

3 Wondrous Ways Rest Activates Your Transformation

Are you tired yet? Have you had enough? Are you fed up with trying harder—at your job, at your health, in your marriage, with your kids, with your thinking or perhaps with the spiritual change you know God wants for you? You’ve learned by now that simply trying harder to change your behavior doesn’t work. You may need to learn how rest activates your transformation in areas where you need it most.

Our cluttered and fast-paced 21st-century culture gets this backwards most of the time. On the one hand, you’re told that hustle, constant connection and more activity can get you anything you want. In that vein rest has come to mean luxury, inactivity or entertainment. (That’s not rest.) On the other hand, we struggle against a continuing sense of entitlement in both our culture and the church—God (or others) owe me a certain result whether or not I invest myself in the process.

Real rest changes all of that.

There are plenty of examples in everyday life where doing less accomplishes more. A problem you struggle for hours to resolve late at night may be solved with 10 minutes of healthy conversation after a good night’s sleep. A 15-minute nap or walk outside in the middle of your workday may provide a measurable increase in creativity and efficiency, not to mention a better attitude.

God has a lot to say about rest. In God’s economy, “rest” does not mean doing nothing. It does mean we get out of our own rat race and start doing things His way.

The Activity of Rest

The kind of rest we need is not passivity, or the absence of

activity. Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30). *Yoke speaks of work*. We are “yoked together” with Jesus in this process.

The rest Jesus offers does not mean we sit back and wait for God to do everything for us. It means we don’t try to do what only God can do.

- You can’t save yourself; Jesus does that. But you *do* actively choose Him as your Lord and Savior.
- God feeds the birds, but He doesn’t drop food in their mouths. He gives you “the ability to get wealth,” (Deut. 8:18), but you take that ability and invest and develop it.
- You are powerless to change your heart. God gives you a new heart (Jer. 31:33). But when the Holy Spirit says, “Here, let me have this!” you must let Him have it.
- God has promised to provide you with wisdom and guidance. But if you’re not listening, how will you ever hear or understand?

Does your marriage need help? Are you worn out from trying to change your spouse? Quit it! That’s not your job. Focus on changing what you can—your own self.

Tired of white-knuckling it trying to overcome an addiction to anger, pornography, or food? Unclench your fists. Get into the only place where real change happens.

So how do you learn to rest like that?

How to Rest

It takes intentional effort to learn to rest. This is not entertainment or inactivity; it’s stepping back from our own efforts to make things happen and realizing we’re not the

boss!

The Bible talks about working to rest: “Let us labor therefore to enter that rest, lest anyone fall by the same pattern of unbelief” (Heb. 4:11). This is not something human beings naturally do. We like to remain in charge. Real rest means God is in charge—something we have to keep learning over and over again.

This kind of rest can be thought of in at least three ways.

1. Daily rest.

Rushing to do your own thing from the moment you get up until you fall into bed exhausted isn't wise (see Ps. 127:2). Starting your day with God helps break that pattern.

Time with God at the beginning of your day is not just an activity of reading a few Bible verses and rattling off a list of requests in prayer. Instead, this daily reset is a moment of aligning your priorities with God's priorities once again. It's giving Him a chance to speak.

God doesn't often speak above the cacophony of sounds in your head. He speaks when you get quiet. Yes, read your Bible and make your requests of God. But then stick around for a little bit and listen. What is *His* plan for you today?

2. Weekly rest.

The Sabbath was a gift! Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27b). God asks for some of our time not because He needs it, but because we need it.

This has nothing to do with legalism. It has to do with our need to stop doing our own thing one day out of seven. And as He does when we honor Him with our money, when we honor God with our time, He makes the remainder of our time that much more productive.

What part of your weekly time is God asking you to trust Him with?

3. Yearly rest.

Life wears us down. Periodically we need time for real refreshment. These periodic times “away” can provide some of the deepest transformation moments of all.

What that looks like can vary depending on your needs, personality, family and so on. That may mean a vacation with family or friends (not entertainment, but time together). It may mean a conference or retreat where you take in high-quality spiritual nourishment. It may mean extended time alone with just you and God.

Rest for you may not look the same as it does for someone else, but you need rest. Real rest. Intentionally consider what refreshes you and allows you to hear God’s voice on a daily, weekly, and yearly basis.

And that kind of rest activates your transformation.

Your Turn: *Where have you been wearing yourself out trying to make something happen? Where is God inviting you to enter His kind of rest? Leave a comment below.* {eoa}

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