

When Your Soul Needs Restoration, Follow These 3 R's

I love taking long walks early in the morning to the Starbucks that's a little way from my home. As I walk in the early-morning silence, I am able to enjoy God's presence and the beauty that surrounds me. A few days ago, as I was walking, a deer stood just a few feet from me looking directly at me with big eyes. I stopped and paused, and we had a moment together. I'm quite sure she was worshipping and enjoying God's presence too!

The deer reminded me of the words of Psalm 42:1-2, where David writes, "As the deer pants after the water brooks, so my soul pants after you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When will I come and appear before God" (Ps. 42:1-2). That longing for God, that deep inner ache, has been placed there by design. Originally, when God first created mankind and before sin entered the world, our human souls enjoyed non-stop perfect fellowship with God. But ever since sin entered the world—all that draws us away from God—our souls long for restoration.

With all that pulls at us, with all that distracts us, with the urgent needs of daily living, how do we find the space to continually restore our souls? I've been thinking a lot about that question this summer and here's what I've come up with:

Return to our first love. It's easy to drift through life, getting wrapped up in the pressures and stresses of daily living. In our hurry we're distracted from simply enjoying God. It feels so foreign. We lose a bit of our passion. But—think back. Remember when you first fell in love with Jesus? Remember when it first dawned on you how much He loved

you and how extravagant His grace was that was offered to you? Remember how you couldn't get enough of Him? You were in awe every morning and in love every night. Ask the Lord to rekindle that love within you. You might pray, *"Oh Lord Jesus, I love you. The pressures and stresses of life crush me, but I long for more of you. Fill me with yourself. Restore to me the joy of my salvation."*

Rest. You knew I was going to write that! It's a recurring theme in my life. I tend to bullet through life at 110 miles per hour, but God is continually calling me back. Back to the place of quiet waters and rest in His presence. There is no soul restoration without rest. If you're like me, and the next great adventure is always out there, you might join me in this prayer: *"Lord Jesus, remind me today that my body is human. Draw me into the place of deep rest with you. I confess I often don't live within the boundaries that you have placed around me. Help me to remember that Jesus Himself needed sleep and rest. Remind me that there is Sabbath rest for me"*.

Rejoicing in what He has done. If there is a practice that has awakened in me my first love it has been the practice of praising and thanking God every day for who He is and what He has done. In the past two weeks I have been praying for a dear friend who has been suffering physically. As I have praised God, I have watched the enemy flee. I have seen miracles in this friend's life. And I have fallen more deeply in love with Jesus. You simply can't praise Him without falling more in love with Him! Why don't you try it this week? Get on your knees first thing in the morning. Put in some headphones with worship music. As you listen, allow the music to prompt your praise. Ask the Holy Spirit to well up within your praise to God. He will answer. You can be sure. As you praise Him, you will be filled with joy and your heart will be brought into deeper union with His. Soul restoration will happen! Your soul was created to delight in and enjoy God. Don't deny your longings anymore. Be like the deer in Psalm 42 who craves more

and more of God's glorious presence. {eoa}

Becky Harling, an author, certified speaker, leadership coach and trainer with the John Maxwell Team, is an energetic and motivational international speaker inspiring audiences to overcome their greatest life challenges and reach their full God-given potential. Her most recent book is *How to Listen So People Will Talk*. Her husband, Steve Harling, is the president of *Reach Beyond*, a nonprofit organization seeking to be the voice and hands of Jesus around the world. Connect with Becky at [, Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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