

Your Secret Source of Renewable Spiritual Energy

Renewable energy is all the buzz right now. Renewable energy creates and sustains electricity—which keeps the lights on—with less environmental impact.

In the spiritual realm, what keeps the lights on in our relationship with Christ? What gives us sustaining energy for the long haul of serving Christ? The key is to establish regular rhythms of rest and renewal.

Jesus invites us, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” (Mark 6:31b, NIV). Because His life and ministry were so full, Jesus Himself often withdrew alone to a quiet place to rest and regroup with the Father (Mark 6:46). Here’s the thing: unless you pull away for times of rest and reflection with God, you will burn out.

The German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “Whoever cannot be alone should beware of community. Such people will only do harm to themselves and to the community.” I find that to be a profound statement. The person who can never be alone is often running from something. In God’s presence we can hide nothing, but we receive absolute acceptance and love. It is the place of absolute rest and revival.

How do you establish healthy rhythms of rest and solitude? Here are a few suggestions.

Practice being silent for two to three minutes several times a day. Our world is noisy. With all that noise, it’s hard to focus on the still, small whisper of God’s voice. When we are still and silent before Him, we can hear His voice, and we are assured that we can trust Him (Ps. 46:10). Peter Scazzero writes that for many of us “[the choice] to turn away from

internal and external noise in order to be with God—is work, difficult work. Externally, we face the unrelenting pressure of our culture. Internally, our minds are in constant and frenzied motion.” That statement resonates with me, and I’m guessing it resonates with you as well. Try some tiny steps towards embracing silence. Turn off your cell phone for 15 minutes a day. Or discipline yourself to only check social media once a day. If we don’t practice silence, we’re likely not good listeners to God or others.

Meditate on a small section of Scripture. A good practice (particularly when you’re tired) is to take one to five verses and mull them over in your mind. Think about them and ask God what He wants you to take from those verses. I used to push myself to read through the Bible every year. It was a great practice for a time, but then I found myself feeling driven to finish the perfunctory three chapters and be done. I wasn’t really listening and understanding what God was teaching me. Several years ago, I decided to slow down. Now I write out certain verses. I meditate on those verses, asking God to change me. I take time to look up the meaning of key words in the verses so that my understanding goes deeper.

Create the space for beauty. Our souls need beauty. God designed them that way. So create the space to incorporate beauty into your life. Take a walk and observe the beauty of the flowers and all their brilliant colors. Or walk the beach and notice the different hues of blue and green in the ocean. Take a hike; slow down long enough to study the trees and the wild flowers on the path. God has created a gorgeous world for us to enjoy— yet for many of us, we’re too busy to enjoy it!

Read a psalm in the evening to close out your day. Steve and I have started reading a psalm in the evening. It is a beautiful way to close out the day and to bring our focus back to God. It’s too easy to go to bed with worries pummeling your peace. Instead, why not turn your focus to the Prince of Peace?

Friend, establishing healthy patterns of rest and renewal in our culture is going to be a challenge. But failure to do so means that you will race through life, but your soul will be limping because you were not designed to go full tilt 24/7. I've seen good people burn out because they are not living life as God intended. {eoa}

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