

These 3 R's Will Remind You Why You Shouldn't Feel Guilty About Resting

Editor's Note: This is part 2 of a two-part series. For part 1, [click here](#).

Rest Is Restorative

Rest and sleep are synonymous and denote a cessation of activity as well as a time of rejuvenation, refreshing and replenishing that happens not just with man, but with all of creation. The psalmist points out in Psalm 104:19-23: "He set the moon to mark the appointed seasons; the sun knows its time for going down. You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest go forth. The young lions roar after their prey and seek their food from God. When the sun arises, they gather themselves together and lay down in their dens. Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until the evening."

The cycle of rest and resurrection is seen in day and night, light and darkness, some creatures and plants being diurnal while others are nocturnal. Man and beasts take turns to rest and come out, thus sharing the world they populate without stepping on one another's toes. God in His wisdom has provided room for all through an alternating pattern of work and rest.

One of my favorite poems by William Wordsworth, "Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802," a Petrarchan sonnet describing London and the River Thames, viewed from Westminster Bridge in the early morning, aptly portrays the resurrection that comes each morning after the rest of sleep:

This City now doth, like a garment, wear

*The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.*

Sleep is rest followed by an awakening that is forerunner of the true resurrection, while the circle of sleep and consciousness is a daily representative of the true rest and resurrection that await us in His presence in eternity. The dawning of each day brings a freshness that is invigorating since the old and the past is dead and gone, swept aside and away in the dark quietness of rest.

The book of Lamentations declares "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed; His compassions do not fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23). It is as though God takes a brush and scrubs away the old, creating not only a new sky and a new earth every morning, but also a new hope and new life. This is a promise that every morning God views us anew, forgets the old and gives us a new start. It is the heavens declaring the glory of the Lord and the skies proclaiming His mercy and grace as being new and fresh every morning and not outdated, jaded or exhausted!

Rest Is Relative

Rest is greatly different from and vastly contrary to passivity, almost its antithesis, since passivity is defined as an unconscious emotional element that limits the flow of creativity or hinders our self-expression. Passivity is lethargy that produces slow paralysis and causes one to be dead weight on others. Passivity has laziness that waits to be acted upon and hence is one of the prime triggers for demonic oppression and possession. In contrast, rest actually produces

an awakening and a renewing that causes heightened sensitivity and alertness to everything around us as well as a new outlook.

Rest is different in that it has potential to give rise to conception and birthing in its core. Rest is often the first basic treatment for depression and dejection, for it has within it a positive aspect of rebuilding and rehabilitating. One of the first remedies doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists advice and administer is sleep, since a good rest often sets the balance aright in our system. A step back from a tight schedule, a time of nutritious food and adequate slumber, and a time of renewing relationship with friends and family will work wonders for anyone who feels distraught and discouraged.

True time of prayer and meditation on God's Word brings a true stillness since we get a glimpse of His greatness and the smallness of our problems. Prayer and contemplation that do not result in quietness of heart and mind, and a realignment of priorities and problems, cannot be termed real, for these would surely bring an encounter with God's power and majesty as well His judgment and mercy.

Passivity gives rise to apathy, inertia and an attitude of *laissez-faire* since rot, slow decay and deadness are present in its root. One can even be passive in prayer rather than waiting upon and waiting for God. When the leaders of the church in Antioch waited upon the Lord in prayer (Acts 13), a new vision and a new outreach were launched into Asia Minor. This caused a new phase to be set in motion by the Holy Spirit, the first missionary journey and movement of the church as well as the new concept of a mission team. It would pay for us to run a diagnostic of our prayer life and meditation times, both as individuals and church.

Rest Is Reset

Rest is pressing the pause button to give time to look around and be happy or sad about what you have just done or accomplished or finished before moving on. It is a time spent to reevaluate your goals, realign your focus, reject the irrelevant, restore equanimity and refresh priorities as well as plans. It is taking the space to review our victories and our failures before deciding on the next course of action or spell of life. That is why retirement can be such a precursor of another different lease of work and being, ignorance of which makes many still crave for the work life they just concluded.

A few years ago, amidst a hectic active lifestyle of being engaged in fruitful lifework and an exhilarating daily reaching for God's will in it, came the clear command: Step back, cease from activity and rest. Anyone who knows me or has ever come in contact with me even a little would understand how difficult a proposition and decision this was for me. At the peak of my form in work and life, I wrestled and fought with it until others—close confidants and prayer warriors—began hearing the same thing from Him as this being His will for the season. I had no other recourse except to listen and obey Him fully by pulling back from active visibility to quiet obscurity. As I struggled to transition into quietness and stillness, I began to really understand the various aspects of rest, how fast life is today and how foreign and alien in today's world is the concept of rest!

When I entered my phase of rest, I struggled to quieten down and maintain stillness, especially in the face of others, who were askance at the concept. As I could not really articulate the whole thing to each and every one, I often saw myself trying to justify my stance and defending my stay, both to myself and others. Reason? I felt guilty about resting while my "comrades chase e'en now the fliers"! Ironical, isn't it, to know that rest has become something to question about rather than a natural order of things and part and parcel of life as

well as living!

Over a period of time I came to relax, relish and rejoice in rest, thanking God for pulling me back into the secret places of His presence. I realized that I had run dry and my bottle was empty, having fully poured out my store. As I learned to rest, I began sensing the soothing streams of His anointing begin to heal, help and humble my soul into a deeper sense of God, His Word and His Spirit. Rest began restoring and restructuring my inner being, making me ready for the next season of life. It's been a journey of discovery, discipline and devotion that I wouldn't exchange for any amount of name, fame or monetary benefit. Rest has now become a habit and a habitus rather than a pit stop or bump in the road of life.

Rest Easy

A Poem

*People are often in a tizzy,
If they don't keep themselves quite busy!
They often don't know what it's to rest sweetly,
For they think it's wrong to just take it easy!
Running around madly trying to do something,
May not just be the answer needed for everything.
Resting brings dividends that are often unexpected,
Yet it's the one thing that's quite frankly neglected!
Rocking chairs can be in constant motion,
Yet they don't get anywhere for all their locomotion!
It's not necessary to make such a noisy commotion,
In order to get that great and wonderful promotion!*

*God in wisdom did ordain cessation of movement,
Alternating work with relaxation at the right moment.
We in our foolish frenzy for consumption,
Often pursue goals in frantic assumption!
So take some time to sit in peaceful quietness,
It's actually a hallmark of godly piety!
Take some time to spend in restoring idleness,
It's a great need for continued righteousness! © Sabina
Tagore Immanuel {eo}*

Sabina Tagore Immanuel is a counselor, content developer and author of Teach Us to Pray. Find out more at www.teachustoprayer.com.