

Your Isa. 28:12 Reason for Reaching Toward True Rest

In the past few days, I've received several messages from dear friends who are taking extra time to rest and reflect during the month of January. All the messages have resonated with my heart. It's what I need, and it's what you need as well! As I've been thinking about these messages, I've been reading through the book of Isaiah.

Just this morning, I read these words from the Old Testament prophet: "'This is the resting. Give rest to the weary,' and 'This is repose'" (Isa. 28:12b).

I dug a bit deeper into the word for "rest" used here. It's the Hebrew word *menuchah*, which means "resting place; place of stillness, repose, consolation, peace; a quiet place" (Strong's #4496). It's the same word used in Psalm 23:2, where David writes, "He leads me beside waters of *menuchah* [still waters]." It carries the idea of soothing or settling down. Ever feel like your soul needs soothing? Ever feel like in the chaos of life you need to settle down? Me too!

I am a performer who longs to change the whole world. My passion to see Christ known at times gets unhealthily twisted with a deep desire to do something great for God. The combination of those two can keep me up at night, drive me to take on more than I am physically able and leave me exhausted and in an emotionally unhealthy place. Here's the thing: While God loves my passion, He wants me to *settle down and be still* in His presence. He wants my energy to come from Him, not from some unhealthy desire to make something great out of my life. Can you relate?

I have found in the rhythm of my life that January is a great month to set aside extra time for rest and reflection. It's

not that I stop all activity; I don't. I just set aside extra time in God's presence, and I take a day or two to simply reflect on God's leading. In other words, I slow down just a bit.

Why is rest so important? Here are three reasons to get you started:

Rest is a part of our worship. It's easy in our Western thought to feel worship is something we do. One could argue that our deepest worship happens when we simply rest in Him and trust that He is accomplishing all. When we rest and enjoy His company, there's a deeper worship that rises up in our souls. We trust more fully. We love more completely. As a result, peace rather than frenzy rules in our lives.

Rest refines our motives for service. If you're like me, your motives for service can become twisted. Can you echo the apostle Paul's words, "Christ's love compels us" (2 Cor. 5:14, NIV)? Or is it more the desire to accomplish something great that compels us? Ouch! I know. When we rest, we allow the Spirit of the living God to cleanse our motives. We ask Him to search our hearts and refine our service so it's not coming out of an insecure desire to prove ourselves.

Rest aligns our hearts with Christ. Have you noticed? Jesus was never frantic nor frazzled! He never told his disciples to hurry up. He didn't heal every single person in every single town. He fell asleep in the boat. He rested with the Father in prayer. He took time for solitude without feeling guilty. Wow. If Jesus needed time to rest, so do we. Jesus models a rhythm for life and ministry that is sustainable.

Honestly, friends, I still struggle to find the balance. But here's what I know: I need rest in order for my life to be sustainable, so I can't give up. I need to keep asking the Spirit of God to lead me and show me when and how to rest. I need to slow down in order to spend unhurried time in His

presence and to simply enjoy Him. You do too.

What if we both commit to spending extra time to resting this January? What if we commit to longer times in His presence and a bit of a lighter schedule? No judgment if you can't. But if you can, dare to consider when you can rest and breathe in the beauty of His presence. {eo}

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