

How Can A Person Find Real Rest?

How does one find real rest? Are you worn out from the day-to-day grind? Perhaps some folks would question the need for such guidance in this article since the majority of you who read it are 'retired'. I've heard many retirees say that they weren't this busy when they were working full time! Those are the ones who don't sit around in the lazyboy at home. We all need rest, but we should not want to just idly sit around ... it's not good for the brain nor the body.

This really is a great topic for an over-programmed, over-scheduled culture like ours. It's also a great question for people all around the world, because life can be very tiring. Whether it's being too busy or it involves day-to-day efforts of just trying to survive. Wherever people are today, they need to know how to get real rest. We are talking about something deeper and more profound than just taking a few days off now and then.

Real rest doesn't simply involve some down time. It may include that, but there's much more to getting rest than doing nothing for a while. In addition to stillness, rest includes being replenished and refreshed. These are gifts that come from outside ourselves and from outside our frantic world.

Consider the word 'replenished'. In Psalm 46 God says, "Be still and know that I am God." He didn't just say, "Be still." Being still is a start, but not the end of the story. It's not the sole answer to getting rest. In fact, spending time in quiet can get pretty stressful. Suddenly, you're left with yourself; your problems, your struggles, your conscience, your list of things to do that are yet undone. Stillness on your own could be your undoing, too! God says that, in your stillness, in your quiet, know that I am God, which means trusting that God is in charge, that He's in control, and that He doesn't change ... and most of all, that He loves you. He is your Friend and your Savior. In your stillness, amidst the problems, it will be okay. In fact, Psalm 23 discusses God's role in getting rest. We're told that the Lord is our Shepherd and that He restores our souls. Being truly replenished means being connected to God, the giver of all good things.

We might think here, also, of Psalm 62 which says, "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him" (Psalms 62:1 NIV). Just as a car needs to be fueled from an outside source; a gas station, and just as water bottles need to be refilled from a source of fresh water, our souls find rest and replenishment in a source outside of ourselves; outside of this crazy world. God alone is our Source of real rest.

What does God provide to give us that rest and how does He provide it? The number one answer is His self-sacrificial, unconditional, restoring love through His Son, Jesus. That precious gift is brought into our lives through God's Word--the Bible, and through the blessings in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. This gift comes also through our connection with God and fellow believers. Think about how wonderful it is to hear Jesus say, "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). The fact that it's Jesus who says this makes all the difference, because He accomplishes what He promises!

Think about the relief of hearing words like this from Psalm 94: "When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations (O Lord), they cheer me up" (Psalms 94:19). That's God's living Word going deep into our souls with His promises to restore and refresh us.

God doesn't intend for us to live in isolation, either. He gives us encouragement through fellow believers as we gather for worship and prayer and receiving the gift of Holy Communion, the gift of Christ received together with fellow believers. His body and blood, then, holds us together, it holds us forever; and that, too, is the foundation of real rest.

That's part of what's behind God establishing the Sabbath Day in the Old Testament. It's also why Christians began to gather on the first day of the week after the Sabbath Law was fulfilled through Christ's death, to celebrate the day of Jesus' resurrection. If you plow through life without a break, you become rest-less. God designed our lives to have real doses, regular doses of rest and replenishment in Him.

Jesus provides an example of this when He and the disciples from time to time would get away from the crowds, like in Mark, chapter six, where it says, "So many people were coming and going to Him that He didn't even have a chance to eat, he said, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and let's get some rest'"(Mark 6:31 NIV). So, together with Jesus, whether it is eating, relaxing, exercising, or pursuing a hobby, His gifts can refill us and restore us from the weariness that comes in this life!

That's the View from Here.

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