

How many of you believe that life is moving at a faster pace than it did 40 or even 20 years ago? How many of you wish that life would slow down, that you could simply enjoy life more instead of running day after day just to keep? Today, nearly everyone is in a hurry. We've got place to go, things to do, and time waits for no one. At first glance, the words from the rather unknown book of Leviticus don't appear to speak about the hurried pace of life, but when you look more carefully, they describe and prescribe useful information for life in the fast lane.

I. God has called us to live in His fast lane. A. But we prefer to live in our self-imposed fast lane. 1. In our fast lane, we see selfishness. Verse ten in our text spoke about intentionally leaving grapes for the poor and the wanderers. Today, we live in the selfish generation, the generation that says, "Get all you can get from anyone you can get it from and share it with no one because you earned it and it's yours!" It's easy to fall into that pattern, to ignore the needs of others, to look the other way, and to focus our attention of self-survival because we believe that it's the only way to survive. It's not God's way, but we find ourselves there nevertheless.

2. In our fast lane, we also see dishonesty. As Moses pens our text, God says, "You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another." Sounds good and proper, doesn't it? But, it's not working in our communities today. When you meet someone you don't know especially in the business world, do you automatically trust them 100% of the time or do you operate with a sense of reservation, with that mental note that they may not always be on the up and up? Honesty may be the best policy, but that doesn't make it the most prevalent. Life in the fast lane may be how life runs, but dishonesty in the fast lane isn't how life is designed to be.

3. Looking at life in the fast lane, we find an abundance of grudges. Late in our text, we find the words, "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge." As we hear those words, we say to ourselves, "Yep. Sounds like a good plan, like the right thing to do." But then we step into reality and people hurt us with their words and their actions and, being human, like the rest of the world, it's easy to hold a grudge, to look for some way to right the wrong. We want to tell ourselves that we're not that way, that such things never happen in our hearts, but living in this fast paced world, it happens to the best of us.

B. Since our fast lane doesn't equate with God's fast lane, what motivates us to adjust our fast lane approach? 1. We're motivated by the reality that God is in charge. Repeatedly, our text says, "I am the Lord." Those words are more than a simple announcement of a fact. They say, "I am the One who gave you the gift of life, the One who guides and protects you, the One who placed you here for an express purpose." We may run because life has us on the run, but, as we run, God says, "Remember that I am in charge. I can change any event at any moment. Allow Me to remain in charge of your life and I will show you how to survive in the fast lane."

2. We're also motivated by His demonstration of love toward us. How do you know that God loves you? How do you know that the words, "Jesus loves me this I

know,” are true? Where is your finest and most obvious evidence? The greatest demonstration is found in the cross. Before we were born, Jesus knew we would struggle with life in our hurried world, that we would fail repeatedly. Yet, He still went to the cross in your place, in my place. He still stretched out His arms and said, “This is how much I love you.” In our hurriedness, we can always find two intersecting lines that serve as a perfect reminder that Jesus still loves you and me.

3. We’re motivated by the realization that our purpose for living is holiness. God said it many years ago, but it remains true forever, “You shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy.” Notice what He doesn’t say. He doesn’t say, “Because you are My child, you shall be successful, fulfill all your dreams, be a person of great wealth, or stand out in the crowd.” In the fast lane, productivity, output, more, more, more - that’s their motto. But Jesus gives us a simple purpose for living as He says, “Here is what I designed you to do. Be holy.” That’s our purpose for living; That’s why we exist within this hurried world.

C. Aware that we can’t avoid the fast lane of life, how do we live in His fast lane?

1. We live in it by making caring for others our life goal. Leaving the fallen grapes, not stripping the vineyard bare - it doesn’t sound like anything important, but, at that time, it was one way to care for others. Today, we have a multitude of opportunities. Our challenge is to make the most of those opportunities, to not grow weary while doing good, to believe that making time to care is one of the most life-changing things you can do. Someone who takes the time to care when they didn’t need to do so, those acts touch hearts and lives in ways we never fully understand.

2. We live in His fast lane by forgiving as Christ has forgiven us. It’s been a challenge since Cain and Abel, a challenge that seems nearly impossible in our world today. Yet, Christ still says, “Forgive as I have forgiven you.” When we look at that cross, when we see two intersecting lines that form a cross and think of what Christ did on that cross and what He demonstrated frequently in His life, we realize that we have the motivation. We have the power because Christ offers it to us. Our task is to go out from this place with a heart that is intent on forgiving and moving on with life, with a heart that says, “I will forgive no matter what the cost.”

3. We live in His fast lane by speaking well of others. As we hear the words, “You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people,” the flip side of that statement is that we go around speaking well of others. What would happen in this community if everyone spoke well of everyone else for a single day? It’s easy to gossip; it makes for great conversation, but it’s not good, neither for them nor for us. God says, “Speak well of others; treat them in the kindest way.” Although it may be popular, living in His fast lane says, “Adjust your approach because it’s the right thing to do; it’s the least we can do considering what Christ has done for us.”

4. The fast lane. We can’t make it go away although we can choose to slow ourselves down a bit. Even so, our Creator calls us to live it His way, to live not in our fast lane, but in His fast lane. Amen.