

**U >> Unhurried**

This message will focus on how we must move in His direction, wanting Him, waiting on Him, praying and listening to Him, and all in an unhurried way. We choose Him, being still, knowing that He is God.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Graduation season has come and gone. Families and friends gathered to celebrate the many graduates. Laughter and lunch were enjoyed by many. Ham sandwiches, chips, and cake were plentiful. And gifts were given. One of the most popular gifts again this year was gift cards! Graduates, remember to use your gift cards. A report from cardfunder.com states that 1 out of every 2 people will either forget to use or lose their gift cards, a loss of \$139 on average.

In much the same way, we are not using a gift that has been given to us, that being the Holy Spirit. For four consecutive weeks, we are exploring the why, the how, and the what of the Holy Spirit, God in us. People feel some pain at the pump when buying gas, and some people choose to “run on empty instead of filling up.” Similarly, are we running on empty or are we filled with the Spirit? Are we living mediocre, run-of-the-mill lives as Christians, trying to do life in our own strength? F.U.E.L. is a memory tool to help us recall four essentials to being filled with the Spirit of Jesus. Last week, we learned F is for FOLLOW. To be filled with the Spirit, we must FOLLOW Him, yielding to His control because HE IS GOD in us.

This week, we will unpack U for UNHURRIED.

Have you ever been in a hurry, living life in the fast lane? I read a story about Mensa, the organization with members who have IQs of 132 or more. Mensa has conventions throughout the year and throughout the world. At one such gathering of these super-intelligent people, delegates were taking a dinner break. While sitting at a restaurant, a group of them noticed that there was salt in the peppershaker and pepper in the saltshaker. They looked at one another and said, “This is a problem for Mensa!” They decided they would try to get the right spice in the right shaker using what was left on their dinner table: a napkin, a saucer, and a straw. Once they figured it out, they called their server over to show him their brilliant solution. The server listened to them explain the problem and their elaborate solution, but before the Mensa team could move into action, the server offered an apology for this glaring dinner oversight, and without any hesitation, he reached for the shakers, quickly removed the caps, put them on the correct shakers, and declared, “Problem solved!” Then with a grin on his face, he walked away in triumph!

All too often, we make something much harder than it is—even when it comes to being filled with the Spirit. If we are going to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must put on the brakes and slow down, because our lives are too complex. We must become **unhurried**. Let’s break this down with [www.unhurried](http://www.unhurried).

**W for WANT**

First and foremost, we must WANT a relationship with God, the Holy Spirit, and that is expressed in being unhurried. We must want—and need—Him! Think with me. All four gospels describe the moment when Jesus was immersed, but only one gospel provides this unique insight:

Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on Him. And I myself did not know Him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.” (John 1:32-34)

The Spirit remained on Jesus. This is the first time we read this in Scripture. In the Old Testament, the Spirit was given to a person for a specific purpose and removed. The Spirit did not remain with any individual until Jesus. The “fullness of the deity” lived in Jesus while He was on earth (Colossians 2:9). Jesus was fully God, but He was also fully human and in need of the Holy Spirit. We must admit to the same.

Remember, the Holy Spirit is God and God is looking for, wanting a relationship with each one of us. From the opening pages of Scripture, even before Adam and Eve sinned, God was in a “walking and talking” relationship with them (Gen 2:15, 3:8). So, when we were immersed, the Spirit moved inside of us. We have a roommate—and He not only likes us, He loves us. The word declares that God so loved us that He gave us His Son, Jesus, to die for us and that God “demonstrates His loves for us” that while we were still sinners, Jesus died for us (John 3:16, Rom 5:8). Even when we were opposed to God, He loved us. Before we chose God, He chose us. While we ran from Him, He ran toward us. God loves us, is for us, and is with us through His Spirit in us.

Acts 2:38 says, “Repent and be immersed, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Think about that: when the Spirit of Jesus entered you and me, it was the convergence of heaven with earth, and that is indescribable!

But here’s a word of warning. Some people want the remarkable rather than the relationship. What do I mean by that? Some people want the spectacular, the demonstrative power of the Holy Spirit. Some individuals want to speak in tongues, to give words of prophecy. There is a picture of this in the Old Testament. When wicked Queen Jezebel put a contract out for the murder of Elijah the prophet, he went running from her and ended up hiding in a cave. In the midst of his despair and indescribable depression, God showed up—and He showed off.

There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.” The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the

Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:9-13)

God was not in the remarkable, the spectacular. He inhabited the whisper. God is a jealous God and He wants a relationship with each of us, so much so that His one and only Son, Jesus, died a horrific death on a cross for us. Then God gave to us His Spirit to be with us forever! Talk about determined! Talk about love driving God to want a relationship with us!

I was in Kansas to do some leadership coaching at a church recently. I’ve been there several times. I know the staff and elders very well, and they know me. When the day came to an end, I went to get in my rental car, but I couldn’t find the keys. I looked everywhere, and the staff and elders began searching with me. It was then that I remembered that I left the keys on a lunch tray. Every time I go to this church, they serve some incredible Kansas City BBQ. Long story made short, after eating, I dumped the contents of my lunch tray into the trash and the trash bags had already been thrown into the giant trash dumpster behind the church. But before I could jump into the dumpster, Taylor, the pastor’s administrative assistant, had already climbed into the dumpster and was tearing open every trash bag looking for my keys. Then it got worse—the clouds were torn open by rain, and it poured! While all of us ran into the building, Taylor stayed on task in the dumpster only to come up empty handed. Imagine how I felt when I reached into the bottom of my backpack and found the missing keys! What I saw take place that day will always remind me of how God went dumpster diving for me, sending His Son Jesus to die for my sins. God is determined to have a relationship with us.

So then, why approach God *for gifts* when we can have the gift *Giver* Himself? Being filled with the Spirit of Jesus is not some mysterious secret sauce, a genie in a bottle, or an incantation to say while burning incense. It is simple and it has everything to do with humbly coming to God on HIS terms and WANTING the Spirit. This is not about a formula, but an eternal friendship with the one true living God, the Spirit of Jesus!

## **W for WAIT**

After His suffering, He presented Himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:3-8)

Jesus told His disciples to WAIT for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus died on what we call Good Friday and was raised on Sunday. After that, He appeared to His followers for forty days, then after He ascended into heaven, His followers did just what Jesus commanded. They waited, and not just for a few minutes or a few hours but for ten days. Then God sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost—fifty days after Jesus was raised from the dead. Why did they have to wait? Why not send the Spirit immediately? Waiting was an expression of trusting and trusting was a declaration of surrender, a declaration of their faith being anchored in God.

They had to wait, and so must we. When we slow down and wait, we express that we trust the Spirit to fill us, empower us, and provide for all that we need. Do not think for a moment that we can experience intimacy with the Spirit of Jesus with three-minute devotions, practicing the ever famous “God on the go” plan. How can I know the DEEP things of God when I settle for a SHALLOW experience with God? Can we contemplate the depth of the universe in three easy minutes? Can we imagine the vast expanse of earth in a 30-minute flight at 32,000 feet? If we want to experience the filling of the Spirit, we must be willing to invest time with Him.

Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty). . . (Acts 1:12-15)

After Jesus ascended into heaven, how did His followers spend the next ten days? They “all joined together constantly in prayer” in the upper room. They entered the upper room and met with God. They secluded themselves from the hustle and bustle of the streets below. Going upstairs, they entered a room and closed a door on distractions that would keep them from God. Moreover, in Genesis 7, we read four times that Noah, his wife, his sons, and their wives, “entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood” (vv. 7, 9, 13, 15), and then Jesus reminded the people that Noah “entered the ark” (Matt 24:38, Luke 17:27). I’ve heard it said that if something is repeated, it is important! God does not want us to miss something here.

We enter a house, a room, a building. Being inside is different than being outside, where we are exposed to noise, to weather, to traffic, and more. When we enter, there is a sense of protection, seclusion, and separation. The friends of Jesus entered a room where they prayed and waited. We are friends of Jesus, and nothing has changed. We have to be intentional and deliberate to enter quiet seclusion with the Spirit of Jesus.

One more thing about being unhurried. When we are in a hurry, we declare our importance. We have places to go, people to see, things to do—and in our own strength. “Get out of the way because I am more important than you.” Pride is a spiritual speed bump that keeps us from being filled with the Spirit. Humility is one of the many remarkable traits of Jesus.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing. Taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

Humility, not pride, enables us to be unhurried so that we wait to encounter the Spirit of Jesus in deeper, more filling ways. I'm a work in progress and will be until the day I draw my last breath. To that end, as I strive to move into humility, I have four simple initiatives: 1) be quick [to praise others], 2) be quiet [speaking less of myself], 3) let go [of control of others], and 4) go last [in line, in traffic, etc.]. Unless I learn to slow down and WAIT, I will not experience the filling of the Spirit of Jesus.

## **W for WALK**

“So I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).

When writing to the churches throughout the region of Galatia, Paul commanded Christians to “go on walking” (i.e., live every day) with the Spirit. When Paul wrote this, he used one word twice, and it is the Greek word *pneuma*, which means “wind.” Paul wrote, “So I say, walk *pneuma pneuma*”—“wind wind.” One of the words for the Spirit is *pneuma*, meaning that the Spirit of Jesus is immaterial, not flesh like us. Moreover, the Spirit “blows” and goes wherever He wants. We are to be moved, directed, blown by the wind of the Holy Wind. How do we do that? Just as we had to learn to walk when we were little, we must learn to WALK IN THE SPIRIT. Think of it this way. When we are filled with the Spirit of Jesus, we are putting on some spiritual muscle, and for that to happen, we must be willing to make an effort. Someone who is serious about physical fitness will spend hours in the gym because that is what it will take to build physical muscle, and the person does so because it is gratifying, satisfying. Similarly, if you and I want to be spiritually strong, it will take some serious effort.

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. (1 Timothy 4:7-9)

The word “training” in Greek is the word *gumnazo*, from which we derive our word gymnasium. Getting some physical exercise benefits us in this life, but when we make an effort to grow spiritually, in the person and strength of the Holy Spirit, it benefits us for the next life. When Jesus healed a man who had been born blind, He put some mud in the man's eyes and told him to go and wash out the mud in the pool of Siloam. The man did and he returned to Jesus with his full sight (John 9:1-7). Jesus required the man to make an effort to receive the blessing of his sight. When Jesus encountered the ten men with leprosy, He required them to go and show themselves to the priest, “and as they went, they were healed” (Luke 17:14). Jesus could have healed each of them instantly on the spot, yet He required them to make an effort to receive the blessing. We need to make an effort to build a deep relationship with the Spirit of Jesus, and that

begins with WANTING Him, which leads to WAITING for Him, and results in learning to WALK in Him. And remember, it's unhurried. It is not a sprint.

Walking in the Spirit, being prompted, led by Him day by day and throughout the day, is how we are to live. Check this out.

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." (Acts 8:26-29)

The Spirit prompted Philip to go to the chariot of the Ethiopian official and to stay near it. Philip was led by the "wind of the Holy Wind." Can we do that? Does the Spirit prompt people today?

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)

The Spirit said, communicated, directed individuals (i.e., church leaders) to send out Paul and Barnabas—the A Team—to a new place of ministry. And they went. They walked in the Spirit. Christians then kept in step with the Spirit. Does the Spirit speak today to us? Yes, and amen! We can be sure of this because the Spirit is God and God does not change. He is immutable, unchanging! The Spirit is *still speaking*. The question is, "Are we listening?"

In each of the seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3, Jesus ended each letter with this statement: "Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Seven times. Seven letters. If it's repeated. . . The Spirit is speaking. Are we listening?

Three inventions have profoundly impacted our lives and this world. In 1370, the clock was invented, measuring a day and a night, and not the rising and the setting of the sun. The second invention was in 1879, and the light bulb made it possible for people to stay awake longer at night. No longer did people sleep for an average of ten hours a night! The third invention was more recent—in 2007 the iPhone made it possible for people to be constantly connected with one another and their world! An estimated 97% of Americans now own a cell phone, and though they are to help us communicate with one another, they often do just the opposite. When was the last time you had a completely focused conversation with a person (spouse, child, friend, etc.) and your phone was nowhere near? Do we make it a habit to turn the phone upside down during a conversation, or does it distract us from hearing one another? In some families, people come and go like ships in the night. We move through the house with little or no connection to one another, hardly speaking and rarely sitting with and enjoying one another's presence. The same thing happens with the Holy Spirit. He lives in us, and we are like strangers to one another, having

little or no conversation together and certainly not taking time to sit and enjoy one another's presence.

When I am traveling with e2, I will call Leah a few times a day and ask typical questions: What did you do today, was there anything good in the mail, etc. Leah will then answer the questions, and from time to time, I've been known to ask her the same question in the same conversation! Then, in typical Leah-esque directness, she asks: "Are you listening to me?" Regretfully, the Spirit of Jesus asks me the same question, and even more directly than my wife! We have FIVE senses: taste, smell, sight, hearing, touch. Yet, there is a sixth sense, and it's spiritual. Our spiritual sense is the Spirit Himself communicating with us. Do I hear Him audibly? No. But I, like you, can hear Him distinctly speak in three primary ways, and it's as simple as A-B-C: A is for advisors, B is for Bible, and C is for conscience.

A is for advisors. "Many advisors make victory sure" (Proverbs 11:14).

In Exodus 32, Moses went for a hike to the summit of Mt. Sinai, and while he was gone for forty days and nights, with no way to send a text or a tweet, the people turned to Aaron, the high priest (i.e., senior minister and spiritual leader) with a request: "Come make us gods!" Aaron took that under advisement (for all of 60 seconds) and told them to give him their gold rings, earrings, etc. Aaron then smelted the gold and sculpted a golden calf. Aaron listened to the wrong voices and thousands of people died. The Holy Spirit will speak through holy people in your life and mine. Jesus said that every student becomes like his teacher (Luke 6:40), and we must be careful when it comes to the impact of our spiritual teachers. After all, Paul said that bad company corrupts good character (1 Cor 15:33).

How else does the Spirit speak to us? Through Scripture. B is for Bible. "All scripture is God breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). The word "scripture" is the word *graphe*, and it means the written word. In John 1:1,14 we read, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and lived among us." The word for "word" is *logos*, meaning that Jesus God was Scripture embodied. Finally, Ephesians 6:17 states, "And take with you the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." Here, the phrase "word of God" is the word *rhema*, which means the spoken word. When Jesus was tempted by Satan, He spoke the word audibly, telling Satan that "man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Written. Embodied. Spoken. Studies show that when we read the written word of God at least four times a week, then embody the word in our minds (i.e., meditate, memorize), and we begin to spontaneously make it a part of our everyday speech, we will grow more quickly and more like Jesus than in any other way. This is the most life-transforming way to personally *know* and become like Jesus. The more we know Scripture the more clearly we will "hear" the Spirit of Jesus speak into our lives. B is for Bible.

Still, one of the most common ways for the Spirit to speak into our lives is through our conscience. Every person has a conscience by which we distinguish between right and wrong, between good and evil. Our consciences work 24/7/365 and the Holy Spirit prompts us to select what is good, right, and God-honoring. The word "conscience" appears dozens of times throughout the Bible, with the Apostle Paul using the word over twenty times! For example, "I

thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear **conscience**, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers” (2 Timothy 1:3).

So, when we are about to say something stupid and we have the thought, “Don’t say that”—the Spirit of Jesus is speaking to us through our conscience. When we are looking at something vile on our phones, and our conscience is saying, “This is wrong! Stop now!”—the Spirit of Jesus is speaking to us via our conscience. Don’t say for a moment that we never hear the Spirit speak. That could not be further from the truth, for the truth of the matter is that we are not listening. C is for conscience

## **Closing**

Jesus was never in a hurry, and we would be better off if we lived at His pace and not ours. Hence, consider [www.unhurried](http://www.unhurried.com). WANT the Spirit, WAIT for the Spirit, WALK in the Spirit. This leads to an unhurried life.

When we choose NOT to refuel the car, we run the risk of running out of gas and causing real difficulty, significant inconvenience. When we choose NOT to be filled with the Spirit, to spiritually run on empty, we run the risk of far more than inconvenience. We risk knowing real misery and loss. Instead of being filled with the person and power of the Holy Spirit, we settle for second best, another devotional book, on-line media, workshops, seminars, and studies. These are not bad in and of themselves, but they are far from what is best, and that is to walk in the Spirit, being filled by Him moment to moment, day after day.

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