By Jim Langham

“I never saw that sculpture before,” a close friend said one evening as we were sitting around the table talking.

She was referring to a small garden behind a neighbor’s yard that was decorated with various statues, flowers and plaques with meaningful sayings.

“Have they always had those beautiful flowers surrounding their bird bath?” she continued. “And this is the first time their little boy has ever come out to greet me. I didn’t know that he was that friendly.”

Her stroll through the neighborhood produced many things she had never seen when she had hurriedly driven down that street on her way to run another quick errand.

When she walked, she saw such things as a cardinal’s nest, wind chimes, a breathtaking view across a valley, and a flower garden flanked with the words, “Smell the roses before they fade.”

“It’s amazing what you see when you’re not in a hurry,” she told us.

And the same is true with people. To stop and enjoy their humor, listen to their wisdom, and gain from their stories of pain and triumph, makes walking next to that person a deep gift to be appreciated.

To listen to their needs, catch their tears, and share their world, suddenly brings a whole new

perspective we often miss on our busy way.

Admittedly, when life's circumstances are harsh, it's much easier to attempt the quick way out, rather than sensibly work through the situation. No one likes uncomfortable situations. Trying to avoid them, pretending that they aren't there, or hiding them behind a quickly constructed makeshift wall can often seem more appealing, and understandingly so. But dealing with them "soul-outward" often brings much deeper peace and contentment in the long run.

At first, the progression of strength offered in Isaiah 40:31 seems like it's in reverse order.

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

Anyone familiar with conditioning would think that the order should be walking, running, and, finally flying. But in soul conditioning, just the opposite is true. It takes more discipline to slow down and walk than to fly away with a leaping impulse. It's in walking when we see the most, not driving or flying.

A small child was walking with a parent down a scenic country road. The youngster continued to point things out that the parent had never seen before.

Finally, he said, "Mommy, I know why I can see things that you can't."

"And just why is that?" responded the mother.

"Because you look too fast," he said. "The slower you look the more you see."

"Lord, help me to become saturated with steps, rather than fascinated with the rush. Help me to

see reaching eyes, ready hands and a child's smile. Make me realize sunbeams, fragrances from a garden, and a bird's song. Help me to look slowly, and see those moments of grace you've provided for my trials. Help me to walk in step with your pace, and see things through your eyes. Amen."