

# REST

**Bonus Chapter**

**IMMOVABLE:** REFLECTIONS TO BUILD YOUR LIFE AND LEADERSHIP ON  
SOLID GROUND

**MEREDITH KING**

# Rest

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“The busyness of things obscures our concentration on God.... Never let a hurried lifestyle disturb the relationship of abiding in Him. This is an easy thing to allow. But we must guard against it.”

- Oswald Chambers

The irony of today and this topic can't be ignored. I returned from four long days on the road to a jam-packed weekend: errands, dinners, parties, laundry. You know – all the normal “life” stuff. Throw in a time-change and a thunderstorm and you've got a recipe for over-tired children and a momma verging on a hint of crazy. This morning, our youngest is expressing all the emotions of recently turning three through incessant crying and tantrums. Oh, yes. This is what Sunday mornings are made of.

So, where is the rest?

It's there.

Trust me.

Beneath the surface noise of everyday life, my soul is finally learning to rest because it's more about the posture of my heart than the activities of my day. But, don't believe for a minute true, deep, soul-rejuvenating rest comes easy. In fact, our entire culture seems to fight against it.

It's not hard to see we (as a collective people) have an unhealthy relationship with work. Technology has made it possible to work anywhere so we work everywhere. Our children's activities and homework, our social and church commitments, and just the general demands of keeping up with life as we've chosen to live it cause our physical bodies to move and work to the point of exhaustion.

Somewhere along the way it was decided purpose and fulfillment were determined by achievement. While we desperately need rest for our physical bodies, it's so much more than that because there's "a work underneath the work"<sup>1</sup> that never stops: the work of proving ourselves. Without true rest from *this* work, physical rest will never be enough. It's why we can return from a vacation more tired than when we left. It's why Monday mornings can bring anxiety and dread even after a relaxing weekend. Our greatest problem isn't needing the absence of work. Our greatest problem is the absence of deep rest.

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David and I have been going to the tiny Texas town of Round Top since before we were married. I went alone to pray and strategize the year we decided I would quit my corporate job to start a nonprofit ministry. We've gone together for ministry retreats and corporate trainings, and we've taken friends there. It's become our go-to escape for anniversaries and birthdays.

Round Top may only be a two and a half our drive, but it feels worlds apart from home. With a grand population of 90, everything moves slower. You drive through endless fields of green and wild flowers to get anywhere. And if you need snacks or half-and-half for your coffee, there's no big, shining grocery store chain, only The Mercantile - the most quaint, friendly corner store you've ever seen. Cell service is spotty at best and the velvety black sky is the perfect backdrop for thousands of brilliant stars. There's far less concrete and distraction in Round Top. I've wondered from time to time if we should move there, but it seems likely that we'd just bring our busyness, and pretty soon, we'd need a new place to escape. Part of the beauty is that it isn't home. It's comfortable and familiar yet refreshing and away.

As is our custom, we arrived that September weary from ministry and sleepless from kids who were tiny but oh-so-energetic. Looking back, it's easy to see I was at my worst: grumpy, snappy, teary-eyed, anxious. I felt like a spectator of my own life

worst: grumpy, snappy, teary-eyed, anxious. I felt like a spectator of my own life because I felt disconnected from everyone I loved and everything important to me.

Rather than shopping or eating or visiting our favorite local hangouts, I started with a three-hour nap and then moved to the rocking chair on the back porch where I read and journaled and asked the Lord to show me how to get my heart and life back.

That September marked the beginning of a new way of living.

It's been almost two years, and I would never claim to be an expert or to have arrived. I fail more times than I would like because old habits die hard. However, with great humility and relief, I can tell you my life and perspective have dramatically changed. My health, my thoughts, and my work have been remade. The process has breathed life back into my friendships, my parenting, my marriage, and in my relationship with God.

What comes most natural: hard work. To-do lists. Powering through. What's changing my life: quiet. Rest. Vulnerability.

For years I believed self-care was for the weak or for the privileged. I would have never confessed that out loud - I actually did the opposite by advocating for friends, family members, and clients to make self-care a priority. But when it came to my own life, my beliefs swung between, "I'm a workhorse and need to power through!" and, "I'm unworthy of really caring for myself."

Now I know the truth.

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A friend recently explained three things tend to happen when we aren't getting enough rest:<sup>2</sup>

- 1. We lose energy for the people we love the most.** Patience eludes us, we don't have the energy for heart-to-heart conversations, and we start to miss out on the sweet unscripted moments of life.

- 2. We lose energy for the things we love.** Saying things like, “I used to love to \_\_\_\_\_!” life is probably crowding out rest. Whether the “used to” is a morning walk, teaching Bible study, painting, watching the sun rise, or having coffee with friends, we need to make some room for things that refuel our souls.
- 3. Bad habits reappear.** Things we fought to conquer in the past pop back up: emotional eating, giving in to unhealthy relationships, numbing out with Netflix or a few drinks. Before we know it, we start becoming the person we used to be instead of who we want to be.

This isn't about working part-time versus full-time. It isn't about long vacations in the Caribbean. It isn't even about a three-hour nap. It's about finally embracing the true source of our identity and worth in Christ and releasing ourselves from the unnecessary pressure of proving ourselves.

Jesus really upset the religious elite in Luke 6 when he healed a man on the Sabbath, which was their weekly holy day established by God for complete rest from all work. Jesus' miracle technically qualified as work and when questioned he simply replied, “I am Lord of the Sabbath.” In other words, “I'm all about the Sabbath – I'm all about rest.” His work of healing accomplished the exact purpose of Sabbath rest: restoration of what's worn and broken. Jesus was the fulfillment of what all of the Jewish Sabbath laws pointed to because He alone provides rest for our souls – rest from the work of proving ourselves and our worth. We are free to show up weak and flawed, yet deeply loved, because Jesus finished every bit of work required of us on the cross.

This isn't about perfection, and there's no finish line to reach. We will still get pushed off center by pressure and expectations of who we should become. But if we keep grounding ourselves in God's perfect love for us, and if we keep creating space to rest in His love and His finished work, we will indeed find the rest that's already ours.

# SCRIPTURE

Matthew 11:28-30; Isaiah 26:3; Luke 6:1-11

# REFLECTION

1. How is your physical wellbeing? What about your soul? (mark both on the scale below)



TOTALLY  
EXHAUSTED



ENERGIZED &  
RESTED

2. Explain why you answered the way you did:

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3. How is a lack of rest impacting your work and relationships?

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## TODAY'S PRAYER

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## SCRIPTURE

What are your "used to's"? List the life-giving activities or habits that have been crowded out by your busy schedule.

Designate a day and time this week to do one of the activities you listed.

## Endnotes

1. Tim Keller, “Work and Rest,” Timothy Keller Sermons Podcast by Gospel in Life, October 22, 2015, <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/work-and-rest/id352660924?i=1000355252922&mt=2>.
2. My friend, Lyle Wells, shared these thoughts with me in March 2018.