



WALK WITH ME

SIMPLE PRINCIPLES
FOR EVERYDAY
DISCIPLEMAKING



BILL MOWRY

CHAPTER THREE

PRINCIPLE 3— WE WALK SLOW

*To be a Christian is not a matter of a moment;
it takes time.*

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

Walking slow is an acquired value and habit for life. We want to hurry; God wants to go slow. Life is learning to live with a slow God. Walking with a God who takes His time was a difficult lesson for Peggy and me to learn.

In our first years as Navigator staff, Peggy and I knew little about fundraising. The Navigators is a “faith” mission, meaning we trust God for our income through the generous gifts of others. Since we lacked fundraising expertise, we also lacked funds. There’s a correlation between the two! The first few staff years were financial challenges. We had to learn to walk with a slow God.

LEARNING TO WALK WITH A SLOW GOD

Walking with a slow God touches all of life—even finances. In our first years on staff, Peggy felt the financial pinch the most. She

had to feed us from our meager income. Baked beans, pancakes, and other low-income meals were our staples.

Like a good campus missionary, I kept plugging away in ministry, meeting with students on campus while Peggy tried to balance the checkbook. On one particular day, I met with Clay, a college freshman. Sitting in a dormitory study lounge to read the Bible, we chose Deuteronomy 8 to read. There was no particular reason for the choice of this passage. After reading the text, these verses jumped off the page to me:

“And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart. . . . And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna . . . that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

—*Deuteronomy 8:2–3*

I was jolted out of my chair when I read those statements. God seemed to be speaking to me directly: “Bill, I’m letting you and Peggy go hungry to teach you a lesson. It’s more important to learn how to live by My Word than to have a full stomach.” Like He did with Israel, God was letting us go hungry to teach us a character lesson, but it was going to take a while. For Israel, it was forty years! Now I had a fresh perspective on our life situation. I didn’t go home for a steak dinner, but I had some meaning for our financial trials.

The Lord called Israel to remember how He had led them . . . for forty years! This was not an overnight, snap-of-the-fingers life change, but forty years of watching the cloud by day and the fire by night. This was a slow walk over four decades. He humbled Israel, letting them hunger but always providing food in timely ways. What was the lesson? He wanted Israel to learn to trust Him by taking Him at His word. The Lord wasn't in a hurry to teach this lesson. This wasn't a neatly defined ten-week Sunday school course.

Peggy's and my financial need did not clear up overnight. We learned day by day to take the Lord at His word. Years later we're still learning this lesson. Spiritual change doesn't happen overnight, and there is no injection for quick life change. Little by little, we're slowly learning what it means to trust God. I sometimes wish God could zap us with changed character but that's not His usual way. We need to learn to walk with a slow God.

When we invite others to walk with us in the Jesus life, we're entering into a slow journey. Disciplemaking is not for those who want quick results, a programmed curriculum, or guaranteed success. Disciplemaking is sometimes two steps forward and one step back. We must learn to walk slowly with God and with others.

Ministering in slow ways means that we slow down to see people as individuals. When we do this, we learn to love people according to how God has designed them and the pace of growth He has for their lives. Disciplemaking means learning how to walk with a slow God, but our culture has another speed.

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WE LIVE FAST

Unlike kingdom culture, speed is the nature of our American culture. We want faster internet, faster smartphones, and faster purchasing power. Overnight and sometimes same-day delivery are becoming the norm for most businesses. This zeal for speed is having implications far beyond our obsession for faster internet service and consumer purchases—speed is impacting our ability to adjust and adapt to life.

In his book *Thank You for Being Late*, author Thomas Friedman describes how in the past we had time to adapt to scientific and technological progress. Incremental steps allowed us to keep up with the changes around us. However, things have now changed.

[Edward Teller, who designed the hydrogen bomb, surmised], “A thousand years ago, it probably would have taken two or three generations to adapt to something new.” By 1900, the time it took to adapt got down to one generation. . . . Today, said Teller, the accelerating speed of scientific and technological innovations can outpace the capacity of the average human being and our societal structures to adapt and absorb them. . . . Change is now accelerating so fast that it has risen above the average rate at which most people can absorb all these changes. Many of us cannot keep pace anymore.¹

The pace of change is all around us. We see it in sexual mores, economic changes, media, and a fundamental reshaping of such

institutions as work, marriage, and even church. Historian Noga Arikha laments this loss of security due to speed: “The world I took for granted as a child, and that my childhood books beautifully represented, jerks with the brand new world of artificial glare . . . [everything is now] faster, louder, unrelated to nature, self-contained.”²

Many of us feel lost in this new world of speed. We sense that a life of hurry is a life of superficiality. We discover that “hurry always empties a soul.”³

Our culture is becoming one science fiction writer’s reality. A book that’s probably read by most high school students is Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*. In Bradbury’s imagined future, books and the homes of book owners are burned by firemen. Only a brave few keep the act of reading alive by hiding books, hoping to escape the firemen.

Why were books hated and feared? When a fireman quizzed a book owner on this question, he answered that it was because of leisure. “Oh, but we’ve plenty of off hours,” was the fireman’s reply. “Off hours, yes. But time to think? If you’re not driving a hundred miles an hour, at a clip where you can’t think of anything else but the danger, then you’re playing some game or sitting in some room where you can’t argue with the four-wall televisior. . . . [The televisior] is immediate, it has dimension. It tells you what to think and blasts it in. . . . It rushes you on so quickly to its own conclusions your mind hasn’t time to protest.”⁴

Doesn’t this sound like a page from today? We get our thrills from extreme sports, we vicariously live through celebrities or reality TV, and we love our video games. Our minds do not have time to protest. We need some leisure!

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Leisure forces us to slow down to reflect and think. The Chinese character for “leisure” is made up of “space” and “sunshine.” It denotes the pause, the attitude of relaxation that creates a gap in life so the sun can shine through.⁵ In contrast, the Chinese ideogram “busy” is made up of two characters, “heart” and “killing.”⁶

In foretelling our multitasking, media-drenched, and thrill-seeking world, Bradbury believed that fighting the life of speed meant slowing down, opening up space in our lives to think. If we don't, busyness will kill our hearts, and speed will harm how we walk with and disciple others. We must learn to walk slow.

WE HAVE A SLOW GOD

God does not seem to be in a hurry. Consider Israel's conquest of the promised land. They had been waiting hundreds of years for God to fulfill the promise He gave to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3. Could God's timing have been any slower?

Centuries after the promise, as we read in the book of Exodus, we find Israel on the verge of entering the land God had promised to them. Anticipation was building. Was God going to snap His fingers and give Israel the land? Here's His strategy (Ex. 23:29–30):

“I will not drive them out [the Hivites, Canaanites, and the Hittites] from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land.”

Do you notice that our Lord had a different strategy than a quick conquest? Israel was not ready to acquire the land. Instant success would be their downfall. If God were to wave His hand and drive out the land's inhabitants, nothing would be left. The small and fledgling nation of Israel would face a barren land, an expanse soon to be overrun by wild beasts and weeds. Our Lord had another plan, one that made more sense to a small nation. "Little by little," the practice of slowness, was God's strategy.

Here's the kicker to this verse. Not only would it be little by little, but it would take decades. Soon after this promise in Exodus, Israel would rebel against God and He would delay the acquisition of the promised land by forty years (Num. 14:20–24). He wanted Israel to learn the lesson of trust and that building trust takes time. It goes slow.

Now fast-forward to Deuteronomy 7. Israel is ready to go into the land. The Lord again promises that He "will clear away these nations before you little by little" (Deut. 7:22). The promise was about to be realized, forty years later.

Nation development is not the Lord's only application of slowness. Becoming more like Christ—spiritual maturity—is a little-by-little approach. Pastor and author Eugene Peterson writes: "Maturity cannot be hurried, programmed, or tinkered with. There are no steroids available for growing up in Christ more quickly. Impatient shortcuts land us in the dead ends of immaturity."⁷

Another analogy is the seepage of water into a crevice. Author and poet Esther de Waal suggests that "the journey into God was a matter of seepage, slow seepage, an advancing tide, not some sudden event with a climatic point."⁸ Character development is a slow, patient process. We walk with a slow God.

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Our Lord is capable of speed. In an instant, He can heal, rescue, or provide. However, there is ample biblical and experiential evidence to suggest that slow is God's preferred speed.

We must learn to keep pace with a slow God. Sometimes His timing is not our timing. My timing usually reflects my desire for immediate gratification. His slowness is a commitment to people's welfare, patiently waiting for them to love Him. Our compulsive timetables sometimes collide with God's patient providence. Slowness is a virtue to our heavenly Father and a countercultural value to life today. We walk with a slow God.

WE PRACTICE SLOW

Slowness means adapting to the spiritual pace of people. Patience is slowness applied. We can only move as fast as the Holy Spirit works in someone's life. My friendship with Dean was no exception.

We had known each other for years. Dean knew that I was a Christian. Even though we shared life together with our children, sports, and our wives' friendship, there was never an apparent interest in spiritual things on his part. Then the sports banquet came up on my schedule.

A local ministry was sponsoring an event where a popular football coach would talk about his faith. I prayerfully decided to invite Dean.

After the meeting was over, Dean turned to me and said, "Thanks for inviting me. Work has been crazy. I needed to hear this message." I was surprised at his quick response. I issued another invitation: "I'm inviting a group of men to read the Bible

with me. Would you be interested?” “I’m ready for something like this,” was his prompt answer.

This conversation was probably twenty years in the making. Slowness means coming alongside the interest and the pace of people. Four easily remembered steps have helped me practice slow. I remember things better when I create acronyms for memory cues. Here’s an acronym for living slow.

Serve excellently
Love accordingly
Observe to learn
Wait for God’s timing

Serve Excellently

You’ve read about my perfectionistic tendencies. Peggy reminds me that I need to stop analyzing and enjoy the tasks that I accomplish. Because I have a compulsion to make things better, I’m often unsatisfied and critical of what I’ve done. I’m learning to pursue the virtue of excellence rather than perfection. Perfection can never be attained, but I can do things excellently . . . but excellence requires slowness.

Excellence implies doing something extremely well. Excellent work has a sense of beauty and elegance to it. Excellence speaks to my doing the best I can with the resources and abilities available. While excellence does not require perfection, it does require work and effort.

**TO DO THINGS
WELL WE MUST
SLOW DOWN
AND RETURN TO
HIGH QUALITY
BASICS.**

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Paul exhorts us to “strive to excel in building up the church” (1 Cor. 14:12). In Colossians 3:17, we’re exhorted to “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.” The thought here is that acting in the name of a person means acting as that person’s representative. The name of Christ makes the smallest task something noble and honorable, something beautiful and fresh.⁹

When we invite people to walk with us as we walk with Jesus, we act as Jesus’ representatives, serving in His name. We should model the one who left people “astonished” because He did “all things well” (Mark 7:37).

To do things well we must slow down and return to high quality basics. The wise author Oswald Chambers describes our task this way: “We have to be exceptional in ordinary things, to be holy in mean streets . . . and this is not learned in five minutes.”¹⁰

A model for being exceptional is found in the legendary Shaker furniture. Shaker furniture is marked by its simplicity, a lack of ostentatiousness, and quality workmanship. Their philosophy is pretty straightforward:

Make every product better than it’s ever been done before. Make the parts you cannot see as well as the parts you can see. Use only the best of materials, even for the most everyday items. Give the same attention to the smallest detail as you do the largest. Design every item you make to last forever.¹¹

Isn’t this a great description for disciplemaking? Walking with others means engaging in the “parts you cannot see.” These “parts” are the unseen conversations and acts of love hidden from

the public's attention. These small acts should have the same attention to detail as a rousing worship service.

Everyday ministry should demand the best materials and deserves our full attention. After all, when we invite people to walk with us, we are Jesus' representatives, and He did everything well. Excellence requires the virtue of slowness.

Serving with excellence marked the life of my father. Dad came to faith in his early forties. When he surrendered to Christ, he only knew one way to live life—the way of commitment and excellence. He was a craftsman, trained as a meat cutter (or butcher) in a Louisiana packinghouse during the Great Depression of the 1930s. He naturally transferred the skills and commitment to excellence from his job to his new faith.

For thirty years, Dad taught Sunday school, led small groups, and spoke around the state of Ohio as a representative of the Gideons, the organization known for placing Bibles in hotel rooms. My parents had high school educations and no formal training in ministry. They were the “little” people of chapter 2, everyday people in the normal routines of life, inviting others to walk with them as they walked with Jesus.

When my father passed away, he did not leave a large inheritance. I received his Bible study books, commentaries, and a file of his small group Bible study lessons. As I thumbed through these materials, I found the books marked up, passages underlined, and teaching notes filled with discussion questions.

A great deal of thought and preparation had gone into his everyday ministry of leading a Bible study in his mobile home community and teaching Sunday school in a small country church. My

mind wandered back to seeing him retreat to his study after work and spend hours studying his Bible and preparing the lessons. He put time and effort into his ministry—a ministry hidden away in an ordinary place, a ministry done slow and with excellence.

How can we walk slow with excellence? Here are two steps to consider.

1. Have I intentionally prayed? This is not a “Lord, bless this time” but a concerted approach to pray through every main point, every Scripture used, or every question asked.
2. Do I know the material? While you may not have professional training in the Scriptures, ask yourself if you’ve put the due diligence into your preparation so that you know the material well.

Love Accordingly

People are different. This is obvious, but sometimes we fail to practice its reality. It’s more efficient to treat everyone the same, expecting that people share the same faith trajectory, and need the same Bible content or spiritual experience. When we practice slowness, we take into account people’s individual differences and love them accordingly.

Both of my sons are trained illustrators. As a teenager, our older son, Jason, always felt a little out of place in the traditional classroom until a high school art teacher introduced him to right brain/left brain thinking.

This philosophy of education teaches that the two hemispheres of our brain are wired in different ways. The left side is our

analytic, linear, sequential side. The right side of the brain is our intuitive, picture making, synthesizing side.¹² Most of our educational settings are designed for left-brain thinkers. We put people in rows, teach sequentially, expect logical answers, and give little time for daydreaming or experimentation. Can you begin to sense how right-brain people might struggle?

“Now I understand why I always felt a little out of place in the classroom,” was Jason’s discovery when realizing he was a right-brain thinker. This realization freed him from the guilt and constraints of traditional learning to explore art in new and fresh ways—ways that reflected how he learned.

When we disciple others, inviting them to walk with us as we walk with Jesus, we must understand that one size does not fit all. Everyone grows differently, is motivated differently, and matures at different speeds. Ministering in slow ways means that we slow down to see people as individuals. When we do this, we learn to love people according to how God has designed them and not treat them as projects.

Paul understood this simple principle of loving accordingly. He described it in this way:

And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

—*1 Thessalonians 5:14 NIV*

How do we love the idle? We warn them of the consequences of idleness. How do we love the disheartened? We provide words of encouragement. How do we love the weak? We help them in

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practical ways. Bottom line, we're to be patient with everyone since patience is Paul's first mark of true love: "Love is patient . . ." (1 Cor. 13:4). Patience loves people according to their needs and spiritual maturity. Patience is slowness applied.

Several years ago we sponsored an alumni picnic for former students in our campus ministry. At the end of the day, I thought, *Jesus, You could return now and I would leave a blessed man!*

It was so satisfying to see men and women I had known when they were eighteen, nineteen, or twenty years old, now mature, some married with children. The maturity I had longed for in their lives was in full bloom.

My mind went back to their time on campus where I pushed, pulled, and cajoled them to get with the program and grow! I leaned on them to make the next commitment, the next step of faith. I lacked patience. I was unwilling to let some of them grow at the rate God had for their lives. Slowness is a tension between desiring the next step for people and waiting for God's timing for those steps.

Slowness is applied when I treat people as individuals. I take time to get below the surface when growth seems delayed. Take the example of Jake. Jake was a regular attender in my Bible study. However, I noticed he seldom completed his study assignments. In fact, he rarely read the Bible. "Reading the Bible is just not something I enjoy," he said.

In a casual conversation one day, he revealed that he had a learning disability and had spent a lifetime learning to cope with it. Knowing a little about learning disabilities, I asked him how it was demonstrated in his life.

"I struggle with tracking words from left to right when I read.

Words tend to jumble up on the page and I have to really focus to move from word to word and not get lost.”

“Can I see your Bible?” I asked. It was a standard study Bible laid out with three columns on each page. Two columns were the biblical text, and the center column was for cross references. When you opened the Bible, six columns showed up across two pages. For someone with dyslexia, this layout would make your head spin.

“Is reading this difficult for you?” I asked.

“You bet it is,” replied Jake.

I purchased a Bible for him that had only one column per page. Now he could read the Bible with greater ease and pleasure. What he considered a spiritual problem—“I don’t like reading the Bible!”—was really a learning issue. Because people are different, we take the time to treat them as individuals, fitting into the story that God is working out in their lives. Walking slow means loving and discipling people according to who they are.

How can we love accordingly? Here are two simple approaches.

1. Learn people’s faith stories. Ask people to draw out a timeline listing the people and events that have shaped their lives. This simple exercise will help you discover the unique story behind each person.
2. Spend time individually with people. If possible, visit someone at work. Seek to understand what their day is like. Visit them at their home or apartment. You will understand a lot about someone from observing how they live, decorate, and prioritize their spending on possessions.

Observe and Learn

One of my long-distance mentors is the novelist, poet, and agrarian philosopher Wendell Berry. Berry writes that slowness and paying attention is at the heart of the successful farmer . . . and person.

Successful farming starts with a simple act: walk the land. Farmers don't run, they walk. Slow walking allows the farmer to pay attention so that he or she can truly care for the farm.

"The gait most congenial to agrarian thought and sensibility is walking. It is the gait best suited to paying attention . . . and most permissive of stopping to look or think. Machines, companies, and politicians run!" wrote Berry with a little tongue in cheek.¹³ *Solvitur ambulando* goes the Latin tag: "You can sort it out by walking."¹⁴

Slowness is a virtue to the farmer. He or she knows that as speed increases, care declines. "The faster we go the less we see. This law applies with equal force to work; the faster we work the less attention we can pay to its details, and the less skill we can apply to it," Wendell Berry states.¹⁵ Again, as speed increases, care declines. Slowness is necessary for successful farming.

The farmer's leisurely gait in order to observe and pay attention is our model for inviting others to walk with us as we walk with Jesus. A farmer doesn't look only to enjoy the scenery but to study the land in order to care. By caring, the farm will flourish. In the same way, we want to look at others, slowing down to care, looking to nourish a life.

I've often pondered the statement by Jesus that "you will indeed see but never perceive" (Matt. 13:14). How can you see without perceiving? For Israel, they saw a man from Nazareth and

missed the Messiah. They observed but didn't really look. I've discovered that I often see but seldom look.

I've found two ways of seeing. One way is simply observing what is there. My wife, Peggy, has brown eyes, she's wearing a blue sweater, and is carrying a bag of groceries. She's stopping to chat with a neighbor. My sight scans this neighbor and records the observable details: she's wearing jeans and a hooded sweatshirt, she's holding her dog's leash, and she's looking serious. I've noticed her outward appearance, but I don't know what's happening in her life. Seeing into a life is what I call "soul sight."

Seeing with the soul notices what's happening in a person's face and posture. Their eyes tell me whether they're happy or sad. The turn of a mouth tells me their mood. Body language reveals their true feelings. Soul sight is the type of observation that we practice in discipling others. Soul sight happens when we slow down to practice heart-to-heart relationships.

"You seem a little down today, Brad." I had noticed that Brad lacked his usual enthusiasm. He didn't greet me with his customary smile and strong handshake.

"I'm discouraged. There are so many demands on my time that it's hard for me to get to sleep at night. Besides work and the kids, I signed on to coach a middle-school soccer team. I also have duties at church, and my dad is needing my help for a rehab project at his house. I really need to sort out my priorities."

"Want to talk about it some more?" I asked. When he said yes, I took us to Mark 1:29–39. We made some observations about Jesus' priorities in a twenty-four time period where He was pushed and pulled by the expectations of others. We noted how

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Jesus made prayer a priority (v. 35) and He had a clear sense of His mission (v. 38). “What can we learn from His example that can apply to our busy lives?” I asked.

A simple observation turned into a discipling moment. We talked about the lordship of Christ and the importance of prayer—all spokes of the discipleship wheel. A discipling movement started by my exercising soul sight.

Looking is a small act of dying to self. I’m choosing to give my attention entirely to another person and not worry about my own agenda. I want to look so that I can understand and love the other person, not advance my own goals or interests. In looking, I can respond with a sympathetic presence, encourage with an appropriate word, or exhort if appropriate. This all starts by observing with soul sight. When I truly learn to see, I can begin to connect Jesus to a life.

How can we slow down to observe and learn?

1. Watch a person’s face. What animates them? Is the mouth turned up or down? Is their gaze focused or blank? What do you notice about the current state of their soul?
2. Ask an appropriate question. Questions could include: “I notice you’re a little discouraged. What’s going on?” “You look happy today. What’s causing the joy?” “You seem a little puzzled. What’s the issue?” We can ask appropriate questions because we have first looked.

Wait for God's Timing

It's breakfast on Tuesday and time to meet Craig at our favorite coffee spot. He wants to grow in his faith but sometimes lacks motivation. He knows that the Bible should be important, but he doesn't have the discipline to read it. God has become more of a life concept than a relationship. How can you love a concept? I was praying and waiting for the "right" moment to challenge him. This moment came when the roof caved in on Craig's life.

The collapse happened in the rhythm of work. As a new manager, Craig was stretched. There were new expectations and greater accountability. Craig found himself tethered to his smartphone, working 24/7. Anxiety was building. He couldn't sleep, he stopped paying attention to his children, and he lost weight. The Lord had Craig's attention. Because I was walking with him in a relationship, I spotted an open door for ministry and walked in.

Timing is everything. Did you know that the New Testament uses two different words to express the Hebrew concept of time? *Chronos* time is chronological time. It refers to quantity of time or the amount of time passed (Matt. 25:19). *Kairos* time is about the "right" moment (Mark 1:15) or the moment of opportunity. Kairos time speaks "of those opportune times that become turning points."¹⁶ A kairos moment had happened in Craig's life.

Kairos thinking is when we realize that our days and hours are full of moments for advancing God's kingdom if only we have wisdom enough to see the possibilities and seize them accordingly. Teachers call them "teachable moments."

These possibilities are often connected with the natural

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rhythms of life. Instead of points on a timeline, the Bible depicts time as a series of constant rhythms:

Seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter.

—*Genesis 8:22 NIV*

For everything there is a season, and a time for every
matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.

—*Ecclesiastes 3:1–2*

Life is wrapped up in these rhythms. There's a time for sowing and reaping, there's a time for cold and heat, there's a time to plant and a time to pluck. Timing is everything. We have a rhythm in our careers, our marriages, and our relationships. When we invite people to walk with us, we enter into a friend's life rhythms and wait for the kairos moments. This happened with my friend Craig.

Because I had stayed in relationship with Craig, walking with him through life, I seized the kairos time. To deal with stress, I encouraged him to read the Psalms. What was once academic now became a heartfelt reality. Out of desperation, he fled to God's refuge.

My experience with Craig reinforced two lessons for walking with people. One, I had to wait to catch the kairos moment with him—that teachable moment inspired by the Holy Spirit. We spent several Tuesdays together before this moment arrived.

Second, I seized the moment because I was walking with him. We spot kairos moments when we're heart-to-heart with people, paying attention to what God is doing, walking alongside them as we go through life. It's difficult to spot a kairos moment from behind a pulpit or lectern. It usually happens when we're up close and personal, walking next to people. Kairos moments can be seized now but sometimes they require our waiting in faith. We must remember that our efforts are never wasted but the results may be delayed . . . for decades.

Nate's dad had his son's life mapped out. He sent Nate to a private college, expecting academic and professional success. Then God intervened. Nate became a believer in his sophomore year. Having his son become what he called a "fundamentalist Christian" was not part of his father's plan. Neither was Nate's next move. He decided that God was calling him to the pastorate.

Nate's decision shattered his father's dreams and strained their relationship. For over thirty years, Nate couldn't talk with his father about his faith. They had a cordial but cautious relationship. Then the kairos moment happened.

Nate's father became seriously ill in his early eighties. Nate's stepmother contacted him for help. Together, they mapped out a plan of action with the physicians to deal with his father's declining health. In the process of caregiving, Nate's dad began to open up about his life. This was the kairos moment. Nate stepped into this rhythm of the Spirit and initiated several faith conversations with his father.

This story has a happy ending. Nate's dad came to faith. As life's fourth quarter wound down for his father, Nate took the

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initiative one last time and had a gospel conversation with his dad. We go slow, patiently trusting God that our efforts are not wasted but sometimes delayed.

How do we wait for God's timing?

1. Be on the lookout for kairos moments. We can think that growth only happens in “spiritual places”—a church service, a Sunday school class, or in a small group. God creates teachable moments on the job, in the daily commute, with our friends or spouse, or through our hobbies.
2. Be patient. This may be a time of sowing in someone's life. Your effort is not wasted, the outcome is just delayed. Remember, the fourth quarter still needs to be played.

TO WRAP UP—WALK S.L.O.W.

We serve a slow God. When our culture pushes the hurry-up discipling button, forcing you to conform to the world of speed, respond with this shout of “Walk S.L.O.W.”!

I will

Serve with excellence!

Love accordingly!

Observe and learn!

Wait for God's timing!

WALK SLOW



SERVE EXCELLENTLY

Pray comprehensively
Know the material

LOVE ACCORDINGLY

Know another's faith story
Spend time with people

OBSERVE AND LEARN

Soul sight
Soul questions

WAIT FOR GOD'S TIMING

Look for *kairos* moments
Practice patience

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