

Did Prince Work Himself to Death?

Did overwork contribute to the death of music icon Prince?

The Daily Beast quotes Prince's brother-in-law, who says the musician worked for 154 hours without sleep in the days leading up to his death. Maurice Phillips, who is married to Prince's sister, would not say what Prince was working on before he died.

Now consider two other headlines in recent news.

First, President Obama has announced plans to send 250 additional military personnel to join the fight against ISIS in Syria. An unspecified number will be special operations forces; others will provide medical, intelligence and logistics support. Clearly the battle against ISIS and other jihadist groups is far from over.

Second, a 90-year-old former senator named Harris Wofford has announced that he is marrying a man 50 years younger than himself. He wrote in *The New York Times* that "it is right to expand our conception of marriage to include all Americans who love each other."

Will this expansion include polygamy, which Harvard law professor Noah Feldman calls "the next marriage issue"? Will it include "consensual love," the attempt to legitimize sexual relations within families? Both movements are gaining advocates as they push for legal acceptance.

Thomas Paine called the 1790s "the times that try men's souls." What would he say of our day? We don't choose the times in which we live. But we can choose whether to let the times live in us. A ship in the water is appropriate; water in the ship is deadly.

It is vital that Christians retreat from culture so we can engage culture. After a long day of ministry, Jesus “went out and departed to a solitary place. And there He prayed” (Mark 1:35). In Leviticus 25, God specified that “the land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord” (v. 2). Every seventh year, the land was to lie uncultivated. If the land needed rest, how much more those who worked it?

In Psalm 46 we read, “Be still and know that I am God” (v. 10a). Note what comes next: “I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (v. 10b). God doesn’t need my help in exalting Himself. However, He wants me to exalt Him on the throne of my heart. And I must be still to do that. I must retreat from my fallen culture to be with my exalted Father. Then He can empower me to take His word to my world.

As school winds down, many begin making summer vacation plans. Why? Isn’t there something in us that knows we need a break, time away, an opportunity to retreat, regroup and refresh?

Our Creator built us to require such space. He set the example for us when he rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2). Then he commanded us to do the same (Ex. 20:8–11). In a culture growing more chaotic by the week, every Christian needs the ancient spiritual disciplines of daily solitude and weekly Sabbath. The less we have time to be alone with God, the more we need time to be alone with God.

If you’re thinking that you’re too busy, you’re right.