

rest.

*Six gifts of rest from God to you
A 6-week Bible Study during Lent*

*Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Me.
Get away with Me and you'll recover your life.
I'll show you how to take a real rest.
Walk with Me and work with Me—watch how I do it.
Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.
I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you.
Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.*

Matthew 11:28-30, The Message

Dear Rest-Seeker,

Imagine: sitting in a rocking chair on a wide, wood-planked porch, looking out onto an expansive pasture. A place so quiet that your breathing seems loud. A schedule that allows you to linger contentedly in the same book. A cup of coffee brewed for enjoyment rather than energy. A breeze that lazily pushes the clouds across the sky. It's a picture of rest. And it's beautiful.


And then, like a thunderclap into an empty chamber, your phone rings. That idyllic picture instantly evaporates from your mind, and you're rushed back to the unceasing shore of reality. Work is picking up. Grades are falling. The kids are whining. The grandkids' birthdays are approaching. The marriage is suffering. That big promotion is at risk. That church committee is meeting again. Guilt is haranguing you about things you haven't done. There's another text. Another email. A voicemail. An appointment. A bill. Blood pressure. Resentment. Sleeplessness. Exercise. Dating. Meals. Repairs. Another email.

Can anyone doubt our need for rest? We are stretched and tattered, fatigued and fallow. Our bodies are weary, and our souls are sapped. We don't just need a nap; we need to be dismantled, and then put back together in a way that makes better sense.

The God of heaven and earth has promised just such a renovation. He has placed on offer a deep soul rest. But God's version of rest is no mere shift in perspective. A journey into God's rest may well cause us to question some of our most closely-guarded beliefs: beliefs about our worth, our ambitions, our idea of success, and even our basic trust in God.

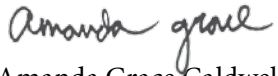
For the next six weeks, you're invited to rest. It begins not with sleeping in late or canceling appointments, but with surrendering our ceaselessness and asking God for a better way to live. Life might look very different when lived according to God's plan for our rest. But it is a beautiful way to live. Through this study, our prayer is that you're able to linger awhile on the front porch of God's incredible rest.

In Christ,


Brandon Gaide
Associate Pastor for Next Gen


Luke Gordon
Youth Ministries Director


Christyn Knoop
Adult Ministries Director


Amanda Grace Caldwell
Relationships Ministries Coordinator

P.S. As part of our Eat Pray Lent tradition, be sure to schedule a time for your group to share a meal together at least once.

The 2015 *Eat Pray Lent* curriculum is dedicated to Vicky Jones in honor of her legacy of spiritual leadership at MDPC. Vicky helped us keep on course, always encouraging us to love the Lord, to believe His promises, to cherish the Word of God, and to seek the fellowship of other believers.

Vicky is also a bit of a stickler about grammar, so drafts 1, 2, and 3 (complete with their marked-up pages) are also dedicated to Vicky.

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Small Group Covenant

Whether this is your first time in a small group or you've been together for years, a Group Covenant is a great way to establish some commitments that will support spiritual growth and friendships. Read the commitments at your first meeting and agree to them together, or change the terms so that it fits for your group!

_____ **Courtesy**
We will make every effort to attend each meeting and arrive on time.
We will meet from _____ to _____ on the following dates:

_____ **Confidentiality**
You may hear some comments that should not be repeated. What is spoken in the group remains in the group.

_____ **Honesty**
As we are able, we will be open, honest, and forthright with one another about our own lives.

_____ **Listening**
None of us will monopolize our time together, making it difficult for others to speak. The giving of advice is to be kept to a minimum.

_____ **Accountability**
We will respect one another's opinions (there are no "dumb questions"!) while seeking counsel from God's Word.

Group Contact Information

Name	Phone #	Email
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____

Grace: Spiritual Rest

Introduction

Deepak Chopra is known by many to be a man of deep spirituality. As the spiritual guru to many top celebrities, he frequently teaches on issues like personal fulfillment, peace, and transformation. Along these lines, we might expect his life to be a model of peace and satisfaction. But in a biographical documentary about his father entitled “Decoding Deepak,” Deepak’s son Gotham revealed a compulsive restlessness about his father. Throughout the film, for example, Deepak is constantly checking his Blackberry, even during times of expected solitude. Toward the end of the film, Gotham reveals that most of the time Deepak is checking the ranking of his newest books on *The New York Times*’ bestsellers list. Rather than a picture of perfect serenity, Deepak is restlessly seeking validation that he’s good enough.

Deepak Chopra is not alone. We all have our own compulsive ways of determining whether or not we’re good enough. Whether it’s our beauty, or intellect, or status, or position, or wealth, or religiosity, or anything else—we’re all looking for a stamp of approval that says, “I’m good enough. I can rest.” But it’s never enough.

The Gospel acknowledges our deep need to be good enough. But instead of creating just another standard to evaluate our goodness, God offers a totally different solution. There is no need to check the bestseller list anymore. Because of what Christ has done, we can rest.

Our Need for Rest

1. Being good enough seems to be an ever-moving target. Like an Olympic champion worrying about defending her record, even our greatest accomplishments don’t seem sufficient. What are some specific examples of public figures whose great accomplishments were not enough for them?
2. It’s very hard to rest if we don’t believe we’re good enough. We feel like we must constantly prove ourselves somehow. What kinds of things tempt you to try and prove yourself?
3. In Matthew 11:29, Jesus promises that those who trust Him “will find rest for your souls.” What does it feel like to have a restless soul? Alternatively, what might it feel like to have rest for your soul?

Scripture

This passage from Hebrews refers back to the job of the priest in Old Testament times. Priests were tasked with making constant sacrifices in the Temple, which served to cover (but not remove) the sins of the people.

Hebrews 10:11-18

¹¹ Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God,

¹³ waiting from that time until His enemies should be made a footstool for His feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶ “This is the covenant that I will make with them

after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put My laws on their hearts,

and write them on their minds,”

¹⁷ then He adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

God’s Offer of Rest

1. As mentioned above, offering regular sacrifices was the job of priests in Old Testament times. What are some modern-day ways a person might attempt to present regular offerings to God?
2. According to the text, what effect do our perpetual offerings have?
3. After Christ makes the ultimate sacrifice for sins, verse 12 tells us “*He sat down.*” What do you think: was Jesus pausing from the work He was doing, or does this act signify something more final?
4. This passage refers to forgiveness in several different ways. In your opinion, how does Christ’s forgiveness of our sins enable us to rest?
5. In a different passage, the apostle Paul is wrestling with a particular difficulty he can’t seem to overcome. Before he despairs, Jesus responds to him by saying, “*My grace is sufficient for you. It’s all you need*” (2 Corinthians 12:9, MSG). Does Jesus also say this to us? Is God’s grace still enough, or are we required to be constantly making ourselves better? Even if we know the “right” answer, are there ways we tend to ignore this reality?

Practicing Rest

1. Listening prayer – Carve out a time of prayer with God. But instead of bringing a list of things to pray, consider resting in God’s presence in silence. Let your thoughts come and go. Ask God to speak, and ask for the patience to listen.
2. Abstain from good works – This is not a license to begin doing terrible things. It’s simply permission to rest from some of the ways we try and justify ourselves outside of Christ’s sacrifice. If you constantly volunteer, take a hiatus. If you’re always leading, ask someone to substitute for a time. You are invited to rest from trying to do good. Christ’s sacrifice is already sufficient for you.

Sabbath: Scheduled Rest

Introduction

In today's non-stop, rest-less world, you can deposit checks or book airline tickets at 2:00 AM using your smart phone; you can even log into your remote desktop while at home or on vacation. But you can't get a Chick-fil-A sandwich on a Sunday.

Chick-fil-A has stood by their decision to remain closed on Sundays since they first opened in 1946. One research firm has projected that by closing their 1,600+ stores on Sundays, the company forgoes about \$42.5 million in additional revenue each year.ⁱ And yet, Chick-fil-A is considered to be one of the more successful and brilliant brands of the twentieth century.

The practice of setting aside one day per week to rest is an ancient Jewish practice that most of us in the American church have all but abandoned. This is not good. Many of us have become addicted to a level of productivity that is unsustainable, insisting we are ultimately responsible for everything. *We don't have time for rest, we think. We need more time for work!*

God has built into each week of our busy lives a day of rest. It is one of the most tangible gifts of rest God has given us and He has commanded quite plainly that we receive it! Why, then, have so many of us left this sacred and restorative gift untouched? Why do we continue to overload our lives? Why is it so hard for us to claim this gift and begin the practice of scheduled rest?

Our Need for Rest

1. \$42.5 million is a lot of money. Why do you think that Chick-fil-A has chosen to uphold the Sabbath for their operators and employees even when so much could be gained by staying open?
2. What sort of response do you have towards the practice of Sabbath? Do you welcome the day of rest or cringe at the idea of losing a day of productivity? Something in between?

Scripture

The Sabbath is instituted in the life of Israel as part of the Ten Commandments. These ten laws are widely regarded as given by God for the health and vitality of the community, especially in regard to their relationships with one another and with God.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

¹² "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female

servants may rest, as you do. ¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

God's Offer of Rest

1. Does anything about this passage surprise you? According to this text, how would you describe the Sabbath to someone who had never heard of this concept?
2. Anxiety has been referred to as "taking responsibility for things outside your control." Notice in verse 13 that God commands the Israelites to *complete all their work in six days*. What on your to-do list might be self-imposed and not something God has called you to? How do you make such decisions?
3. The command to rest is connected to the most important event in Israel's history: the Exodus. What do you suppose is the significance of God reminding them of His victory in their life in the context of the Sabbath?
4. The ultimate victory in the life of the Christian is the resurrection of Jesus Christ which broke the power of sin and death, unleashed the Holy Spirit to dwell in us to give us guidance and peace, and guaranteed for us the promise of everlasting life. By taking a break from our daily work we declare that we live by a different story – not the story of our harried culture seeking bigger and better, but the story of God's redemption. How might a more intentional Sabbath practice declare to the world, or even to your own family, that there is a bigger story to live for?
5. The Sabbath has been famously referred to as a "sanctuary in time." How do you think your friends and family might react if you were to begin a more intentional Sabbath practice? What do you perceive will be the personal rewards? What will make it difficult?

Practicing Rest

1. Practice the Sabbath – One weekend during Lent, set aside one dinner-to-dinner (24 hours) to do nothing that includes your normal "work" responsibilities or errands. Instead, use this time to rest: sleep in a little; go for a walk or bike ride; journal, pray, or read something to edify your spirit; don't make the kids clean their rooms; check on a neighbor; try to leave the tech stuff alone. Furthermore, use this day to set aside burdensome thoughts: fear, anxiety, stressful issues in your life or work. You are in a "sanctuary in time." Let God handle it all for 24 hours.

Note: It was not uncommon for the Jews to prepare for Sabbath by getting extra groceries in the house and doing chores earlier in the week so that the Sabbath could be truly enjoyed. What preparations do you need to make for the Sabbath? Consider these holy chores that will enable you to truly rest and approach them with a joyful heart.

ⁱ<http://www.foxbusiness.com/industries/2012/08/03/gospel-according-to-chick-fil/>

Quiet: Mental Rest

Introduction

A little over a decade ago, on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, residents would fall asleep each night to the constant drone of tens of thousands of crickets. Their distinctive hum was just part of the island's landscape, as regular as the waves of the ocean. But if a person left the island for a few years, and then decided to return after 2003, they would discover—where the crickets should have been—silence. Parasites had killed off many of the island's crickets, and those that remained had reproduced with a unique wing shape that did not create a sound. The island now lived in a new state of quiet.

When was the last time the drone of life ceased for you, and you experienced quiet? We live under the tyranny of unceasing stimuli: text messages, commercials, billboards, emails, binge-watching, and the like. We are surrounded by crickets, and have been content to accept them as part of the landscape. Perpetual preoccupation has become as American as apple pie.

It is not wrong to be preoccupied. But preoccupation becomes toxic when we can't go without it. We can distract ourselves to death, exchanging the richness of living for the numbing buzz of busyness. Sometimes noise is more comfortable than silence. Choosing to be quiet might stir up significant fears. In the nakedness of silence, we might fear being vulnerable to thoughts of guilt, inadequacy, regret, and failure. But this is not God's voice. What if, in cultivating a quiet interior, we instead discovered the kind words of a loving God?

Our Need for Rest

1. In the city limits of Vancouver, British Columbia, the city enforces very strict limitations on the size and visibility of signage. The result is a series of city roads and highways lined with trees and views of the mountains, making a would-be stressful commute rather serene. If you could describe your life as a highway, how much signage would there be? What would dominate the skyline? How serene or stressful would it be?
2. Author Henri Nouwen writes, "We often use the outer distractions to shield ourselves from the interior noises" (*Making All Things New*, 70). Take a risk here: how much of your time per week (days, hours, or minutes) is not occupied with some kind of distraction?

Scripture

This text from Mark's Gospel demonstrates the pressure to be constantly engaged. Up to this point, Jesus has been teaching His disciples many things. Now, He calls them to action, sending them out to heal with their words and deeds. Mark then documents their return to Jesus, and the challenge they face in seeking rest.

Mark 6:12-13; 30-34

¹² So the apostles went out and proclaimed that people should repent. ¹³ And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

³⁰ The apostles returned to Jesus and told Him all that they had done and taught. ³¹ And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³² And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. ³³ Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When He went ashore He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things.

God's Offer of Rest

1. Upon the disciples' return, Jesus gives them a very caring directive in verse 31. Scrutinize the specific words Jesus uses here. What are the components of rest He prescribes? Which of these components is most difficult for you to practice?
2. One way we can rest more is by saying "no" more frequently. But saying "no" becomes very difficult when people insist that they need us. It feels good to be needed. Mark depicts the crowd as nearly feverish in their need to be with Jesus and His disciples, so much so that the disciples can't even eat (verse 31). Think of a time when you've said "yes" to someone at the expense of your own wellbeing. Now imagine an alternative where you could've preserved your wellbeing and seen their needs met some other way.
3. It's somewhat surprising that Jesus does not dismiss the crowd, but instead chooses to teach them. It would be more straightforward if His boundaries were more clearly defined, e.g. "Since this is time for rest, all of you will need to leave." There may be times when we forego rest, but not always. What practical principle could you adopt that would help you decide the point at which you will/will not forego rest? Look at verse 34 to start.
4. One of the great misunderstandings about rest is that its purpose is to prepare us to be more productive later. But Jesus' words contain no further instruction. There's no "so that" in His prescription for rest. Rest is not necessarily related to work. It is its own separate vocation. Jesus tells His disciples to rest simply because rest is good. Reflect on the kind of God who would ask His people to rest simply for the sake of resting. What does this reveal about God's relationship with us?

Practicing Rest

1. Create boundaries with technology. Set ground rules for yourself in your use of technology. For example, if you have a smart phone, turn off your push notifications, or use the Do Not Disturb option at certain times, or turn it off altogether. Sleep with your device somewhere other than your nightstand. Fast from Instagram, Facebook, or Pinterest for a time. Turn devices off during meals.
2. Make it a habit to seek solitude. Find places where you can be alone and without interruption. Use MDPC's prayer chapel, or take a drive outside the city, or go camping, or find an isolated corner of a coffee shop. Create space where you can try to hear God's voice without the perpetual din of other voices.

Forgiveness: Relational Rest

Introduction

Not long ago, the news reported an argument that broke out after one car cut in front of another car. Both cars then came to a stop, and a yelling match ensued. What made this argument newsworthy, however, is when one driver jumped onto the roof of the other driver's car, and then that driver drove a short way with the person clinging desperately to the top of the car. Eventually the car stopped, the driver climbed down, and both drivers drove off, each steaming with rage.

Nothing illustrates bitterness better than a bad case of road rage. Bitterness is what happens when someone wrongs us and we can't let it go. Bitterness is a very human response to being wronged by another person. But it's also a disorder of the soul, one that causes us to rehearse the same offense again, and again, and again. Unchecked bitterness eventually ripens into resentment, and there is no rest in resentment.

We cannot get through life without being wronged by people, whether they're strangers on the highway or our closest friends. Our world is too broken to escape so unscathed. But if we're looking for rest, we must reconcile these aggravated relationships, which will require us to forgive. We are made in God's image, and the more we practice the kinds of things He practices (in this case, forgiveness), the more we will find ourselves at rest with ourselves, with others, and with God.

Our Need for Rest

1. Describe what it feels like to have made peace with someone who offended you. Compare the atmosphere around the relationship before and after forgiveness has taken place.
2. Mark Twain once described forgiveness in this way: "Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it." Spend a couple minutes reflecting together on the meaning of this pithy phrase.
3. Does it surprise you to see a study on rest focusing on forgiveness? Why or why not?

Scripture

This passage from Hebrews identifies the way unresolved relationships can become toxic. Here the author has just expressed that there is, very simply, no one greater than Christ. Since Christ is so great, there are particular ways to live in response, which are outlined here.

Hebrews 12:12-15

¹² Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. ¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.

God's Offer of Rest

1. What does this author command in this passage? How might these commands help produce relational rest?
2. In verse 15, why would the author mention a "root" of bitterness? According to the text, why is it important to address bitterness in its early stages?
3. Where have you seen one person's unchecked bitterness causing "many to become defiled?" How does this work at cross-purposes with rest?
4. Living with an unreconciled relationship can be anything but peaceful. How would you practically go about "striving for peace" with someone who had wronged you? How have you been able to do this in the past?
5. God understands the tasks of forgiving and reconciling better than anyone. God did not quit on us, but sought us out in spite of the cost: "God, through Christ, reconciled us to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:18). What was the cost God paid to be reconciled to us? How does that affect your outlook on forgiving others?

Practicing Rest

1. Wait to take Communion – This might sound odd, but Scripture teaches that we can take the sacrament of Communion prematurely. According to 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 and Matthew 5:23-24, attempted reconciliation is a necessary prerequisite for taking Communion. Otherwise we are embracing the forgiveness of Christ without offering that same forgiveness to others. If you have an unreconciled relationship, wait to take Communion until you have done your part to heal that relationship.
2. Choose not to be offended – Sometimes we choose to be victims. In truth, oftentimes we could actually just choose to look past another person's offense against us. Proverbs 19:11 reads, "It is to one's glory to overlook an offense." Resist the temptation to feel wronged so that bitterness doesn't have an opportunity to take root.

Contentment: Emotional Rest

Introduction

“FOMO.” A state of mental or emotional strain caused by the Fear Of Missing Out. It is a fear that somewhere out there the grass is greener or someone has something better than us. We’re concerned we may miss an opportunity, an exciting experience, a provocative business deal, a satisfying relationship, or even the hottest new item to buy. FOMO makes us uneasy. We envy what we don’t have in the form of the tangible or the intangible—the happy marriage, cooperative and high-performing children, or that new home. We become discontent because we fear someone has it better than us.

In our envy and discontentment, we find ourselves scurrying to settle the feelings of unrest in our spirit. And yet, the harder we run after the things we think we desire or the things we envy, the more discontent, dissatisfied, and restless we become.

However, God desires more for us than to fall victim to FOMO or discontentment. He wants us to find peace and contentment in Him alone as He is the only One who can supply a remedy for our anxious hearts. When we put our hope and trust in the One who defeated sin at the cross and who offers us a life of purpose and promise, we will discover that He is ready and willing to supply us with the joy and peace we crave (Romans 15:13).

Our Need for Rest

1. As you think about FOMO and the community you live in, what are some specific areas of discontentment you’ve experienced or seen?
2. What are some times in your life that you have felt content? What kinds of thoughts and feelings were you having at that time?

Scripture

This passage from Philippians is a part of Paul’s concluding remarks to the church at Philippi. These exhortations were written to the entire church community and were meant to address such issues as selfishness, envy, and anxiety among community members.

Philippians 4:4-13

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.

God’s Offer of Rest

1. Paul says that he has learned to be content in every situation. From what you know of his life, what were some of these situations? (See Acts 16-17; Acts 21; Acts 23; 2 Timothy.)
2. According to verses 11-12, what were some of the areas Paul could have chosen discontentment?
3. Read through the text a second time. Underline the words and phrases Paul uses to describe the antidotes to discontentment. What are these specific exhortations? Which command especially convicts and/or inspires you?
4. What is the promised result of such obedience to be content in any and all circumstances? (See verses 7 and 9.) What kind of rest does this produce?
5. The Lord offers us peace, joy, and contentment when we seek Him above all other sources of contentment. Focusing on the truth and character of Christ instead of the things of this world can be difficult at times. What makes it difficult for you to find contentment in Him completely?

Practicing Rest

1. What is a current area of discontentment in your life? What might be the root cause(s) of this dissatisfaction? Choose to abstain from the very thing that triggers your FOMO. For example, get online and unsubscribe from the dozens of subscriptions or shopping catalogues you receive, trusting you have enough already.
2. Paul highlights the importance of thanksgiving in his letter to the church at Philippi. Gratitude can be used to flame the contentment and peace we find in Jesus Christ alone. This week, steward this act by writing down three specific things you are thankful for each day.

Shalom: Corporate Rest

Introduction

All of us will admit how annoying it is to drive a car with a backseat driver. Backseat drivers have control issues. Don't you just want to tell a blabbering backseat driver to sit still and be quiet?! In Psalm 46:10, we see that God is telling us just that.

Being still is hard for many of us. How can we be productive when we are still? Our culture conditions us to feel lazy, irresponsible, selfish, and even insignificant when we cease activity. As followers of Jesus, we can fall into this trap as well.

However, in Scripture we find that rest and peace are overlapping concepts. Shalom, or lasting peace and healing, comes when we put our faith and trust in God. Sometimes, this act of trusting God means ceasing our own activity. When we stop striving, we are forced to face our own limitations. We must reckon with the source of our individual and corporate worth and identity. Rest allows us to step back and challenge the myth that we are in control.

The first step to peace is trusting God enough to be still and let Him have control. Only then do we begin to locate our life-giving role in God's work of redeeming the world.

Our Need for Rest

1. Why is it hard for people in our society to be still? What are some of the negative voices in your head when you cease activity?
2. Do you ever take yourself too seriously? What problems arise when you take yourself too seriously?
3. Instead of living with sober self-judgment, we often inflate or deflate our significance. What are the advantages of acknowledging your own limitations?

Scripture

Psalm 46:8-10

⁸ *Come, behold the works of the LORD,
how He has brought desolations on the earth.*

⁹ *He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
He burns the chariots with fire.*

¹⁰ *"Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!"*

God's Offer of Rest

1. The phrase "Be still and know that I am God" is a popular passage from scripture. However, people rarely quote the entire verse. How does the rest of the verse in Psalm 46:10 add depth to the significance of the passage?
2. The Biblical understanding of Shalom is deeper and richer than inner peace or fulfillment. Shalom is about *corporate* harmony and *communal* peace. The context of Psalm 46 is all the nations of the earth. What are some of the events in our world today that cause you anxiety? How might we respond to these events in the context of Scriptures that promise God will be exalted among the nations? (See also Matthew 12:15-21, Philippians 2:5-11, Revelation 21:1-8).
3. Do you see the connection between our need for control and a difficulty practicing rest? Elaborate on this in your group by giving some examples. (Ex: out of a desire to control your boss' perception of you, you may work excessively.)
4. As followers of Jesus, we find ourselves living in the tension between activity and rest. How might your obedience in resting enhance your ability to be obedient in other areas?
5. How might families, friend groups, and churches practice creating a culture that defends the importance of rest? Would agreeing upon some mutual practices help us rest more? What might those be?

Practicing Rest

1. What is one area of your life that you need to trust God with this week?

Write it down on a notecard and pass it to the group member on your left. Include your name and your cell phone number on the notecard. Ask the person on your left to follow up with you once during the week by asking you, "Are you trusting God with your need or are you trying to fix it yourself?" Let your community help guide you into a more restful relationship with God.

Adult Ministries

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