



SERIES: Spiritual Fitness: Christian Living

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Tuesday, August 22, 2023

Scripture: Mark 6:31-32 / Mark 1:35

TITLE: I Don't Want To

Do you rest well? I do not. When I get home, there's usually something that can be done. When I travel, there's a new restaurant, site, or experience to be had. And this drives my wife nuts. Her dream vacation is lying on a lounge chair on the beach with a book in her hand. She could be there for hours, if not days. Not me - if it can be done, let's go. So, I don't rest well. But again, what about you?

One of the hardest parts of my Christian faith is to rest. But did you know that we are called to rest? It's true. Listen to the exchange between Jesus and His disciples in Mark 6:31-32 (NLT):

“Then Jesus said, ‘Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.’ He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn’t even have time to eat.³² So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone.”

Jesus was notorious for seeking quiet to rest and pray. That's why Luke 5:16 says, “Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.” Seven times in the Gospels, Jesus is recorded to retreat for solitude, silence, and prayer. Jesus is God in the flesh. He needed time to be still and rest. God created the entire cosmos and rested. How many more examples do we need to be still and rest?

Now, I'm not advocating for a life of laziness either. We are called to work and serve. We are called for time to commune as the people of God. But you cannot give what you do not possess. When we run ourselves ragged, we will have nothing left to give. That kind of lifestyle leads to burnout and even compromise. So, we must find solitude and rest. And part of that restoration is resting in and with God. Mark 1:35 (NIV) says,

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”

Jesus retreated for solitude and time with His Father. He consistently found refreshment there. And so can we. So here's my challenge for you today. Today, find even 5 minutes to be alone and quiet. If you can find more, do so. I get it. That may be very hard. Susanna Wesley was a mother of 19 children and would pull her apron over her head as her quiet place to pray and rest.

So take time today and rest and pray. Put down the smartphone. Turn off the radio. Turn off the computer or TV. Be still and be with God. Maybe some of you are alone plenty. You're too

rested. If this is you, then go pray with someone else. That will bring encouragement to you both and will refresh the soul.

So let's go and rest in the arms of Jesus.