

S. SLOW DOWN

Well, the saga of my life here at the Marion Prison "Resort" continues! There is no heat anywhere in the camp and I feel like a toucan that has been stripped of his colorful feathers, sent into solitary confinement in a glacier prison in the Antarctic and is day by day becoming more jealous of the life of the penguin! If you can imagine me inside of a large deep freezer, typing with every bone in my fingers trembling in pain and waiting to break off if I hit a key too hard, you'd be close to the atmosphere I'm in right now. I don't mind being cold if I have a rifle in my hand when it's deer season. Outside of that...I **HATE** cold! But if the good Lord allows me to not catch pneumonia, I will be better prepared for the Great Tribulation for sure.



If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times: *whatever happens in the spiritual realm will manifest itself in the physical realm and whatever happens in the physical realm happens for a spiritual reason.* So instead of filing a 10-page report to the local warden of Antarctica, I have decided that this is just a test of my emergency faith system. *It's just more character-building.* And with all the new changes and rules from our new warden, the freezing cold temperatures around here, and how the enemy has been working inside the ministry, I'm hoping my character will be closer to Jesus/Yeshua here in about a week or so. I'm seeing how to live a regular life with the same sense of intense and sensitive "*pressing in*" that I had during a service.

Ladies and gentlemen, we all love adventures. We all love to push off in our speed boat in warm, sunny skies and "*do something for God.*" We all love to fix problems, score touchdowns, and run

down the battlefield, ax in hand and face painted like William Wallace in *Braveheart*. What we're not so keen to do is **be still** for God. We're not very good at **waiting** on the salvation of the Lord. When our back is up against the wall, our instinct is to come out fighting and fix the problem. If we could only see that there is an angel surrounding us with an impenetrable shield, and all he wants is for us to sit in silence, holding on to Yahweh's promises and trusting in His mighty right arm, we would see the salvation of the Lord. Unfortunately, many of us never see His power because we are too busy trying to plug every hole in our ships with every finger and piece of gum we can find.

Over the past two months, through many visions and dreams, the Spirit has shown BL and me exactly what the enemy's plans are, exactly how he had been slithering around, and exactly what needs to be done to destroy him. And because we have type-A personalities, once people like us see a solution to a problem, everyone else had better get out of the way because we're about to **Lone Ranger** into town and wipe out the bad guys with a single revolver. But this time Yahweh told us, **"not this time!"** This time it was time to do things differently. Remember: ***we don't fight against flesh and blood.*** Besides, the enemy had me in checkmate. The Father made it clear that I simply needed to wait on Him and let Him do it.

So what does it **mean** to **"wait on the Lord"**? How do we know the difference between waiting on Him and having to make real decisions in the real world? For most of my life, I couldn't have told you the answer to those questions because my philosophy was to fix all the problems using whatever wisdom He gave me. Unfortunately, this was the absolutely wrong way to live my life. On stage, I would have no problem letting the Spirit lead. Many times you would see me standing at the back of the stage pressing into the Spirit through prayer and listening intently for what He wanted to do next. Many times He would give me a word, vision, or direction of what to do next. Being led by the Ruach on stage was second nature to me. It would be in the ***rest of my life*** that I would later see I had struggled with figuring out those same concepts.

Over the past few months, the Spirit has revealed something to me that has forever changed how I make decisions in my life and what I need to do when my back is against the wall. It's so tempting when the pressure is on to make decisions and **"hope"** that God shows up to bless it. Unfortunately, this is exactly how most of us live our lives because we simply don't know how to let Him lead. Our eyes are not attuned to His frequency and the breadcrumbs He puts in front of us to follow. We are so focused on the problem that we cannot see the answer that is right before our eyes.

I have written many articles on how the Spirit is the answer and that He sculpts our circumstances as we are pressing in to Him. Now, I want to take it one step further. I want to show you how to **"track"** what He is doing in your life so that you can truly begin to follow Him by **FAITH** and not by sight. Here are a few verses relevant to this topic:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths." -- Proverbs 3:5-6

"Commit your way to the LORD and trust also in Him. And He shall bring it to pass." Who brings it to pass? HE shall bring it to pass. -- Psalm 37:5

"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him..." -- Psalm 37:7

"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint." -- Psalm 37:9

Take a look at the above scriptures. We are commanded to **NOT** lean on our own understanding, that **HE** is the one that brings the solution to pass, and that we are to wait patiently on Him. *Jim Staley admits he struggled with doing all these things day-to-day.*

Do you remember one of the first articles that I wrote entitled "**S.L.O.W**"? Well, amazingly, the Father is bringing that around again. Except for this time, it is in the spiritual and not so much in the natural. In that article, the acronym stood for "**Slow Down, Listen, Observe and Wait.**" Little did I know that this would be the exact formula He would use months later to teach me how to follow His lead. It would be this "*formula*" that the Father would use to break me out of my terrible habit of trying to lead when I'm off stage and finally bring me to a place where I would let Him lead **ALL** the time. That no matter how large the storm, I would be able to rest in His mighty right hand. So let's begin and go back through our "**S.L.O.W.**" acronym and put this into something you can actually track and live by.

S - Slow Down

Our lives are so fast these days that we seem to not have time for anything related to God. Most Christianity says 'hi' to God in the morning and at night for a few minutes and once or twice a week at church. Our lives are so packed with so many "*things*" that keep us busy that we just don't have time for Him. On a good week, we are going a hundred miles an hour and barely keeping up. But when things go south, we don't slow down, we **SPEED UP** trying to keep up with the situation! This is where the trap is laid. This is where I made many mistakes. The trap and the lie are that when "*the going gets tough, the tough get going.*" No. The truth is that when the going gets tough, the tough **STOP** going. The spiritual person stops what he is doing and looks for signs.



What does a deer hunter do when tracking a deer that has been shot? He looks for every drop of blood and then marks it so he can see the direction the deer went. He is meticulous and slow about tracking. He doesn't want to destroy the evidence or "signs" that would lead him to where his freezer is full of meat.

What do we do when we are lost on our way somewhere? Do we just keep driving aimlessly in all kinds of directions just hoping that God will deliver us to our destination because we *"really want to get there"*? **No**. We pull out the directions and look up at the signs and follow them. We do not make up our own signs, nor do we proceed down the highway without them. Even though there are tons of signs on the highway, we know exactly what we are looking for because He told us ahead of time exactly what we are to look for (more on this later).

However, **none** of this can be accomplished if we are going so fast that we miss the signs designed for us to be able to track what He is doing in our lives. Without the signs, we are *"leaning on our own understanding"* and we are **NOT** *"acknowledging Him in all our ways."* I will go into what these signs are as we move forward. For now, I want to focus on the fact that we are simply going so fast that we are missing every sign, exit ramp, and instruction that comes up. We are so busy with the latest video, movie, sports game, romance novel, and everything else that keeps us going a hundred miles an hour that we have simply come to a point where our foot is glued to the gas pedal and we're unable to sit still.

Where I am living is not reality. I get that. But there is much to learn from my circumstances. First, I am living out of a locker. Everything I own is either in it or in a bin under my bed. My life has been simplified dramatically. Secondly, my schedule has been cleared and I have no access to my iPhone. *I'm still having withdrawals.* All of this combined has created a lot of time on my hands, time that I didn't know existed...time to **slow down**. And in all this forced "slowing," I have learned what I have been missing. I have been missing **REAL** life, **REAL** relationship, and **REAL** love. I have missed important signs because *"life"* was choking the *"life"* right out of me. Sound familiar?



The Holy Spirit knew that the only way to actually really slow me down was to physically get rid of the things I had on my plate. I didn't know how to do it so He did it for me to show me what it looks like. Now I get it. Slowing down was removing the things that were preventing me from "Listening," the next letter in the acronym **S.L.O.W.**

I'm not saying that we need to cut everything we enjoy out of our lives in order to have more time with God, but what I ***am*** saying is that sometimes those things contribute to the "white noise" and the speed of our race cars. Do we really have to watch all that TV? Do we really have to do this, do that, go here, and go there? Is there anything in your life that the Spirit is highlighting to you right now that might be causing you to be missing that critical time with Him?

What about the crisis? This is where the rubber meets the road. The bank says you have to have the money by such and such a date. You don't have it. What do you do? Run around and try to figure out how to get it right. Wrong. **SLOW DOWN**, get on your face, and wait for direction, the "sign." When do we go through an intersection? When the light turns green and not a moment before. In the physical, we understand how to read and wait for the signs.

Unfortunately, most of us have never been taught how to read the spiritual signs so we're running red lights and crashing our cars, then wondering why life is so hard all the time.

Are you living your life in the fast lane? Are you going too fast? Maybe it's time to simplify and create the downtime needed to hear that gentle voice that is always speaking. The next time you're in a crisis and something has to be done right now "or else" there is simply no way for you to make it happen, what if you just put it in His hands to fix?

What if you actually *"trusted Him with all your heart and leaned not on your own understanding"* so that **HE** can direct your path? What if we *slowed* down, took a *deep breath*, and truly let Him get out in front of us so we can actually see what He's doing? How can we follow someone when we're always in front of them? Going too fast is a destiny filled with accidents, failures, and mistakes. My brother-in-law used to always tell me when I raced dirt bikes that "you have to slow down to go fast." If you slow down, you will *see* things and *feel* things that you have never experienced before. As we move into becoming the image of God in the earth realm and truly carrying out His plans for all to see, we first have to slow down long enough to let Him remold us on the potter's wheel so we can be what He desires.

*Shalom,
Jim Staley*