

Relax and Let the Holy Spirit Work in You

Here's an honest confession: I struggle to rest in the Lord. Maybe I'm a bit compulsive, but I find it difficult to be still and know that God is working when I can't see what He's doing. When I need the Lord to do something in my life, I tend to "help Him" do it. But I have come to realize that God doesn't need my help!

In Old Covenant times, God instructed His priests to dress in linen garments instead of wool so they wouldn't perspire while they worked. Ezekiel 44:18b (NASB1995) says: "They shall not gird themselves with anything which makes them sweat."

Why is that in the Bible? It's because God doesn't need our perspiration to accomplish His purpose. He wants to work in us and through us, but He can't if we are anxious, stressed or fretful. He works through people who trust Him completely.

Our job is not to strive in the flesh but to rest in the Spirit. If you want to grow spiritually, you must learn the difference between the sweat of the flesh and the sweet oil of heaven. There is a big difference.

The apostle Paul told the Philippians: "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). It is a wondrous truth that God is changing us daily, even when we can't see the outward evidence. God does this through the Holy Spirit who lives in us. I hope you appreciate the different ways He is transforming you.

He is rebuilding you. Just as Nehemiah rebuilt the ruined city of Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit reconstructs your life. Nehemiah actually means "Comforter," a name Jesus used to describe the Spirit. You are under construction, and He has strategically

placed orange cones and roadblocks in areas of your life. We don't fix our own lives; we are powerless to do that. Let the Comforter rebuild all your broken places!

He is teaching you. The Holy Spirit, who is called "the Spirit of truth" (John 16:13), knows how to bring us to maturity. He shines His supernatural light on the Bible and opens our minds to understand His truth. He allows us to hear His still, small voice inwardly. He reveals His mysteries so we can know Him intimately. And He brings the right people into our lives to provide teaching, encouragement and guidance when needed.

He is subduing your flesh. We don't have to grit our teeth or trust our own willpower to overcome sin in our lives. We have the indwelling power of the Spirit to help us live holy lives. Romans 8:13 says we can put to death the deeds of the body "by the Spirit." He is like a warrior who plunders the enemy in our lives. We may feel weak in the face of temptation, but He has defeated the power of sin once and for all. We must simply yield to His work in us, and He will enable us to overcome every sinful habit.

He is renewing you. Titus 3:5 mentions the "renewing of the Holy Spirit" (NKJV), and we can be thankful that He offers such a blessing. He does not anoint us once and then leave us to live on one jar of oil. The Spirit sends fresh anointing when we are tired, poured out or discouraged. He opens up bottles of new wine and fills us with new joy. He pours the fresh oil of heaven on those who are desperate for more of His presence. Let Him refill you!

He is revealing His glory in and through you. The apostle Paul reminded us that because we have the Spirit inside us, we are now beholding the glory of the Lord "as in a mirror." And the result: We "are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18, NASB1995). Don't focus on your flaws. Fix your eyes on Jesus. When you focus on yourself, you will be disappointed; when you focus on Him, you will be

transformed.

He is refining you. The Holy Spirit is a fire, and He wants to burn up anything that does not resemble Christ. Like a smelter of gold, He melts us, skims off the toxic alloys and melts us again to remove all impurities. Don't be afraid when the Spirit turns up the heat. And don't whine or complain when you go through trials, because the Lord may be using them as a test to work on your character and attitudes. Remember the words of Corrie ten Boom: "God uses our problems for His miracles. This was my first lesson in learning to trust Him completely."

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