

When You Feel Overwhelmed, Try These 3 Ways to Rest in Jesus

"Who brought the groceries in from the car? I can't find the bags."

I questioned all three of my kids, but no one knew where they were. In fact, no one remembered grabbing the bags before we left the store.

Including me.

A call to Walmart Marketplace confirmed my suspicions. I had indeed walked empty-handed out of the grocery store after paying for our food. I trudged back to the car and drove the 20 minutes back, chiding myself along the way.

How could I be so irresponsible? I don't have time to waste. Now it'll be close to 9:00 before dinner's on the table.

Stress and exhaustion can make a person do crazy things.

Yet in some seasons of life, those two realities are unavoidable. This past fall was one of those seasons for our family. Sports practice and church commitments took up five nights of the week. An overwhelming amount of homework filled our at-home time. And in the middle of it all, we gutted and remodeled our kitchen.

I guess I shouldn't have been surprised when I left my groceries at the store.

During those busy months, I found comfort in one of my favorite Bible passages: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and

you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30, NIV).

Three little verses. So short, yet so full of hope, for they were spoken by the Savior who understands our struggles because He faced them, too.

When our schedules are full and life's demands overwhelm, one thing matters more than anything else—living close to Christ. He calls us to come to Him, to learn from Him and to find rest in relationship with Him. He is our source of strength and wisdom and everything else we need in the moment.

Here are some thoughts for resting in Jesus when life is full (and even when it's not):

Prioritize Time to Be Still in His Presence

Jesus knew the pressure of a busy schedule. In Mark 6:31, we read, "Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, He said to them, 'Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'" Taking time for stillness and renewal was vital to Jesus, and it's our lifeline, too.

If we view time with God as one more item on our to-do lists, however, we may find ourselves wearier after our quiet time than before. But if we see it as a way to connect with Him and enjoy being near the God who relentlessly loves us, we'll find the strength and renewal we so desperately need.

My favorite tools for connecting with Jesus are my Bible, a journal and a pen. In the Bible, I discover more of His heart as He reorients me to things eternal. In my journal, I process with Him my often-restless emotions, pouring out my heart and recording what He says to me in response, including any Scriptures He brings to mind. Many a day, I've found rest through simply writing out these conversations and gaining His perspective in the process.

Talk With Him Throughout the Day

Whether it's missing keys or a parenting dilemma we have no idea how to resolve, Jesus stands ready to help with each problem we face. He wants to share our joys and sorrows, our struggles and our triumphs. He invites us to an ongoing conversation each moment of the day.

Remember His Goodness

Reminding ourselves of God's bounty can help settle our souls when they grow restless. (See Ps. 116:7.) As we take inventory of our blessings, we're reminded that He'll provide for us in the future. As we recall past answered prayers, we gain confidence that He'll be faithful once again. As we dwell on His attributes and remember that He never changes, we find an anchor for our souls.

Through connecting with Jesus in both set-aside times and in the everyday, our hearts can find rest in Him, even if we do leave a few groceries behind once in a while.

How do you lead your heart back to rest when life is crazy?
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