

The Surprising Reason Most Christians Don't Experience God's Restorative Power

Picture a sheep against a dark background, looking at you from a page in the *National Geographic*. He has been sheered down one side, from nose to tail, in an attempt to show a season of wool growth. But the photographers went through several sheep, before they could find one that could stand up long enough to have its picture taken. Seems that removing half their wool made them a little tipsy.

Ah, just how I have felt this last week, I thought. Half sheered and lopsided.

"Makes sense," I told mom. "I published two books this spring and finished another year of school. Wouldn't any person feel a little lost after that kind of intense activity has come to an end?" She thought yes—that made perfect sense.

Now the email is so quiet. No new messages comes up quickly. No notes from the editor. No tasks from the project manager. No papers to sign for the bookkeeper.

So quiet.

11:00 comes, and there's no need to pack a lunch for school. No students to knit my brow over. No lesson plans to create.

There are sometimes spaces in our lives that seem empty and silent. Things grind to a halt for one reason or another. —Elisabeth Elliot, Secure in the Everlasting Arms

The guys were gone fishing all day yesterday, and what was a girl to do? I felt the empty space and kept walking over to the cookie jar to make myself feel better, but then I thought,

"No, go to Jesus. Take your own advice, girl. Go to Jesus." I avoided the TV and Facebook and sleeping.

I went and sat on the front porch for a time. Smelled the fresh-cut grass and listened to the birds. I prayed and listened.

For this season, there are words from a shepherd—a man who knows a sheep might fall over if you shear half its wool off:

He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

he restores my soul.

Psalms 23:2-3a

There were times in the middle of book publishing and school when I sighed and told Matt, "I'm so tired." Tired of giving, maybe? Tired of being vulnerable in front of people. Tired of lying awake at night, worrying about every name and face in my classroom.

So now the Lord has brought me next to quiet waters, but I don't do quiet very well. I'm not a sip-lemonade-in-the-sun kind of girl. I need a task in hand or maybe go crazy with boredom.

I suppose, though, that to have your soul restored you have to be still for a time, just still.

How do you respond when activity grinds to a halt?