



Discovering Rest

A BIBLE STUDY WITH

NELSON PAINTER

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WEEK 1

RSVP TO REST

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:28

Parties. I love parties. The idea of friends, food, and fellowship is something that I will always enjoy. I'm a social bird so it makes sense that I would feel this way. My wife, however, would be totally satisfied to curl up on the couch and read a book about any random topic so long as she could have her tea to go along with it. But there's something that takes place before the party that is super vital to the success of that. I particularly think of weddings.

Over the years, my wife, Greta, and I have attended our fair share of weddings. Long before the wedding ever takes place we usually receive something in the mail, an invitation. The invitation usually has information on it like the time, date, and location of the celebration, along with some information about gift registries, and all of those details. But somewhere with the invitation there is a card that gives you information on how to RSVP. If you don't RSVP for the wedding, most likely you will not be planned for. You can show up to the event and feel very out of place and uninvited because you did not RSVP. Currently we are talking about weddings and parties, but there is an invitation from God to RSVP to a place in Him where you can reside and be rejuvenated. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden..." Matthew 11:28.

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One of the many things that the Israelites in the Old Testament were asked to do was to

keep the Sabbath day as part of their lifestyle. It was something that was a reflection of what God did during creation when He worked for six days and stepped back and said, “It is good,” and then rested on the seventh day. It’s important that you’re able to get rest, and if you don’t get your rest, you find out that you become a person that’s not your normal self. If I don’t get my rest, I get cranky. If I don’t get my rest, I become exhausted, which makes my judgment clouded, and then I make decisions and react in a way that I do not want to, simply because I’m exhausted. This is why the Sabbath day is so important.

Many of us practice this weekly on Sunday. We go to church and immediately after church, grab a quick bite at a local Mexican restaurant and head home to rest. Greta and I, have two young children. When we get home from church, we have a pretty solid routine. The kids change into comfy clothes and we tuck them in for a nap. After that Greta and I change into comfy clothes and then we are on the couch, ready to close our eyes. The Sunday afternoon nap is quite a sacred thing in our house, as I’m sure it may be in yours.

You are simply free to experience rest on any day of the week, not just your Sunday sabbath.

Colossians 2:16-17, “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or **sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.**” What this is revealing is that the Sabbath in the Old Testament was really just a type and shadow of what Christ would fulfill. No, I am not suggesting to you that you no longer keep the Sabbath day. What I am saying is that you are simply free to experience rest on any day of the week, not just your Sunday Sabbath. There are many things in the Old Testament that the Israelites did that were simply a type and shadow of what Christ would fulfill on the Cross and through His resurrection. So now, no longer do we simply have a Sabbath day but what was a shadow of a day has now been fulfilled in Christ for every moment of every day. Rest is no longer something

that is exclusive to one specific day, but now I can rest in Christ at any given point of my life, on any day. This is the transformation of the Gospel. It does not matter what you're facing personally, your job, or where you serve with your family. It is Christ's finished work on the Cross that provides a place of rest in the middle of your greatest storm.

I think of Greta on our wedding day. She walks down the aisle, surrounded by our friends and family. She says goodbye to her father and takes the hand of my shadow. Can you imagine how strange it would be for her to simply marry a shadow? A shadow can't go to work, a shadow can't help with the dishes, a shadow is simply limited by the fact that it is only a part of something real. Shadows can bring comfort in that there is proximity to the real thing, but it is no replacement for the real thing.

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THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

What is your current practice of the Sabbath? _____

What do you do to experience rest? _____

Are you able to find time in each day to “rest”? If yes, when, and how? _____



WEEK 2

OBEDIENCE TO REST

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am
gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

MATTHEW 11:29

So there I am standing on the rock in the middle of the river. I am cold, wet, and tired. My mind is swirling as I strategize and plan on how to get down the river without sinking. As I am planning and problem-solving I ask myself the question, “Why in the world did I do this?” It was my brother’s birthday, and his wife had gifted him a two-day kayaking trip with myself and another friend. The kayaks that we have are “sit on top” kayaks, which are very different from the professional kayaks where you sit inside of a hollowed out hole in the bottom of the kayak. That style of kayak gives you a sense of gravity and help to prevent you from flipping over.

When I first heard about the trip, I anticipated it to be some sort of “Pocahontas thing,” where we would glide across a lake of glass-like water or down a peaceful river. Instead, just about every section of the river that we went down was like rafting a class 3 rapids. The immense rainfall that we had received earlier in the week was not helping matters. After flipping our kayaks several times and having to chase our belongings as they floated down the river without us, we decided to change our plan of approach. Before each section of rapids, we would stop at a big rock or on the side of the bank to scout out what was ahead of us. Was there a better path down? What obstacles might we face? We survived the two-day trip, and have some fun stories to tell, but in the moment it was nerve-racking. You had to constantly be on guard for whatever you might come up against. You were always fighting your kayak’s desire to flip over, and always checking the river to find out which way we were supposed to go.

If I'm completely honest, these feelings are not just felt in a two-day trip that I took for my brother's birthday weekend. I have felt this way about my life before. Always feeling like I need to discover what the next thing is so I can prepare for it, constantly trying to keep myself together and not drown in the situation that I'm currently in. All the while, knowing that I have no experience, and no idea what is coming up next.

In Matthew 11:28, Jesus says "...I will give you rest." Over the years, I've seen many people strive, fight, and wrestle to overcome sin, life-goals, and everything in between; but if I can encourage you today, resting in Christ's finish work on the Cross will bring breakthrough much faster than your striving. There has never been a King like this that would invite you to be yoked with Him like two oxen harnessed together to plow a field. He will walk with you and see to it that the yolk is easy and that your burden is light. It is in this assurance that we can rest knowing that the King walks beside us guiding each step and carrying the weight.

Rest is the freedom from the responsibility of the outcome.

If I could define rest or peace in anyway, I would say that it is the freedom from the responsibility of the outcome. It doesn't mean that you don't have responsibility, it doesn't mean that you don't have to do your part, but it means that you are not responsible to accomplish a particular outcome. All that God requires of us is simple obedience. We obey, and we leave the results to Him. If we are yoked with Him, obedience is all that is needed and obedience is all that is required. This realization gives a tremendous freedom, peace, and rest that we can lean into, that will bring His will in our lives.

It's been some years ago that I was invited to go on a rafting trip. Although both trips were on the river, this trip was very different from my kayaking experience. We were on the

river all day, splashing one another, joking around, pushing each other out of the raft, and jumping out ourselves. The definition of relaxation! This trip was just about effortless. It was completely opposite of our kayaking experience which was full of planning, stress, and extreme effort. This trip was relaxing, fun, and carefree. I think about these two experiences and I have to ask myself the question what was the difference? I've come to realize that the key factor that changed the whole experience was one person.

Although I went with five close friends, we had a guide in the back of the boat. This guy had a job to keep everybody on the raft safe. I never once had to look down the river to plan for what was coming, because the guide already knew the river. He knew what was coming. He knew which direction we needed to go, all I had to do was listen to the guide. Because I had a guide in the boat, I didn't have to think very hard about anything. I didn't have to plan ahead. I could rest knowing that he was in the boat and that he was going to see me through. My friend, the King is in your boat, so you are free from the responsibility of the outcome.

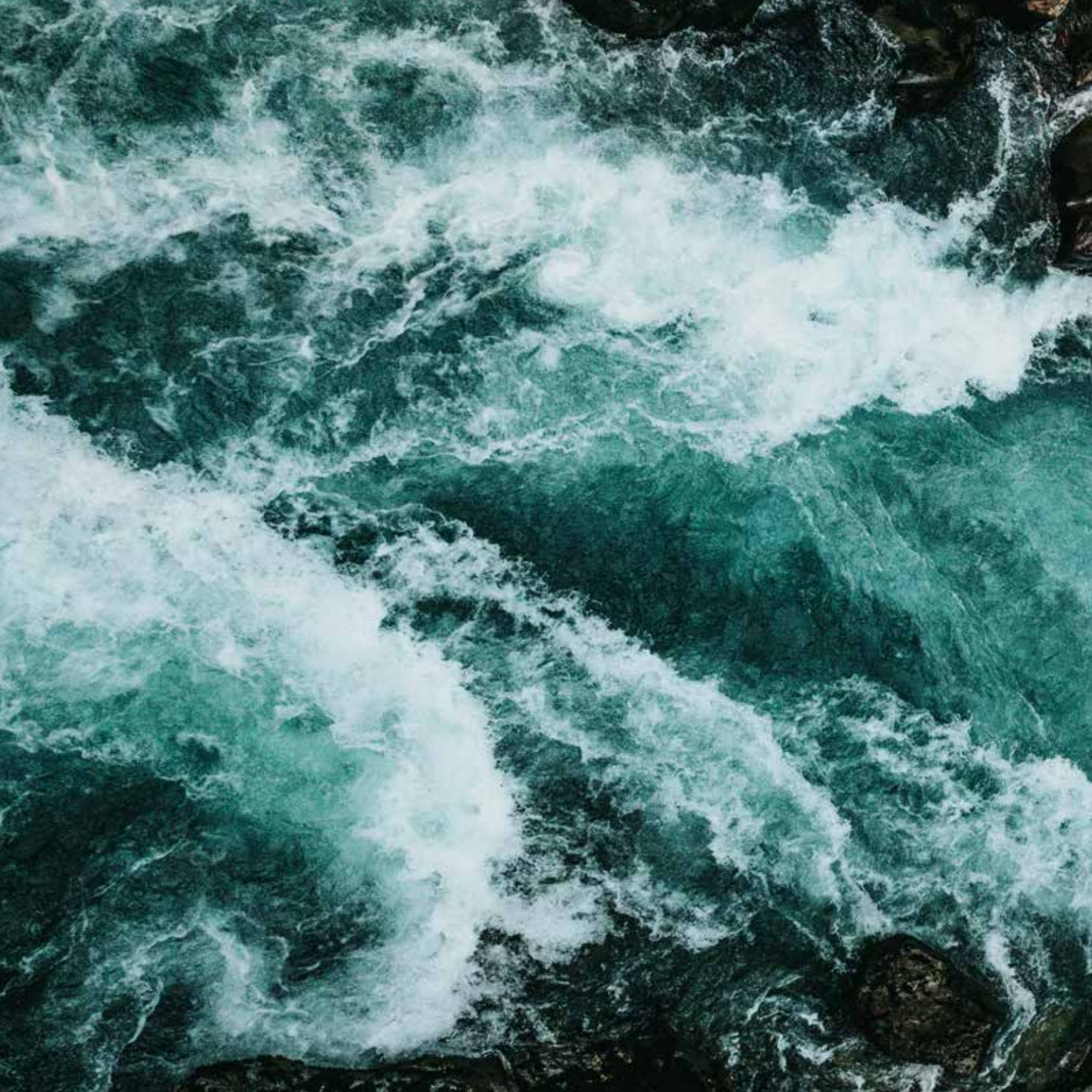
**THE KING IS IN YOUR BOAT, SO YOU ARE FREE FROM THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OUTCOME.**

THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

Do you find yourself always thinking ahead to the next thing? Do you find it hard to focus on one day at a time? If yes, what has created this thought process in your life? _____

Do you find it difficult to be obedient to the Lord if you don't know what the outcome of your obedience may bring about? _____

Describe a moment of when there was a positive outcome of an act of your obedience: _____



An aerial, top-down view of a powerful waterfall cascading over dark, jagged rocks. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, churning and creating white foam as it falls. The surrounding area is lush with green vegetation, including moss and small plants growing on the rocks.

WEEK 3

ALONE TO REST

...And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

1 KINGS 19:11-12

This week as we talk more about rest, I want to give you some real life, examples, and Scripture that talk about people needing to take time to rest. Maybe you've seen the commercials before for a very popular candy bar called Snickers. These commercials always crack me up when somebody is being unrealistic or unreasonable about some situation, and the person beside them looks at them and says, "Hey, have a Snickers." And their mood seems to change dramatically.

This is the equivalent to Biblical rest. It gives you fresh perspective. It allows you to think clearly and to hear the voice of the Lord correctly. In I Kings 19, Elijah is on the run. He has just walked through one of the most amazing faith stories in Scripture. In a three-year span, Elijah has declared to King Ahab that it will not rain until Elijah says it will. Elijah has said that if he is fed first, a widow and her son will also have food until the rain comes back. He has mocked the prophets of Baal, and has called fire down from Heaven. The rain returns and he slaughters 450 prophets of Baal. After accomplishing all of this, the Lord is with him, and he outruns horses and chariots back to his home. Elijah gathers his things and flees for his life because Jezebel, the queen at that time has vowed to kill him. He hides himself under a tree in the middle of nowhere and prays, "It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

Biblical rest allows you to think clearly and to hear the voice of the Lord correctly.

1 Kings 19:40. He then lays down and falls asleep. God wakes him up to eat two times because he continues to lay down and falls back asleep.

In a world where everything is fast paced, and there is a high demand put on you, burnout is a real thing.

In a world where everything is fast paced, and there is a high demand put on you, burnout is a real thing. You have more opportunities today than any other generation in history has ever had before. There are opportunities for you to connect, network, participate, learn, and enjoy so many more things than anyone has ever had access to. With that comes the tremendous responsibility of knowing that you cannot do it all. Burnout is something that must be prevented at all cost. Often

times we can feel the pressure to take hold of every opportunity, so that we are able to climb the success ladder as quickly as possible, particularly in a culture where instant gratification is becoming more and more paramount.

Part of resting in the Lord is understanding that when He wants to hide you, it does not matter how much striving you do, you cannot be found. And when He wants to promote you, nothing, and no one can stand in the way of Him promoting you. This includes time, position, years of experience, and all other factors. Life is a race, but Hebrews 12:2 says that we have to run with endurance, looking unto Jesus. When our eyes are fixed on Him and we take the time to physically, emotionally, and spiritually rest, we will be able to endure the length of the race and avoid burnout that others will suffer from.

Elijah soon moves on from the tree and finds a cave, and this is where we hear the famous account of God allowing an earthquake, wind, and fire to pass by, but He was not in any of those things, He is in the still small voice.

Sometimes we can treat God like a spiritual vending machine. When we're tired or exhausted, we pray for renewed strength and energy. We throw a list of demands out to Him, as if He is there to simply meet the needs that we believe should be filled. But in the same way that your gifts, your abilities, and what you do does not define who you are, God is not simply valuable because of what He can do for you. The value isn't His still small voice, no matter what you are currently facing or how exhausted you become, taking time away in your secret place to hear the still small voice of God will rejuvenate you and energize you like nothing else can.

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THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

Is burnout something that you struggle with in your life? If so, what is the cause? _____

Have you established a “secret place” (time of quiet, worship, reflection, and prayer) in your daily life? If not, what is holding you back? _____



WEEK 4

THE POWER OF “NO”

A serene landscape featuring a calm body of water, likely a lake or a wide river, reflecting the surrounding dense forest of green trees. The sky is overcast and hazy. In the foreground, there are tall, yellowish-green grasses. The text "THE POWER OF NO" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters, centered horizontally and partially overlapping the water and the forest.

And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving...

LUKE 10:39-40

As we wrap up this series in our final week, I want to shift our focus towards how the Lord thinks about us and what He most desires. The reality is - God is far less concerned about what you can do for Him than He is simply concerned about you. Your identity is not consumed by what you can accomplish or how available you are to Him but rather simply that you're His son or daughter. Nothing that you do bad or good, can change that.

I'm reminded of the story of Martha and Mary found in Luke 10. Jesus and His disciples are at the house and Jesus is teaching them. Martha is running around trying to get everything ready. She is trying to get the house tidy, prepare meals, and clean dishes, all the while Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus doing nothing. As Martha's frustration builds, she eventually explodes and asks Jesus to force Mary to help her with the workload.

Your identity is not consumed by what you can accomplish or how available you are to Him but rather simply that you're His son or daughter.

It's very easy for me to get frustrated with Mary in this situation. I can easily identify with Martha and think, "There are things to do!" All Mary wants to do is sit around! I would also become very frustrated. But Jesus has a different perspective. He says, "Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one

thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:41.

When you say “no” to something, it means that you were able to say “yes” to something that is more important.

What we should gain from this story is the importance of keeping the main thing, the main thing. It’s easy to jump into a lifestyle where you say “yes” to everything, but the power of “no” is vital to be a leader. When you say “no” to something, it means that you were able to say “yes” to something that is more important. The challenge in our life is to prioritize God’s call over the good things. Knowing the difference between good and bad is not hard to distinguish, but understanding what is good from God is more difficult.

Come on, if someone hit you in the face, do you hit them back or do you walk away? It’s not hard to determine what is right from wrong. But a talented person like yourself can get asked to do a lot of good things instead of prioritizing the “God things”. Before you know it, your life is filled with jumping through hoops and keeping up with a busy schedule that you do not have time for God or the “God things” that He’s calling you too. If the enemy cannot get me to do wrong things, he will get me to overextend myself doing good things. Fatigue will eventually give birth to unbelief. Fatigue will give us a callous and resistant heart, so much so that we become accustomed to activity in the place of relationship with God. As we live our life out of busyness, we lose the tenderness and intimacy that we have with the Father, and we simply do things because it’s the next thing on a list of things to do.

Margins are an important aspect of this. Imagine as you read this Bible study that there were no margins on the page. The words would simply run down into the center binding and right back up the other side. Not only would it be difficult to understand what the study is saying, some of the words would be absolutely impossible to read because space

was not created to fit the binding in. God wants you to set margins in your life, time with Him, time to reflect, time to sleep, time to rest, time to have fun, time to process. Rest is an incredibly important aspect of maintaining your mental health, and it is far too easy to neglect this simple gift that the Lord has designed to keep you sane, sharp, and vibrant to accomplish His purposes for your life.

If Martha could look back on that day when Jesus came to visit, I'm sure she would regret the choice that she made to busy herself with the dishes, the food, and the crumbs on the floor. Jesus, the Son of God, was under her roof and she missed Him! She could have joined her sister in drinking in the presence of the Savior, hanging on to each word of wisdom, love, and encouragement that He gave. Don't make the same mistake. Seek Him while He is near, find Him in your space of rest.

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THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

Is saying “no,” difficult for you? Why or why not?_____

Reflect on your life, is it filled with too many things, events, and responsibilities? Do you feel that your busyness is balanced well with your connection to the Father?_____

If you have identified that finding time to rest is hard for you, what will you change to accomplish rest?_____



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