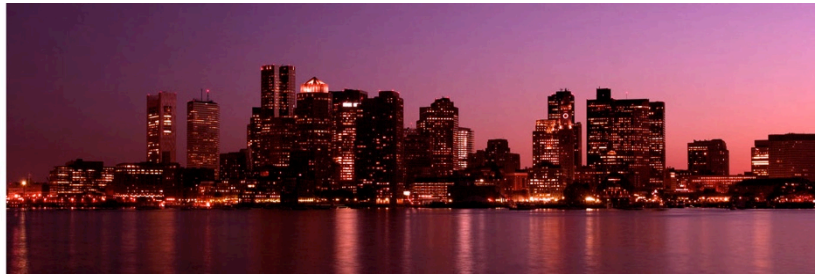


August 1, 2019

Brian & Malisa Ellis – Serving with Cru in Boston

Change Boston



How to slow down

“Thank you for helping me slow down and connect with Jesus,” Andrew said to me. “This is the first time in weeks that we’ve paused long enough to have space to connect with Jesus.” This summer I got to coach Andrew a Cru staff guy and a group of other new Cru team leaders from across the country.

One thing that’s important for all of us is to cultivate our walk with God.

Similar things are true of the students we work with today in Boston. They are hyper-scheduled, overworked, and don’t have or make the time and space to connect with Jesus. Instead, they’re running from activity to class to other thing and usually doing it with their earbuds in.

And of course, it’s not just students. It’s also the men and women that we coach. And it’s us too – Malisa and me.

So, the question is: **“How do we slow down to cultivate our walk with God?”**

Throughout church history, Christians around the world have created spiritual practices to slow down, listen and attend to what God is doing in their lives. Practices like Bible reading daily, Prayer, Contemplation, Examen, Journaling, Rest, Sabbath, Silence, Slowing, Solitude... each of these can help us downshift and connect with God.

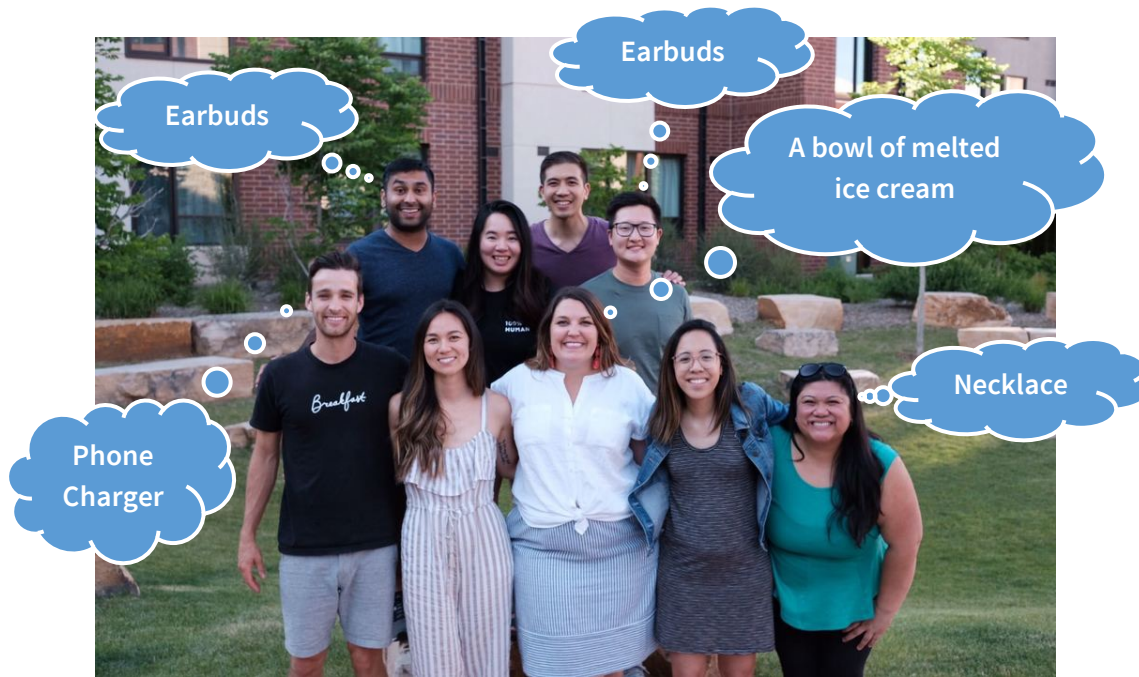
You want something practical? The next time you get together with a group of friends, ask them to bring an object to describe the state of their soul. Then when you meet, each person takes 2-3 minutes to describe the state of their soul using the object as a physical reminder – it might be a container for tea that’s crammed a little too full of tea bags to show how crammed your life is. It might be an interesting stick that reminds you of the journey Jesus has you on. It might be a tape measure to show that you keep measuring yourself against others and wish you wouldn’t. Anyway... each person shares for 2-3 minutes and everyone else just listens. Then you repeat back a significant phrase you heard (not sharing “when you said this, it made me think of...” but just sharing verbatim what they said). And then you pray for each other.

This isn’t complicated, right? You’ve just shared for a couple minutes and then listened to your friends.

But we have found that simple, slow activities like this are quite profound, because we don’t often slow down to really listen to each other.



Our kids help us slow down (even as they grow so fast... Sydney is 8, Eliza is almost 6, and Genevieve is 2)



Here's the group of new team Leaders Malisa coached this summer and some of the "state of soul" objects they brought with them.

Malisa and I have been working to cultivate our relationship with God. It includes normal things – bible study,

prayer, church, small groups. It has also included a series of amazing retreats (Emmaus) and continues with meeting a prayer partner and a spiritual director on a regular basis.

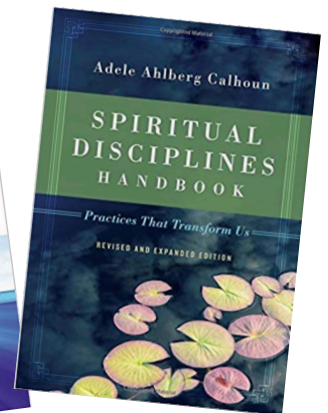
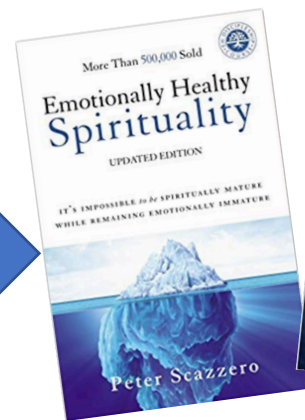
And we want to continue to expose our students to these practices. A book we love: *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Calhoun – it makes things really short. Another: *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzero.

Would you pray for us and with us?

Loving our adventurous Lord,

Brian & Malisa

Add these to your amazon wish list



Pray for us:

- That we would continue to connect into the deep well of Jesus' Spirit.
- Pray for the next two weeks as we slow down for some great rest and reflection as a family after a full summer before we head into preparing for students to arrive in Boston.

Pray for our students:

- That those who know Jesus would slow down over the next few weeks before the fullness of Fall begins.
- Pray for those who don't know Jesus, that they may pause to "ponder" who God is.



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