



EXCERPT



A Year of Slowing Down *Daily Devotions for Unhurried Living*

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With the overwhelming pace of life, many of us struggle to stop long enough to be present. In this book, Alan Fadling offers six devotionals for each week of the year, each one an invitation to slow down and be present with the movement of God in your everyday life. Will you accept God's call to welcome a year of slowing down?

Grace Multiplies Simplicity

Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. (John 6:11)

Today's passage comes from the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand. I'm encouraged to remember that five small loaves and two tiny fish brought by a little boy were the starting point for this miracle. On its own, this meal might have stretched to help a friend or two, but it was obviously not going to help a crowd of thousands.

Jesus can take our unimpressive offerings and transform them into something that blesses hundreds and thousands of others. God does great work with our small gifts offered in love.

There is an intersection between the language John uses here about how Jesus receives and blesses this offering and his words in the upper room when he celebrates Passover with his inner circle. Luke, for example, shares that "he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me'" (Luke 22:19).

Like he would later do in that last gathering of his close followers, Jesus stands among the thousands, takes the loaves, gives thanks for them, and distributes them to the people. Taken, blessed, given. It sounds like sacramental language. Jesus takes our little offerings, blesses them with gratitude to the Father, and, through us, gives them to bless the world.

Whatever little offering you have to offer others, bring it first to Jesus. Invite his blessing on it and trust him to multiply it to help many.

Is there something in your life that feels like less than you wish it was? What would it look like to offer it to Jesus and welcome his blessing of it to help many?

—Adaptation from Day 141



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Q & A



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Alan Fadling is president and founder of Unhurried Living, Inc. in Mission Viejo, California. He speaks and consults internationally with organizations such as Saddleback Church, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Cru, Halftime Institute, Apprentice Institute, and Open Doors International. He is the award-winning author of An Unhurried Leader and An Unhurried Life, which was honored with a Christianity Today Award of Merit in spirituality. He is also coauthor (with Gem Fadling) of What Does Your Soul Love?

Daily Five-Minute Retreats

In what ways does this latest writing project add to your current body of work?

Alan Fadling: Having written *An Unhurried Life* and *An Unhurried Leader*, I wanted to create a resource that would help people slow down in a day-to-day way. I envision this book as daily, five-minute retreats. I'm not necessarily talking about hurry every single day, but I'm offering readings that cultivate a spirit of unhurry and the slower pace of God's kingdom.

How was it for you to write these short-form readings?

Alan: I've been writing short-form readings like this for nearly thirty years: first as a fax, then as an email list, then as a blog. It's a format I love for its simplicity and digestibility. The writings in this book have been drawn from my own daily journal entries, which cover thirty-two years, currently run 11,392 Word pages, and total 7.56 million words. It's been the most fruitful form of long obedience in my spiritual journey.

Is this book a continuation of what you would define as your calling?

Alan: This work, as an expression of my personal journal, is a direct realization of a calling I received at the Urbana Conference in 1990. During that time both my wife and I received a clear call that we would one day share our lives with leaders. This is what I am mostly doing today.

What is the core idea of this book?

Alan: The core idea of the book is coming to treasure the unhurried pace of God. In our hurried culture, we often overvalue work and undervalue rest. Both are gifts of God to be received at the unhurried pace of love, grace, joy, and peace. Too often we live our lives more at the pace of the culture in self-interest, drivenness, empty excitement, and anxiety. I've hoped that these daily readings would be a chance to encounter the fruitful reality of God's unhurried way with us. Rather than talking about hurry, I'm seeking to share experiences in this book from following the unhurried way of God and convictions that have grown in me about its greater fruitfulness than the multiplying of activity after activity.

What are a few key takeaways from this latest book of yours?

Alan: God is unhurried in the best sense of that word. Jesus demonstrates the unhurried nature of his Father's kingdom in his daily life. Therefore, the church, at its best, models this unhurried way of love, prayer, peace, gentleness, humility, and patience. Slowing down is often the better spiritual move rather than autopiloting into acceleration in the face of challenges or hardships. So, learning to slow to the pace of God's kingdom needs to be something that happens over time and rarely in some crisis moment.



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