THREE MILE AN HOUR GOD

a counter-formation series

A Series Study Guide

May 2026

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

SERIES INTRODUCTION

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NEXT STEPS



Three Mile An Hour God

Formation at the Pace of Love

There's a scene in the movie "Bruce Almighty" (a classic from the early 2000's) where Bruce (played by Jim Carrey) is suddenly given God's power and responsibility. It is almost immediately overwhelming: Prayers are flooding in. Crises erupt around the world. Requests are stacking up faster than he can handle. Bruce is frantic, reactive, trying to keep up with the sheer volume of need in the world.

It's meant to be funny, but it also reveals something about how we often imagine God.

Busy. In demand. Urgently reacting. Moving quickly from one need to the next. Too important to be bothered.

But when you look at the life of Jesus, nothing could be further from the truth.

God is not frantic. He is not overwhelmed. He is not in a hurry with you.

He is patient.
He is present.
He is gentle.

From the beginning, Scripture gives us this picture of God walking with His people: close, relational, unhurried. And when Jesus comes, that same reality becomes visible again. He moves through the world with a kind of steady attentiveness. He takes time with people. He listens. He notices. He is interruptible, not because He lacks purpose, but because He is rooted in relationship.

This is what God is like with you.

The theologian Kosuke Koyama once wrote, “God walks ‘slowly’ because He is love…” Not distant love, but personal love. The kind of love that doesn’t rush past you. The kind of love that stays.

He continues, “Love has its speed… It is the speed we walk and therefore the speed the love of God walks.”

God’s walking pace is not accidental. It expresses something true about how He sees you.

You are not a problem to solve or a task to complete. You are a person to be with. Because He loves you, He is patient with you. Because He delights in you, He does not rush the work He is doing in your life. He stays close. He speaks gently. He forms you over time.

This is the life we’re being invited into.

Over the next few weeks, we’re going to explore what it means to walk with a God like this.

This is not a series about doing more or becoming impressive. It’s about becoming the kind of people who can slow down to receive God’s love – and then reflect His

patient love to a hurried world.

This journey can't be rushed. God is not disappointedly hurrying you along. He's walking with you, joining you in a pace where you can learn, grow, and thrive.

The speed of love is 3 miles per hour, the average human walking pace. Because in His love, God is patient with you. In His love, God humbles Himself to walk with you.

So as you step into this series, slow down enough to notice:
Notice where He is already near.
Notice how He is speaking.
Notice the invitation in front of you.

And take the next step with Him, trusting that His love is present and patient. He won't leave you behind. He's slowing down for you, to draw near, to be present.

Slow Formation is Counter-Formation

To walk with a God like this will put you at odds with the world we live in. We live in a instant gratification world: a society of drive-thrus and microwaves. The pressures around us are real and constant; move faster, do more, stay productive, prove your worth. It's easy to absorb those values and the rhythms that accompany them without even noticing it.

But the way of Jesus forms a different kind of person. As we walk with Him, we begin to loosen our grip on the need to achieve, perform, and keep up. We learn to receive before we produce. To be with Him before we do for Him.

This is what it means to apprentice under Jesus, not just to admire His life, but to take on His way of living in the world. As Eugene Peterson once described it, following Jesus is "a long obedience in the same direction." It's not rushed or scattered. It's steady, relational, and rooted. Over

time, this kind of life begins to reshape us. We become less driven by pressure and more grounded in love, less reactive, more attentive, less hurried, more present.

Slow formation may not look impressive, but it is deeply transformative. It's how Jesus forms His people.

Additional Resources

Three Mile An Hour God, Kosuke Koyama (A Japanese priest's reflections on the heart of God and the speed of love.)

The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God, Dallas Willard (An engaging invitation to the Kingdom of God, which we enter into here and now by apprenticing under Jesus.)

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry, John Mark Comer (A call to eliminate hurry in a world of busy so that we can live present to God.)

Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation, M. Robert Mulholland Jr (An accessible introduction to spiritual formation and its disciplines.)

The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways that Jesus is the Way, Eugene Peterson (Christian living as an invitation to live like Jesus.)

The Heart of Jesus: How He Really Feels About You, Dane Ortlund (Ortlund confronts unscriptural and unhealthy stereotypes about how God sees you.)

Devotions, Mary Oliver (Slow down with this collection of poems reflecting on the spiritual life.)

3 Mile An Hour God - Week 1

Date:

Speaker:

Main Scripture: Genesis 3v8; John 1:14

SERMON TITLE

The Speed of Love

Main Points | Verses Used	Notes

REFLECTIONS

Reflect on how to apply today's sermon to your life

Quotes:

“God walks slowly because He is love.”
- Kosuke Koyama

“God loves you as you are, not as you should be, because none of us are as we should be.”
- Brennan Manning

“The primary thing God gets out of your life is not the achievements you accomplish; it is the person you become.”
- Dallas Willard

Week 1: Reflect and Discuss

1. When you picture God walking in the garden (Gen. 3:8), what does that reveal about His desire for relationship with people?

2. How do you respond to the idea that God is not waiting for you to catch up, but is already coming near to walk with you?

3. As you sit with these passages, what do you sense God might be saying to you about His heart toward you right now?

4. What does it reveal about God that He comes looking for people, even after they’ve hidden (Gen. 3:8–9)?

5. Where do you see evidence in your own life that God has come near to you—perhaps even before you were aware of Him?

6. What keeps you from slowing down enough to walk with God, both externally (schedule, demands) and internally (anxiety, control, distraction)?

7. How is God calling you to respond to this passage? Try writing an “I will” statement (“I will _____”) that captures your response. Then, go and do!

8. Who can you tell about how God has met you in His Word? Pray for an opportunity to share it with them.

““Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the ‘Beloved.’”
— Henri Nouwen
Life of the Beloved

Scripture tells the story of a God who comes near, slowing to our pace to walk with us. God comes toward us. Why? Because love moves closer.

And yet, for many of us, this is the hardest truth to receive.

We believe God loves “people” – the world even. We believe He is loving in general. But when it comes to our own lives, something resists. We default to earning, proving, and achieving. We assume God is disappointed, distant, or waiting for us to get it together.

So instead of receiving His free love, we try to secure it. And often in our striving, we actually miss the very thing that He is offering.

There are obstacles, both loud and subtle, to receiving God’s love. We replay old narratives that say I’m not enough. We live in a culture that teaches you to measure your worth by what you achieve. Perhaps you’re afraid that if you slow down, what’s beneath the surface might not be so lovable.

So we keep moving. Keep striving. Keep managing the image. But love doesn’t work that way.

Love is received. And the love of God, especially, cannot be earned, only welcomed.

This is where formation begins: not with effort, but with surrender; not with doing more, but with opening your hands.

To receive the love of God is to let Him define you: *Beloved*.

This week, slowly read over these verses. Perhaps you'll find it helpful to grab a notebook, and jot down a prayer after you read each one. Reflect on these questions: What is God's invitation to you here? Where do you sense resistance in you? What would it look like to live from this identity today?

1 John 3:1

John 15:9

Ephesians 1:5-6

John 17:23

Zephaniah 3:17

I'll say it again: to receive the love of God is to let Him define you: Beloved. Not because you've earned it or because you feel it. But because it is true in Christ.

And slowly—often more slowly than we'd like—that truth begins to sink beneath the surface. It reshapes how you see God. How you see yourself. How you move through the world.

God is not in a hurry with you. He is not rushing past you. He is walking with you, His beloved.

So this week, don't try to prove anything. Don't try to fix everything. Just begin here: Let yourself be loved.

3 Mile An Hour God - Week 2

Date:

Speaker:

Main Scripture: Matthew 11v28-30

SERMON TITLE

Keeping Pace

Main Points | Verses Used	Notes

REFLECTIONS

Reflect on how to apply today's sermon to your life

Quote:

“Hurry is not just a disordered schedule. Hurry is a disordered heart.” - John Ortberg

“The ‘easy yoke’ is to live the kind of life that Jesus lived… a life of peace, power, and joy.” - Dallas Willard

“For many of us, the great danger is not that we will renounce our faith. It is that we will become so distracted and rushed… that we will settle for a mediocre version of it.”
- John Ortberg

Week 2: Reflect and Discuss

1. What does “hurry” actually feel like in your body, your thoughts, your relationships?

2. When you picture Jesus in Matthew 11:28–30, what stands out about His tone or posture?

3. How does the idea of Jesus being “relaxed” challenge or confront your assumptions about God?

4. What are you currently looking to (achievement, productivity, approval) to give you a sense of worth?

5. Jesus says, “Take my yoke upon you… learn from me.” What do you think His “yoke” practically looks like in daily life?

6. What might you need to release in order to receive His way of living?

7. How is God calling you to respond to this passage? Try writing an “I will” statement (“I will _____”) that captures your response. Then, go and do!

8. Who can you tell about how God has met you in His Word? Pray for an opportunity to share it with them.

"If I had to choose a word or two to sum up the human life of Christ, I think it would be 'relaxed.' He was not tense. He was not anxious. He was not hurried."
— Dallas Willard
Living in Christ's Presence

If you spent a day with Jesus, what would it feel like?

Despite His importance and impact, I don't think it would be rushed, pressured, or hurried.

Jesus lived with a kind of ease, a security in His identity and purpose. Not because He had nothing to carry, but because He was at rest in the Father. Fully present. Fully attentive. Never in a hurry.

And in Matthew 11, He extends that same invitation to us: "Come to me… walk with me… learn from me."

This is more than a moment of rest—it's an invitation into a way of life. A way of moving through your actual, ordinary day with Him.

Practice: Spend Your Day with Jesus
This week, don't try to change everything. Just practice spending your day with Him. You won't be perfect or probably even all that good at it, but it's a step of faith. Jesus loves to meet us in steps of faith like this.

Think of it as a simple rhythm:

1. Pause: You Are Not Alone
At a few moments in your day (when you're feet hit the floor in the morning, before a meeting, in the middle of a task), slow down. Take a breath. Acknowledge: Jesus, you are here.

You're not starting your day alone; you're stepping into a day already shared with Him.

2. Join: Walk With Him
As your day unfolds, begin to shift from managing your life to walking with Jesus in it.

Before a moment, quietly ask: “Jesus, what are you doing here?” Then, if you have an impression or conviction, follow His lead. You’re not looking for certainty or clarity. It can even begin by imagining: What kind of thing would Jesus be doing in this moment? And then try it!

This might look like:

- Listening instead of rushing
- Being present instead of distracted
- Letting go of control instead of forcing outcomes

Spending a day with Jesus isn’t always about doing different things; it’s about doing the same things you usually do (work, family life, recreation, etc.) with Him.

3. Return: Just Come Back
I guarantee: You will forget. You will hurry. You will drift. No one is surprised, even Jesus. The practice is simply this: return.

No guilt. No pressure to “get it right.” Just turning back: “Jesus, I’m with you again.” And keep walking.

We often assume following Jesus means adding more to our lives. But often, it means learning a different pace, taking different cues.

A slower, gentler, more attentive way of living, rooted in attentiveness of His presence. This is the “easy yoke” of Jesus: not less to carry, but a different way of carrying it—together.

Each day this week, choose 2–3 moments to practice:
Pause. Join. Return. Spend your day with Jesus.

*Practice adapted from John Ortberg’s article, “How to Spend an Ordinary Day with Jesus.”

3 Mile An Hour God - Week 3

Date:

Speaker:

Main Scripture: 1 Kings 19v9-13; Gal. 5v22-25

SERMON TITLE

The Patience of God

Main Points | Verses Used	Notes

REFLECTIONS

Reflect on how to apply today's sermon to your life

Quote:

“God never hurries. There are no deadlines against which He must work. Only to know this is to quiet our spirits and relax our nerves.”

- A.W. Tozer

“There is a great market for religious experience in our world; there is little enthusiasm for the patient acquisition of virtue.”

- Eugene Peterson

Week 3: Reflect and Discuss

1. How might God be present in quieter, slower, less obvious ways than you expected?

2. Is there a part of your story where you feel frustrated with your pace of growth? How might God see that differently?

3. Galatians says to “keep in step with the Spirit” (5v25). What do you think that practically looks like in your daily life?

4. Who or what tested your patience this past week? How did you respond? If that situation happened again, what would patience look like in that exact moment?

5. Who in your life requires the most patience from you right now? How does remembering God’s patience toward you reshape how you respond to them?

6. How comfortable are you with slow transformation? In yourself and in others? Why?

7. How is God calling you to respond to this passage? Try writing an “I will” statement (“I will _____”) that captures your response. Then, go and do!

8. Who can you tell about how God has met you in His Word? Pray for an opportunity to share it with them.

Practice: Learning to Wait

““The present moment is always full of infinite riches;
it contains more than you are capable of receiving.”
– Jean Pierre de Caussade
Abandonment to Divine Providence

We don’t usually think of waiting as spiritual.

We think of it as wasted time, an interruption, or something to get through as quickly as possible. So we reach for our phones, fill the silence, distract ourselves, move faster.

But what if these small moments of waiting are not obstacles to your spiritual life but actually invitations into it?

In 1 Kings 19, Elijah expects God to show up in power, in the wind, the earthquake, the fire. But God meets him in a whisper.

God doesn’t whisper because He lacks power; Elijah doesn’t need more power in this moment. He’s overwhelmed. Exhausted. Running on empty.

So God comes gently. Personally. In a way Elijah can actually receive.

This is the way of God. He doesn’t force His way in. He doesn’t overwhelm or compete for attention. He meets us in the kind of space where we can truly hear Him.

God often speaks in a whisper—not to hide from us, but to draw us close.

Practice: Learning to Wait
This week, instead of avoiding moments of quiet and waiting, begin to receive them. Choose one ordinary situation each day: standing in line; sitting in traffic; waiting for someone to respond; a delay, interruption, or inconvenience.

Rather than give into your impulse for efficiency and productivity, when you find yourself waiting, try this:

1. Notice
Become aware of your internal response.
Are you frustrated? Rushed? Reaching for distraction?

2. Breathe
Take a slow breath. Let your body settle.

3. Turn your attention to God
Quietly pray: “God, you are here. Help me receive this moment. Teach me to be unhurried.”

4. Receive instead of resist
What if this moment is not in your way but part of your formation? A place of God’s invitation for your day? A waiting divine appointment?

5. Ask
“Spirit, what are you forming in me right now?”

Patience isn’t formed in theory. It’s formed in moments like this, as we let the Spirit meet us in our frustration and anxiety.

The fruit of the Spirit grows slowly, quietly, over time. As you use this moment to become more aware of God *in* the moment, you begin to experience something deeper:
You are not alone.
You are not behind.
God is not rushing you.
He is with you, right here, in this moment.

Prayer:
Jesus, you are not in a hurry.
Slow me down to your pace.
Form your patience in me,
even as I wait. Amen

3 Mile An Hour God - Week 4

Date:

Speaker:

Main Scripture: John 15v1-11

SERMON TITLE

Abiding as Breakthrough

Main Points | Verses Used	Notes

REFLECTIONS

Reflect on how to apply today's sermon to your life

Quote:

“The branch of the vine does not worry, and toil, and rush here to seek for sunshine, and there to find rain… it rests in union and communion with the vine…”

- Hudson Taylor

“Abide in Me, rest in Me, and let Me do My work.”

- Andrew Murray

Week 4: Reflect and Discuss

1. What stands out to you about how Jesus describes the relationship between the Father, Himself, and us?

2. Jesus repeats the word remain/abide multiple times. Why do you think He emphasizes it so strongly?

3. Jesus says the Father prunes the branches so they can bear more fruit (John 15:2). What might pruning look like in your life right now?

4. What are some subtle ways you try to “produce fruit” on your own (fixing, controlling, performing, rushing outcomes)?

5. If abiding is less about adding and more about staying, what might you need to stop or slow down to create space for connection?

6. At the end of this week, what would it look like to measure faithfulness not by outcomes, but by connection?

7. How is God calling you to respond to this passage? Try writing an “I will” statement (“I will _____”) that captures your response. Then, go and do!

8. Who can you tell about how God has met you in His Word? Pray for an opportunity to share it with them.

Practice: Abiding Together

"You can trust us to stick to you through thick and thin—to the bitter end. And you can trust us to keep any secret of yours—closer than you keep it yourself. But you cannot trust us to let you face trouble alone."
– Meriadoc Brandybuck
J.R.R, Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

We often imagine abiding as something quiet and personal—just us and Jesus, like a branch resting in the vine. And there's truth in that. Abiding is deeply relational, intimate, hidden. It's the slow work of staying connected to Him.

But it's not meant to be a solo mission.

From the beginning, apprenticeship has always included another person: a master, a guide, or even a "fellowship of the ring," so to speak. Someone(s) who has walked the road a little further and can help us see what we can't yet see. In most areas of life, we expect this (think: coaches, mentors, teachers). But in our spiritual lives, we can drift into thinking it's just "me and Jesus."

Yet Jesus didn't disciple people that way.

He formed a community. He invited people to walk with Him together. And even after He ascended, His followers continued this pattern—learning, practicing, growing side by side, with older voices speaking wisdom into younger lives.

Abiding, then, isn't just about staying connected to Jesus. It's about staying connected to the people He uses to shape us.

Because here's the reality: there are things Jesus wants to grow in you that will only come through relationship, through conversation, through encouragement, through correction, through watching someone else follow Him in real time.

You can’t apprentice alone.

So this week, don’t just ask, “How can I abide?” Ask, “Who am I abiding with?”

Who are the people in your life that carry wisdom, depth, or faith you long to grow into? Not perfect people—but faithful ones. People who have walked with Jesus through real life.

Take a step toward them.

Reach out. Ask a question. Invite a conversation. Be honest about where you want to grow. You don’t need a formal program, just a willingness to learn, to listen, to walk together.

Because abiding isn’t just about staying connected to the vine. It’s about growing in a vineyard.

Practice: Abiding Together
Abiding with Jesus isn’t meant to be a solo journey. Growth happens in relationship.

This week, take one simple step:
1. Name one person
Think of someone a step ahead of you in following Jesus—especially in an area you want to grow.

2. Make a simple ask
Keep it low pressure. You could say:
“I’d love to grow in _____. Would you be open to meeting a couple times so I can learn from you?”

3. Show up curious
When you meet, keep it simple:

- Ask about their story
- Ask what helped them grow
- Take one small step to practice afterward

The life of abiding isn’t just personal; it’s shared. Take a step towards someone this week.

3 Mile An Hour God - Week 5

Date:

Speaker:

Main Scripture: Ephesians 2:10; 1 Cor. 13:1-7

SERMON TITLE

Unhurried with others.

Main Points | Verses Used	Notes

REFLECTIONS

Reflect on how to apply today's sermon to your life

Quote:

“Hurry is incompatible with love.”
- John Mark Comer

“The church is the church only when it exists for others.”
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Week 5: Reflect and Discuss

1. Where have you seen glimpses of God already at work in lives around you this week (family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances)?

2. What does it mean that you are God’s handiwork, not a project He’s managing, but something God is forming/crafting?

3. How does your view of “mission” change if the good works are already prepared by God?

4. Where in your life are you most tempted to rush people instead of loving them patiently?

5. What would it look like to move at the pace of love in one specific relationship this week?

6. Where do you notice yourself trying to fix people instead of simply walking with them?

7. As you walk with God this week, how will you stay attentive to both Him and the people around you?

8. How is God calling you to respond to this passage? Try writing an “I will” statement (“I will _____”) that captures your response. Then, go and do!

9. Who can you tell about how God has met you in His Word? Pray for an opportunity to share it with them.

Practice: Making Margin

"Developing an intuitive, incarnational lifestyle is an organic process and depends on our willingness to listen and respond to God's direction. For it to emerge, we must learn to trust God and lean on faith, being certain that his Spirit is faithfully working in and through us."
– Hugh Halter
The Tangible Kingdom Primer

We often assume that a life with others will just… happen.

But if we're honest, most of us are already full. Full schedules. Full calendars. Full minds. And when life is full, even good desires—like loving people, being present, joining what God is doing—get pushed to the margins.

Walking with others isn't just about intention; it's about margin.

Hugh Halter describes the "intuitive life" as learning to sense and respond to what God is already doing, often not through a plan, but through attentiveness in everyday moments.

But that kind of life doesn't happen when we're rushed, distracted, or overcommitted. It grows in the margins.

This week, don't try to add something new. Instead, make space for what God may already be stirring.

Practice: Making Margin
Before anything changes, we have to notice what's already filling our lives. Take a simple audit of your time and attention this week—because margin doesn't happen by accident, it's made by what we choose to keep and what we choose to release.

Ask two simple questions:
What do I need to say "no" to?

Not because it's bad, but because it's crowding out something better (an extra commitment, unnecessary screen time, overfilling your schedule).

What do I need to say "yes" to?
A person. A conversation. A shared meal. A moment where you slow down enough to actually be with someone.

As you take this simple audit, you may start to see how full your life is, and how often that fullness keeps you moving past people.

The intuitive life in the Spirit isn't something we switch on in a moment; it's something we grow into as we become more available. As you begin to release even a little space, you'll find your pace slowing just enough to notice, to linger, to walk with people where they actually are (just as God slowed down to walk with you).

This is where life with God and life with others begin to overlap: conversations deepen; interruptions become invitations; what once felt like something extra starts to feel like the very place God is present and at work.

Over time, you're not forcing connection; you're living in step with the Spirit, attentive and responsive in real moments with real people.

And you may discover: the space you made isn't empty at all; it's where love begins to take shape.

You're no longer trying to fit mission into your life; you're discovering that your life is already filled with it.

The intuitive life is simply this:
walking with God at His pace…
and finding that He is already walking with others, too.

Next Steps
As we wrap up our series, what's your next step in the direction of Jesus?

Seek First
Seek First is a space to return to the altar: to pause, yield, and realign our hearts with the presence of Jesus. In the middle of busy weeks and crowded priorities, we come not to perform but to offer ourselves again. Join us in the Upper Room for a time of worship and prayer – **May 4, 18, June 1, 15** (8pm). Together we seek first His Kingdom, trusting that when our lives are on the altar, His fire still falls.

Want more information about a House Church?
A fresh season of House Church is coming this fall. House Churches are located all around our valley and are designed to help us practice the way of Jesus: being with Jesus; becoming like Jesus; doing what Jesus did. House Church is a safe place to go deeper with Jesus and in community:
www.findcommunity.com/housechurch

WinShape Day Camp || June 29-July 3
WinShape Camp is one of the most tangible ways we get to love our city together. For one week, our campus fills with kids laughing, learning, and experiencing the kind of joy and belonging that reflects the heart of Jesus.

There are two simple ways to be part of what God is doing. First, you can serve: showing up with presence, energy, and care to help create an unforgettable week for these kids. Second, you can give: helping remove financial barriers so more families in our community can say yes to camp.

Whether you're leading, supporting, or giving behind the scenes, you're helping create space for kids to encounter joy, friendship, and the love of God in real and lasting ways.

More info: findcommunity.com/winshape

NOTES:

COMMUNITY
CHURCH RANCHO