

Feel Disconnected? Try Slowing Down

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If you rank standing in long lines right up there with spiders and snakes on your list of personal nightmares, you're not alone.

Whether we're standing in line, sitting in traffic, or watching for the bus, we hate waiting.

Luckily for us, wait times are truly becoming the stuff of nightmares: a dreaded possibility but not a daily reality. We live in the age of zero wait times. Technology is speeding everything up so much that we have shorter attention spans than goldfish (yes, really).¹ When the need to wait does arise, we try to fill our time—usually by turning to a mobile device.

There's nothing inherently wrong with technology or efficiency, but a rapid pace and constant distractions might be keeping us from something more important.

More Than a Quippy Scripture

Not long ago, I was feeling spiritually adrift. I couldn't understand it. I was going to church, rattling off

prayers, and glancing at my scriptures. I occasionally felt spiritual promptings, but overall, I felt somewhat disconnected.

As I told Heavenly Father this in an anxious prayer, these words came to mind: "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

It was as if the word *still* was highlighted, underlined, and in bold type.

I may have been doing all the right things, but I was doing them at high speeds and with shallow focus. I had adopted a distracted approach to living the gospel.

No religious practice could bring me deep spiritual connection if my participation was cursory and distracted. It was much more than a quippy scripture. To come to know God and to connect with the divine, permeating knowledge I was craving, I needed to slow down and be still.

Heeding that prompting wasn't easy. But it made all the difference.

Now, Slow Down There . . .

Nephi teaches that those who "*diligently seeketh* shall find; and the

**"I love waiting,"
said no one ever.
But maybe they
should.**

mysteries of God shall be *unfolded* unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 10:19; emphasis added).

Let's break it down: Learning the mysteries of God requires *diligently seeking*. It's a consistent and intentional practice, not a onetime google. Next, the mysteries don't pop up; they gradually *unfold*. This process takes time. And that time is critical! The *time* we take to ponder and seek gives us *time* to connect to the Spirit, by whose power answers come.

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) declared that meditation—“deep, continued reflection on some religious theme”—is “one of the . . . most sacred doors through which we pass into the presence of the Lord.”² By slowing down, we can open a door to revelation. We can transcend

the world’s pervasive ideals and connect with the divine. We *need* that door. We need to slow down.

It Takes Effort

For me, slowing down meant kneeling and speaking out loud as I prayed. The reverent posture and my

own audible words helped me focus better. Slowing down meant studying from physical scriptures and taking physical notes. It takes more effort and time, and that increased effort and time is a good way to “awake and arouse your faculties,” thus allowing the Spirit and the desire for truth to “work in you” and that seed of testimony to “get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit” (Alma 32:27, 37).

We can find almost any information with a few keystrokes, but spiritual understanding and conversion requires *time* and diligent *effort*. *How* you slow down and devote effort to the gospel isn’t important, just that you do! When we are spoon-fed information, we eliminate much of our personal participation in our own learning. We eliminate chances to connect with the Spirit.

We can certainly embrace the technology and advances that make daily tasks easier and enable us to use our time more efficiently. But we can’t afford to adopt the distracted living and shallow thinking that so often come with it. Instead of dreading the need to wait, we can embrace it as an opportunity to slow down, meditate, and deepen our connection with the Spirit. ■

NOTES

1. See Leon Watson, “Humans Have Shorter Attention Span Than Goldfish, Thanks to Smartphones,” *The Telegraph*, May 15, 2015, telegraph.co.uk.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* (2011), 31, 32.

