



SJB Reclaim Challenge January /February

Book Study

Weekly Small Group Questions (with Daily Discussion Questions to consult)

“Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy” by Matthew Kelly

Mon., Jan. 5 Prologue: The Jar of Life/Part I: The Thing I Would Change

Matthew Kelly gives a new spin on the common jar of life story. He reveals that, in reality, we are never going to be able to fit everything into our jar of life, even with the best of organizational skills. Instead, he focuses on the intentionality of things and the speed of how we do them. What do you think of his quote: “Joy erupts within us when we allow an experience to touch the very depths of our souls. That cannot be rushed”?

In Part I Chapter Beyond the Joyless Urgency, the first chapter is The Thing I Would Change. The author shares his regretful journey of living a busy life. To combat this, he needed to slow down and discern what mattered most. The skill set led to the last 5 years of practicing living at a speed of joy and he encourages the reader to join in the adventure. As you embark on this 35 day journey, ask yourself these questions: Why I am undertaking this journey to slow down to the speed of joy? What do I hope to accomplish? Do I have any fears and hesitations? In what ways do I want my relationship with God and others to improve?

Tues., Jan. 6 Part I: Breakfast with a Friend

The author states, “To establish the speed of joy in your life you will need to forcibly remove busy and urgent from your life.” P. 7 Busy is defined as “having a great deal to do”. P. 8. Both busy and hurry are choices. On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being overwhelmed and 5 being joyful, where do you land? Are there some choices you could make this week that would move the scale toward joyful?

Wed., Jan. 7 Part I: A Mutual Toxic Friend

The author notes that busy does not have friend qualities but instead is “loveless and lifeless and soulless, and so, it is completely incapable of knowing your hopes, hurts, needs and dreams.” P. 12 How have you embraced busy and urgent living? How steps could you take to break up this false friendship?

Thurs., Jan. 8 Part I: Busy is Not a New Problem

The author has many quotes over the span of many years communicating that busy has been a perennial problem. What is your favorite quote? Why? How are the negative aspects of busy affecting you as a person?

Fri., Jan. 9 Part I: A Brief History of Busy

The author traces the history of technology with the lure of simplifying our lives. In essence the reverse happened with the glorification of work and badge of honor. The status of symbol of being busy became cool. He concludes, “Busy is a problem. It has accelerated the speed of our lives to the point of being inhumane, and so, we are led to conclude that busy is an enemy of joy.” What busy habits have developed over your lifetime? What is a small way you could break a busy habit?

Sat., Jan. 10 Part I: The Busy War

The author states that “joyless urgency will remain the status quo unless you decide to wrestle with busy and win.” What is your battle plan against busy?

Weekly Small Group Questions: Part I Beyond the Joyless Urgency

In this first Part One: Beyond the Joyless Urgency, was the author, Matthew Kelly’s revelation about regretting living a busy and hurried life relevant to you? If so, in what way?

Why is busy a perennial problem?

How have the negative aspects of living a hurried, busy, unintentional life effected you or others around you?

What is one step you want to move toward to live more intentionally?

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being overwhelmed and 5 being joyful, where do you land? Are there some choices you could make this week that would move the scale toward joyful?

What areas of prayer did you need to be supported in this?

Sun., Jan. 11 Part II: Human Flourishing The Trail Above the Clouds

The author tells the story of an archeologist and his team setting off to explore Machu Picchu at a more ambitious pace than the regular guides are comfortable. They claim they need 'to wait for their souls to catch up' p. 30 He is setting up in the next chapter that there is a body/soul connection in us and pace matters. What is keeping you so busy that you're ignoring your soul?

Mon., Jan. 12 Part II: The Opposite of Busy

What do you think of this quote: "The speed of joy isn't one speed. It isn't one static level of activity. It requires the human heart and mind to discern what is best for each season of life, for each day and week, and for each activity each day." P. 32 What season of life do you find yourself in?

The author states, "The speed of joy is as much about this inner attitude as it is about the amount of activity on your schedule." P. 32 He gives the example of Mother Teresa who accomplish great works in her life while embodying the ability to establish and maintain an internal disposition of calm joy. Matthew Kelly notes, "When we are living at the speed of joy we can fully engage in demanding tasks while preserving inner calm and growing more aware of the needs of others." P. 33 What side effects do you tend to experience when your life is moving too fast? How can a daily task in your season of life be lived at a speed of joy?

Tues., Jan. 13 Part II: There Must Be a Better Way

The author notes that creation thrives when it abides by the rhythm of its nature. He notes, "The speed of joy honors our legitimate needs – physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. It is the perfect combination of rest, leisure, and activity at the optimal pace. Find the speed of joy and it will flood your life with energy, enthusiasm, and creativity." What parts of your life have fallen out of rhythm? What is one way you can honor your physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs today?

Wed., Jan. 14 Part II: The Great Human Mandate

He author states that wholehearted love is a mandate from God (Matthew 22:37-39). A busy, hurried outlook contradicts the nature of love. He states, "Our joyless urgency is not of God. We have brought this breathlessness upon ourselves, but we can choose a new path." Page 40. He challenges us to not conform ourselves to the "tyrants of modern secularism: urgent, busy, and hurry." p. 40. What are your thoughts about? The author also makes the point that "the speed of joy is about giving each task the time it needs to be done with excellence and joy". Page 41. Review your day. Evaluate at how your tasks were completed and if they were with excellence and joy.

Thurs., Jan. 15 Part II: Human Flourishing

The author states, "Slowing down is not our goal. Our goal is human flourishing." Page 42. Look at the 10 markers to measure flourishing on page 44. How does this look in your life? Are you thriving or are you just surviving? At what speed do you flourish? The speed of joy is the speed at which you flourish. What is your ideal speed of joy – "the right amount of busyness and activity that leads to your flourishing? P. 48

Fri., Jan. 16 Part II: Jesus Was Never in a Hurry

The author gives examples of how Jesus was never in a hurry in all aspects of physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. What are your thoughts about this? What does Jesus' example teach you about the speed of joy?

Sat., Jan. 17 Part II: Beautiful Interruptions

The author states that Jesus loved interruptions, cherished them and made them beautiful and holy. Many of the biblical encounters were a result of an interruption. Which scripture passages were inspiring to you and why? How a person handles interruptions are a good indicator of their flourishing. The author notes these aspects, "Joy is the leading indicator. Other signs include empathy, healthy relationships, resilience, contentment, energy, broad satisfaction across multiple areas of life, willingness to serve others and responding to interruptions graciously and patiently." Page 53 How do you handle interruptions? When in your life has an interruption turned out to be a beautiful moment?

Sun., Jan. 18 Part II: Margin: The Missing Ingredient

The author states, "To slow down to the speed of joy, we need to build margin into our days. This margin is time to honor the unexpected but important. Because let's face it, the unexpected is inevitable." Page 59. What part of your life feels overloaded? How do you need to build more margin into that area of your life? Virtue requires and thrives in margin. What virtue do you need to work on? How can insert more margin in your life to practice this virtue?

Weekly Small Group Questions: Part II Human Flourishing

In our second Part Two: Human Flourishing, Matthew Kelly starts to define the concept of the "speed of joy". He states that it is not one speed and varies according to your season of life. He notes that the speed of joy honors creation and the rhythm of nature. He notes, "The speed of joy honors our legitimate needs – physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. It is the perfect combination of rest, leisure, and activity at the optimal pace. Find the speed of joy and it will flood your life with energy, enthusiasm, and creativity." What parts of your life have fallen out of rhythm?

Living with a busy, hurried outlook contradicts the nature of love. We are not centered and at attention enough to see the needs of others or pay attention to important details. How in your own life have you seen this principle in action? What is something you've tried to do to restore love?

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In the chapter entitled, Jesus was Never in a Hurry, the author notes the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects of a person's life and how Jesus lived in a calm, reflective, loving way. What scripture passage noted spoke to you and why?

The author states that Jesus loved interruptions, cherished them and made them beautiful and holy. How do you handle interruptions? When in your life has an interruption turned out to be a beautiful moment?

How do you need to build more margin into that area of your life?

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being overwhelmed and 5 being joyful, where do you land? Are there some choices you could make this week that would move the scale toward joyful?

Mon., Jan. 19 Part III: Life Isn't Supposed to Be Hacked

The author talks about life hacks that a person creates in order to be more efficient with their time and do more. What life hacks do you have? Have these prevented you from being present in the now? Has the life hack tricks and efficiency speed led to stress and anxiety? How has this led to a lack of peace in your life? What can you change today to live at the speed of joy and cultivate more peace?

Tues., Jan. 20 Part III: Who Stole Our Leisure?

What is the definition of leisure that the author gives? How is this different from other definitions that he proposes? The author states, “Leisure brings us into harmony with ourselves. It allows us to be still and quiet. It gives the truth and goodness of life an opportunity to reveal itself to us.” P. 68. Are you living in harmony with yourself? How is leisure a gift? How is it an attitude? The author states that we are bad at leisure. Do you agree? What is one thing you can do today to realign to the proper definition of leisure?

Wed., Jan. 21 Part III: The Basis of Culture

The author describes the five signs of a declining civilization. Do you agree with the signs? He quotes Joseph Pieper, “...religion can only be born in leisure, a leisure that allows time to contemplate nature, self, God and the world.” P. 73. “Deprive people of leisure and you will drive religion out of their lives”. P. 73. How do you think our society would improve if we returned to an authentic practice of leisure? What is one way you can defend your leisure from the culture of busy?

Thurs., Jan. 22 Part III: A Professor’s Sabbatical

The author states, “A sabbatical, a Think Week, retreats, pilgrimages, a day of recollection, a reading day, a day of prayer – there are so many ways to access the fruits of the sabbatical spirit.” P. 77 Pick one way to access the sabbatical spirit in your life. If you’ve practiced this in the past, what have you learned? If you could take a year off, how would you spend your time? What elements would be important enough to continue in your life after your year off? Why?

Fri., Jan. 23 Part III: The One Thing

The author states that the rest we are desiring can be fulfilled in the one thing of Sunday or Sabbath. He states, “The uncomfortable truth is that God gives us a mini-sabbatical every week.” He asks, “Have you been surrendering to the joy God wants to give you through the genius of the Sabbath?” P. 77 How do you spend your Sundays? How would your Sunday look like if you approached it as a mini-sabbatical? The author challenges you to spend a month (four Sunday’s) practicing Sunday rest. Are you willing to take the challenge? How could it benefit to with “speed distortion”? How could it ultimately benefit to living at the speed of joy?

Sat., Jan. 24 Part III: What Happened to Sunday?

The author asks the question, “Who stole our Sunday/Sabbath?” p. 84 He answers that we as a culture have all allowed it to be overcome with other values. He states that it is time to renegotiate this bad deal. Do you agree? What immovable obstacles do you need to identify and explore options to remove? How would you go about reclaiming elements for Sunday to be restful and fulfilling? Pick an obstacle and make a plan to overcome it to start reclaiming your Sunday experience.

Sun., Jan. 25 Part III: Practicing the Sabbath

The author states, “The calm, purpose, and joy of the Sabbath is an invitation and a lesson. It’s an invitation to experience calm, purpose, and joy. And the lesson is that when we live Sabbath well, we learn that all of life can be lived calmly, purposefully, and joyfully.” P. 86 What do you think of this statement? Is it true? He states, “The biggest challenge to honoring the Sabbath is what surprises many: Work is easier than leisure.” P. 87 Do you think this is true? Are there examples in your life you can relay to support your answer? Leisure requires two specific disciplines and two specific virtues. What are they and why are they important?

Weekly Small Group Questions: Part III The One Thing

In Part III we looked at the concepts of leisure, rest and Sabbath. The author notes that a person should not have to create and implement different life hacks to be more efficient with their time or do more in

life. It leads to not being in the present now, having more anxiety and stress. Looking at your life, what life hacks have you developed, and have they led to a more peaceful life?

How is leisure a gift and an attitude? What is one thing you can do today to realign to the proper definition of leisure?

On page 73 the author describes the five signs of a declining civilization. The author makes the bold statement of lack of proper understanding of leisure drives out religion. How do you think our society would improve if we returned to an authentic practice of leisure? What is one way you can defend your leisure from the culture of busy?

The author talks about sabbatical spirit. If you've experienced or practiced examples of systematic rest in your life, what have you learned? What elements of this experience would be important to continue a regular basis in your life?

How would your Sunday look like if you approached it as a mini sabbatical?

What obstacles do you need to identify and remove to reclaim elements of rest into your Sunday?

Day 22 Mon., Jan. 26 Part III: Leisure Revisited

The author quotes Joseph Pieper who says, "Leisure is an attitude of mind and a condition of the soul that fosters a capacity to receive the reality of the world." How often do we turn away from the reality of a situation because it is too much? How often do we meet people who are in complete denial of reality in some aspects of their life? Pieper says the enemies of leisure are living lives of distraction and 'total work'. Why does leisure matter? Is it possible that religion has disappeared from our lives and society because it simply cannot survive without leisure? What does authentic leisure look like in your life?

Day 23 Tues., Jan. 27 Part III: Leisure Is Essential to the Human Experience

The author states that "leisure is essential to the human experience. We cannot be fully human without leisure." P. 92. Where do you feel most resistant to slowing down and embracing leisure? Pick one of these categories of leisure that you want to explore next: contemplation, philosophical reflection, celebration, worship, the arts and aesthetic appreciation, true rest, play, and the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge.

Day 24 Wed., Jan. 28 Part III: Sunday by Design

What do you need to stop doing on Sundays in order to reclaim your Sabbath? Make a list of the things you plan to do this coming Sunday. What would happen if you only did a third of those things?

Day 25 Thurs., Jan. 29 The Simple Art of Taking Back Your Life

The author gives many benefits when you take back your Sundays. What are some benefits that you desire for your life? How will you take back your Sundays to accomplish the desired benefit(s)?

Day 26 Fri., Jan. 30 Part IV: The Secret of Life

What would be your personal answer to the question: What is the secret of life? How will you incorporate this into your life?

Day 27 Sat., Jan. 31 Part IV: What Are the Right Things?

The author states, "Desire directs our lives. The things we desire add to our joy or destroy our joy. There is a relationship between the quality of your desires and the quality of your life." P. 106 He gives a long list of things to desire. What are the greatest desires at this time in your life? How are those desires directing your life? Identify one desire you have that is steering your life in the wrong direction. How can you shift or let go of that desire?

Day 28 Sun., Feb. 1 Part IV: The Wisdom of Enough

The author states, "Live in the wisdom of enough. Slowing down to the speed of joy gets easier the more we realize we have enough and that we are enough." P. 116 What is keeping you from feeling like you have enough and that you are enough? Meditate on Psalm 23 on page 118-119. What can you ask the Good Shepherd to provide for you to embrace being enough?

Weekly Small Group Questions: Part III The One Thing/Part IV The Secret of Life

This week we continue with Part III on the topics of leisure, rest and Sabbath. The author takes a look at leisure. Why does leisure matter? Is it possible that religion has disappeared from our lives and society because it simply cannot survive without leisure? What does authentic leisure look like in your life?

Pick one of these categories of leisure that you want to explore next: contemplation, philosophical reflection, celebration, worship, the arts and aesthetic appreciation, true rest, play, and the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge.

The author gives many benefits when you take back your Sundays. What are some benefits that you desire for your life? How will you take back your Sundays to accomplish the desired benefit(s)?

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The author states, "Live in the wisdom of enough. Slowing down to the speed of joy gets easier the more we realize we have enough and that we are enough." P. 116 What is keeping you from feeling like you have enough and that you are enough?

Meditate on Psalm 23 on page 118-119. What can you ask the Good Shepherd to provide for you to embrace being enough?

Day 29 Mon., Feb. 2 Part IV: A Crisis of Contentment

The author states, "It's impossible to be grateful and unhappy at the same time. Satisfaction and gratitude go hand in hand. Happiness and gratitude are inseparable. There are no happy ungrateful people, and there are no happy entitled people." P. 120 Who or what are you most grateful for today? What is one habit you can establish to foster a sense of gratitude every day?

Day 30 Tues., Feb. 3 Part IV: In Search of the Vital Few

What do you think of Vilfredo Pareto's theory of the 80/20 Principle? How is this theory and invitation to focus on what is essential? (ie. Identifying the 20% (the vital few) and focusing on them rather than the 80% (the trivial many). The author states, "Slowing down to the speed of joy is a quest for the vital few. It is time to throw off the trivial many and embrace the vital few in every aspect of our lives." 124 What is essential for you? Take some time reflecting on what is most important at this time in your life. Perform a priorities check. List out what you consider your top five priorities in life right now. Are you spending the right amount of time and energy on these things?

Day 31 Wed., Feb. 4 Part IV: We want So Much and Need So Little

The author states, “A lot of the hurry and justle in our lives is generated by the things we own or the things we want to own. Once we discover how little we need and the real cost of owning and maintaining things, we can step back and rethink our approach.” P. 127. What do you think of this? Are there areas of your life that you need to simplify? How can you practice the author’s ‘generosity habit’? P. 126. Why would giving away things or simplifying your life be liberating or lead to greater freedom?

Day 32 Thurs., Feb. 5 Part IV: The Right Amount of Anything

The author states, “There is a right amount of anything. There is such a thing as enough. These realizations are the gateway to contentment.” P. 129 How content are you in your life? Is discontentment driven from excess? The author states, “...knowing the right amount of anything transforms FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) into JOMO – the Joy of Missing Out.” P. 128. How can you make this shift in your life? The author gives this advice, “Knowing what to want, learning how to be content, discovering what the vital few are for you (and your family), realizing how little we actually need and that there is a right amount of anything. These are all powerful lessons that make it easier to slow down to the speed of joy, but the best is yet to come.” P. 132. How are these elements present in your life? What do you need to change?

Day 33 Fri., Feb. 6 Part IV: The Great Clarifier

The author states, “Time is the great clarifier. It puts emotions, opinions, and situations into perspective. It reveals our true values and priorities.” P. 133. Is there an impossible amount on your schedule? What things are on your plate that God never intended for you? Make a list for the next 24 hours. Ask God to help you discern if there is anything that needs to be added or removed.

Day 34 Sat., Feb. 7 Part IV: A New Springtime

Do you need a springtime (a new beginning, a fresh start)? What do you think of this quote from Albert Einstein, “There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.” The author notes two lessons to learn: wholeheartedness and listening deeply. How can you apply these to your life?

Day 35 Sun., Feb. 8 Part IV: I Wish You Many

The author invites the reader to have A Harry Day which is “... a day when you wake up, have breakfast, and decide what will bring you the most joy.” P. 149 Make a plan to have a Harry Day sometime soon. What are you looking forward to the most? How would this help you to implement the other goals of this book to slow down to the speed of joy? What is one take away from this book that you want to implement in your life?

Weekly Small Group Questions: Part IV The Secret of Life

In this last section of the book, our author is bringing forward other elements that influence a person’s success to slow down to the speed of joy. The first is gratitude. The author states, “It’s impossible to be grateful and unhappy at the same time. Satisfaction and gratitude go hand in hand. Happiness and gratitude are inseparable. There are no happy ungrateful people, and there are no happy entitled people.” P. 120 What is one habit you can establish to foster a sense of gratitude every day?

The next element is living by what is most essential, or the vital few. The author states, “Slowing down to the speed of joy is a quest for the vital few. It is time to throw off the trivial many and embrace the vital few in every aspect of our lives.” 124 In performing a priorities check, list out what you consider your top five priorities in life right now. Are you spending the right amount of time and energy on these things?

Another element is having the right amount. The author states, “A lot of the hurry and hustle in our lives is generated by the things we own or the things we want to own. Once we discover how little we need and the real cost of owning and maintaining things, we can step back and rethink our approach.” P. 127. Why would giving away things or simplifying your life be liberating or lead to greater freedom?

A final element is contentment. The author states, “There is a right amount of anything. There is such a thing as enough. These realizations are the gateway to contentment.” P. 129 How content are you? What needs to change for you to become more content?

The author invites you to a new springtime in your life. In what ways are you wanting a new springtime?

The author notes two lessons to learn: wholeheartedness and listening deeply. How can you apply these to your life?

What is one take away from this book that you want to implement in your life?