

REST

I purposely
choose to
release and
receive



Developing rhythms
in my relationship
with God

Rest *I purposely choose to release and receive*

We live in a hurried culture. Often our identities are either informed, if not defined, by what we do or achieve. The good news is God designed a tool to protect us and modeled it Himself at creation: sabbath. For the Israelites, living as slaves in Egypt, their worth and value was defined by how many bricks they made each day. Sabbath became a weekly reminder that they were not defined by what they accomplished, but by their identity as God’s children. As slaves they were not allowed to rest. Learning to live in a rhythm of rest was part of their new identity as they learned to live under God’s provision for them. We must choose to create a rhythm of rest in our lives. For some that may be an entire day every week, for others it may be a consistent block of time, or some other combination. The key thing is that it is consistent and intentional. No one will ask you to rest. Resting is different than sleeping (although it may include that), but the goal is to release our stress, our worth-seeking activity, and receive a re-creation and identity forming love and peace from Jesus.

PRACTICES

SABBATH: Set aside a block of time to reflect on what took place in your week. Consider the things you’ve learned and heard from God. Confess the times you sought worth and value in something you did, or someone else’s opinion of you. Spend time doing an activity that is life-giving and refreshing for your soul. Worship God through song, written word, or prayer. Trust God with something: give generously beyond what you would normally do; let go of something you’re trying too hard to control; or pray about an area you’ve been concerned about. Release the outcome to God.

FASTING: Give up food, or something else important to you, for a period of time (typically a day or more). As you get the urge to do that thing (hunger pangs, habit of looking at your phone etc.), instead devote a few minutes to prayer right then and there, or choose a scripture verse for meditation. Express your commitment to the Lord and ask Him to speak into those moments in special ways. Find additional ways to focus on Jesus, your spiritual life, and growth during the period of time you designate.

SLOWING: Since we live in a hurried society, we must intentionally put ourselves in places where we are forced to wait, or grow in our patience. This could involve purposely choosing the “slow lane” in a line, not wearing a watch for a day (or looking at the time), taking twice as long for a meal by eating slowly, or creating space to meet the needs of others. We typically miss opportunities to show love for others because of our fast pace of life. Slowing means we intentionally look for ways to stop and care for others, and we refuse to let our pace and achievement shape our identity.

SOLITUDE: The lives we live can often feel like a merry-go-round. We must take time to get off the ride and get away from society. It’s often in times of solitude that we will confront our loneliness and our fear. Solitude can often be the place we can hear the voice of God most clearly, as we slow down long enough to rest and listen. While this should be done regularly, it’s also recommended to schedule a half day, full day, or even multiple days each year where you can be alone and away from your responsibilities. This includes turning off devices and eliminating potential distractions.

DIG IN

The Bible is very specific when describing who we are because of the work Jesus did on the cross. Look up the Bible references below and write the things about you that are true because you are in Jesus. Do a few at a time, if necessary, so they can really sink in.

Matthew 5:13-14	John 1:12	John 10:27
John 15:15	Romans 5:1	Romans 8:1
Romans 8:14-17	Romans 8:37	1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19
1 Corinthians 12:27	2 Corinthians 2:15	2 Corinthians 5:17-19
Galatians 2:20	Ephesians 1:4, 13	Colossians 1:14, 22
Colossians 3:12	1 Thessalonians 5:5	2 Timothy 1:7
1 Peter 2:11	1 John 2:12	1 John 4:10

Read "The Message" version of Matthew 11:28-30: "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

What stands out to you from these verses?

What do you think He means by "unforced rhythms of grace"?

What do you think you could change in your life that would allow these verses to become a reality for you?

RESPOND

Of the four practices (Sabbath, Fasting, Slowing, Solitude) which feels most natural to you? Which stands out as an area for growth? If a practice is natural for you, take it to the next level. If a practice is an area where you would like to grow, make a plan to read more about it, and seek out others who do it well or have incorporated it into their lives. Then, actively and intentionally, try out that practice for a month. Write down how you have seen God working in you, and others, as a result of anticipating God's movement through the practice.

Brainstorm a list of things that replenish you, narrow down the list to a top 5, and create a pattern you can practice that would build replenishment into your weekly, monthly and annual schedule. Hold yourself accountable and include it in your calendar or schedule to make it happen. Record in your journal observations you have after a consistent time of incorporating your new practice into your schedule. Reflect on how regular replenishment and rest is impacting your life.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Soul Keeping: Caring For the Most Important Part of You by John Ortberg

Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest by Edward T. Welch

The Rest of God by Mark Buchanan

FOR KIDS

Long Story Short: Ten-Mnute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God by Marty Machowski



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