, your hope and soul come back to life. If all we ever do is ask, we are



## ***SLOW CLUB, ISAIAH 30:15-18***

Stop the World I wanna Get Off #2

in danger of thinking that life is only about what we need or don't have.

◆**Conclusion:** Do you have tasks before you that seem overwhelming? Are you pressing hard and anxious toward elsewhere? When John Ortberg was hired as teaching pastor at the mega-sized church Willow Creek, he called his mentor, professor and author Dallas Willard and asked for advice. Willard's response was this: "ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life." You see, efficient isn't the same as effective. Slowing down, or following the principle of sabbath rest teaches us perspective about what really matters. Of course, merely slowing down will not revive your soul. Your soul was made, as Pascal put it, with a God-shaped vacuum inside. Accept God's invitation to slow down to be with him! Mat.11:28