

Rest in the Lord

*Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him:
fret not thyself because of him who prospers in his way,
because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. – Psalm 37:7*

I remember when my son was young I would lay him down for an afternoon nap. He hated naps. He hated laying still. Often he would incessantly talk until I would sternly warn him to close his eyes and be quiet. He would close his eyes, but his hands would fuss, his legs would jiggle, and then an impish smile would creep over his face. He was still on the outside, but still jitterbugging on the inside. I would give a final warning that if he did not take a nap we would not be going to the park, to McDonalds, or to play his favorite game. Then, I would lay down next to him, and put my arm across his body physically restraining him. In a few minutes he was sound asleep. Why do Moms and Dads make their little boys take naps? It seems like such a waste of time in the middle of an exciting day. We do it because we know it is good for them, that their energy will soon run out and they will become agitated and unruly. A nap will refresh them and give them stamina for the rest of the day.

God knows we need spiritual naps. He exhorts us to discipline ourselves in the art of "being still." Yet most believers rebel at the silly requirement, and argue defensively that they have so much to do, being still will only put them behind. And so it goes for all our lives. We rush, we fuss, we run out of steam, we stress-out before we should, and we lose out on God's very best -- His presence and still small voice.

Even the finest machines need regular and periodic maintenance. That maintenance is essential to the longevity of the machine and its parts. God made us with self-renewing parts. He created us bio-machines with rhythms of rest and restoration. Without it we burn out. Elijah is an example of physical, emotional, and spiritual burn out. His high energy machine ran faster, longer, and harder than the average prophet. If you doubt it, just ask him. He'd tell you. "I have been very jealous for the Lord God Almighty. I am the only one left. I've had it. Take my life (I'm burned out.)"

God did not create Adam and Eve to do non-stop work in the garden of Eden. God ordained rest moments, or purposeful pauses, in their days. The best was in the cool of the day when God came down to walk and talk with them. These were precious moments of Divine restoration.

The Lord established a Sabbath rest weekly for all mankind to get rested, restored, and rejuvenated. He ordered perpetual holy days, special Sabbaths, in Israel for spiritual rest and restoration. Three times per year every man was to take significant time to go up to Jerusalem to present himself to the Lord. There were no exceptions, and no excuses. It was a purposeful pause.

Jesus recognized the need of rest for his disciples and himself. Mark 6:31 records, "Come away with me into a solitary place and rest awhile."

Rest in the Lord is not meant to be a simple mental relaxation, or an attitude one can put on in his hurried devotions early in the morning. It takes time, ample time, to slow down and recuperate

one's perspectives and forces. Hebrews reiterates for us, "*God has prepared a rest for the people of God.*" (Hebrews 4:9)

And they that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar like eagles. They will run and not be weary. They will walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31)