

**‘Rest’—Who Me?**

27 October 2011

Welcome to something we think we cannot do, or do not have the right to expect. *Welcome to ‘rest’!* Don’t miss it because it’s been so long that we can’t recognize it, or because we feel guilty about it, or **worst of all because we don’t have time for it.** For this next hour, let’s leave behind the fast-tracking, high-speeding, instant messaging, multitasking, power lunching we’re on and listen to what God’s Word says about his ordained *rest* for us.

While the world honors the one on fast-forward, God rewards the believing one who will affirmatively answer his call to *come apart and rest*. Vance Havner said, “If we don’t come apart and rest awhile, we may just come apart.” Even cell phones, digital cameras, laptops, *Ipads* and those *Pods*, too, must be regularly plugged into a power source where they can recharge and re-energize—*rest*. And if we forget to plug them in, or they cannot hold a charge, they will not do what they were made to do...or anything else.

How many of us, today, are simply falling apart with busyness and the fast-paced frenzy of modern-day living? We may not call it coming apart. We may call it a struggle with ‘time-management’—and there is certainly such a thing—but could our struggle actually be with a depletion of, and consequent depletion of, God-given ‘rest-management’?

**Don’t come apart; come to Jesus! Rest is something that God says we are to do.** He wants it for us and gives it to us if we come to him. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus says, “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*” When Jesus says “come” it’s always to a good place! And when we are yoked with him, remember that he’ll be doing the ‘lion’ share. God will give us rest for our body, spirit, mind, and soul. We are supposed to be careful to get rest—to make an effort at finding rest. And the only way we can truly learn how to plan for rest in life is to come to Jesus and say, **“Teach me how to rest, Lord; I don’t really know anything about it.”**

Listen to this definition of rest from *Webster’s New American Dictionary*: **REST n 1 : The refreshing quiet or repose of sleep, refreshing ease, relief from anything that wearies, troubles or disturbs, absence of motion. 2 : To take rest or refresh oneself with rest as by sleeping, lying down or relaxing the body or mind; to be at ease; to cease from motion, come to rest, to be fixed or directed, as the eyes on something.**

Do we remember Hebrews 12:2 from last week's study "*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the **author and perfecter of our faith***"?

**AT REST.** In a motionless state, still, immobile, tranquil—*R.I.P.* (mine).

**RESTFUL.** To be at peace, full of rest, quiet. An acrostic for REST—**R**epose, **E**ase, **S**leep and **T**ime-out has been added to the worksheet with definitions.

There is a **911** verse in the Bible that I love: Psalm **91:1** says "*He who **dwells** in the shelter of the Most High **will rest** in the shadow of the Almighty.*" Isn't that a soothing, comforting and amazing verse? There is a longing for rest in the human being. Psalm 127:2 "*In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for **he grants sleep to those he loves.***" Have we felt that longing for restful sleep and relaxation? Are we getting it?

God invented rest, he modeled rest, and he was the first recorded "rest"-er—(I know, it's not a word!) But think of it: if God rested, and Scripture records that he rested in Genesis 2:2—"*so on the seventh day he rested from all his work*"—then what does that say about us? That we certainly should rest! Scripture does not say that God needed to rest, but it tells us that he did. Maybe he rested just to model it for us. Something we do know about God's resting is that he does not sleep. The Psalm of Ascent 121:3b-4 says about God, the Almighty Protector, "*...he who watches over you will not slumber **Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.***"

• **We have to plan for rest; it doesn't just happen.** And we make our plans but then let God edit them. If our lives are frazzled and if we are exhausted, it's our fault because we haven't planned for rest. And it's not just sleeping at night; it's relaxing. And what is rest or relaxing for us may not be for another—but we will all need it.

• I'm a *nap* person—one hour and I'm new! Some people can't nap, and that's okay.

Reading a book is restful for me because I love to read and am relaxed when I do it. For others it's stressful because they don't like to read or struggle with it—for them it's work.

For me, going shopping is not relaxing—I'm a serious shopper!

But sitting on a beach or mountainside or watching animals play is restful, and I can feel totally restored in twenty minutes or so.

And studying God's word is restful for me, and exhilarating at the same time. And **time spent with God is a *must* for all of us.**•

Let the Lord help us discover what is restful. Because rest is God's idea, it will always be bigger than us. It will always be a bit illusive, but it needs to be planned for, and we need to get in touch with what rest can do for us and what rest *is* for us. If we can't do anything else, we can get into the shower for ten minutes. Find rest: have a place, a chair, a book—whatever will give us rest. Know that we can go to that place and get twenty minutes of rest if we haven't had it that day. If we *plan* to get rest every single day, then we will at least get it a few days out of every week. But to be practical we must:

1. Make a plan.
2. Be flexible with that plan, or we'll get stressed over the fact that our plan isn't working.
3. Be disciplined and get our lives under control in this area of *rest*—get control of our time. Plan three or four at-home days a week, and if we have to go out on one of those, that's okay. Make a daily list of things to do, and designate those things A, B or C. 'A' means very important; 'B' is less important; 'C' is not important. Do 'A' tasks first, so if that's all we get done, we've done what's important. Completing the 'A' tasks will often provide energy to tackle the 'Bs'. 'C' tasks may not get done at all unless they become urgent and clamor their way up to the 'A' list.

Planning for rest is very much like budgeting. Rest will impact us in all the other areas of our lives, so it's very worth planning for...and if we don't:

- **Sometimes there's enforced rest.** And who enforces that rest? God does! Hebrews 3:6 says: "*Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house....*" If we've not been resting, because he loves us and because he is faithful to *this house*—the temple where the Holy Spirit dwells—he will enforce rest. For some of us, God has been trying to make us lie down and rest. And he's been showing us that, by allowing our body to respond adversely to the stresses of overdoing—perhaps even allowing sickness. In April we'll have a lesson titled *Stress and Distress*, so I'll not go there now.

Psalm 23:1-3 says: "*The LORD is my shepherd, **I shall not be in want.** **He makes me lie down** in green pastures, **he leads me** beside quiet waters, **he restores my soul.** **He guides me** in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." If we recall the shepherd's role in the sheep's life, we know that sometimes the shepherd has to break a lamb's leg to keep it from wandering. And there are times in our lives when God, who is our Shepherd, will absolutely send enforced rest. **Warning:** He will not allow his sheep to be **in want** of it for too long!*

When our day planners and monthly calendars scream over-booked and over committed; we're physically over worked; emotionally on overload, and mentally in overdrive, overkill or over the top...look out legs! There have been times in my life when God has said to me: *"Okay, that's enough...give it a rest! You've forgotten the primary things. You need to learn again that rest is important; it will refresh your body. It will keep you from the stress that can destroy you. It will restore your soul. Come to Me...."* • And I go.

It's vitally important to our health that we take rest. If we don't rest—for long enough—the lack can contribute to the development of various diseases, and inhibit the ability of the body to fight off disease. We need to choose *rest* if we're really going to find restoration from all the stresses that come to women, in particular. Realize, though, that if we're going to go in the direction of catching rest in our days, weeks, months and years, then we'll have to turn our back on directions that take us away from rest.

We must reject guilt over rest, and the false thinking that rest is frivolous or being idle. Remember that God worked six days before he rested. Idleness and slothfulness are wrong, but *rest* is something else entirely. Rest is deliberate refreshing and restoring of the body, spirit, mind, and soul.

- **A Sabbath-rest.** In Hebrews chapters 3 and 4, God says the Sabbath-rest is important. Hebrews 3:19 *"So we see that they were not able to enter [into rest], because of their unbelief."* While these chapters refer to entering into the rest of belief (salvation), the principles apply directly to the issue of physical rest. The passage also refers to the fact that **we cannot enter into rest unless we believe that God has made it for us, that we really need it, and that we must, in fact, have it**—like salvation. Hebrews 4:1 says, *"Let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it (referring to rest)."* Be careful that you don't fall short of finding rest. And in Hebrews 4:9-11: *"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest, also **rests** from his own work, **just as God did from his**. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest."* If we've doubted that this passage means physical rest as well, look at what it says about God—just as he rested from his work of creation, we are to rest from our work.

Plan for the Sabbath; for *rest* one day out of seven—the Lord's Day—in addition to regular resting. Mark 2:27 says, *"The Sabbath was created for man, not man for the Sabbath."* We think of the Sabbath as Sunday, the day that we go to church. Scripture says that it's to be a day of rest, created for us, and that God wants it for us.

The woman who is practicing resting characterizes a growing woman—emotionally, spiritually and physically—who is being prepared to influence, impact, and invest in others because she's made God-ordained rest a priority. She's regularly being renewed, refreshed and restored!

Max Lucado talking about Jesus:

*“When he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside.”* Don't read the sentence so fast that you miss the surprise. In the book of Matthew, its author writes the unexpected about Jesus. The verse doesn't read, when he saw the crowds, he went into their midst; or when he saw the crowds, he healed their hurts; or when he saw the crowds, he seated them and began to teach them. **On other occasions he did that, but not this time. Before he went to the masses, he went to the mountain. Before the disciples encountered the crowds, they encountered the Christ and before they faced the people, they were reminded of the Sacred.**

“That's where I am right now. I sit in the stillness, accompanied by the 'tap' of coffee, the aroma of coffee, perking in the other room. What was a playroom 30 minutes ago is now my study. Everyone is bedded down and I'm in my study. What is a study now may just...well, may just become a sanctuary, for what may happen in the next few minutes borders on the holy. The quietness will slow my pulse, the silence will open my ears and something sacred may just happen. The soft slap of sandaled feet will break the stillness and a pierced hand will extend a quiet invitation...*'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened....'* And I follow. I leave behind the budget; the bills; the deadlines; and I walk the narrow trail up the mountain with him.

“Gently, (Jesus) invites you to sit on the rock above the tree line and look out with him at the ancient peaks that will never erode. 'What is necessary is still what is sure,' he confides. 'Just remember, you'll go nowhere tomorrow that I haven't already been. Truth will still triumph; death will still die. The victory is yours and delight is one decision away—seize it.’”

- Choose rest, plan for it, and then let God take us there!