

Weariness & Rest

Matthew 11:28-30

Rest is essential for us in many ways. Without rest – and more specifically sleep – our mind and body are unable to function the way they were designed. We become unhealthy as our bodies go into chaos attempting to simply survive.

The same goes for the rest Jesus provides: without it we begin to lean on ourselves and away from Jesus, driving our bodies and minds alike to exhaustion.

Amidst the chaos of COVID-19 and being quarantined in our homes, people still refuse rest when it is offered to us in the most obvious way: physically having to be home. Our need for schedules and productivity have become more apparent than ever as we find any way to keep busy. We turn from rest without even realizing it.

Resting in Jesus is more than just a physical halt from activity. It is something we are called to tap into at all times, allowing Him to pour into us and work through us at all times. It is laying everything down at His feet and trusting that He has already done the work.

What Does It Look like to Be Weary?

How many of the following 10 signs can you relate to? Which ones are the most revealing for you and why?

1. “Busy” and “tired” are the words you use to describe yourself most often when people ask you how you’re doing.
2. You always seem to be in a hurry!
3. Every time you look at your upcoming schedule, you feel stressed and anxious.
4. You are getting less and less sleep.
5. You always see others as the reason for your problem.
6. You keep saying that what you are going through is a “season” that will eventually pass.
7. You are showing less and less compassion toward others.
8. You are losing hope.
9. You begin to withdraw from family and friends.
10. You can’t remember the last time you genuinely had fun.

How would you answer these 12 questions, if asked?

1. Do you regularly work 30 minutes a day longer than your contracted hours?
2. Do you check work emails and phone messages at home?
3. Has anyone ever said to you, "I didn't want to trouble you because I know how busy you are?"
4. Do your family and friends complain about not getting time with you?
5. If tomorrow evening were unexpectedly freed up, would you use it to do work or a household chore?
6. Do you often feel tired during the day or do you find your neck and shoulders aching?
7. Do you often exceed the speed limit while driving?
8. Do you make use of flexible working arrangements offered by your employer?
9. Do you pray with your family regularly?
10. Do you have enough time to pray?
11. Do you have a hobby in which you are actively involved?
12. Do you eat together as a family or household at least once a day?

We live in a world that promotes hustle and full schedules. There is always another project to tackle, another item on our to-do lists, another goal to accomplish. It's even true in the midst of the pandemic, which is full of to-do projects.

We often idolize productiveness and mask, or even boast, about weariness. We compare our schedules to others to see who is "doing more". This is called "striving".

"Striving" is a constant struggle of trying to reach farther, do more, and be better. We take all of our resources and put it to the "doing". This leaves us empty. We are pulling from our own limited resources rather than Jesus' unlimited supply of life. We're actually walking in the opposite direction of His path to rest.

What are some things you strive for?

"Looking" weary doesn't just look like dark circles under our eyes or 2pm caffeine crashes at work, it often isn't that obvious. Weariness of the soul is often *felt before it is seen*, we hear those voices that we will never do or be enough, and in reaction, we do and try more and more until there is nothing left to give.

You may even feel like you're doing great, but you have to look inward and ask if you are "doing great" by the world's standards or Jesus' standards.

Three Dangers to Avoid

The first danger is that busyness can ruin our _____. When our lives are frantic and frenzied, we're more prone to anxiety, resentment, impatience, and irritability.

The second danger is that busyness can rob our _____. The worries of life often choke out our spiritual life. Jesus says the work of the Word is swallowed up by the desire for other things. Possessions aren't the problem. The issue is once you own it you need to keep it clean, keep it working, and keep up with the latest improvements. If the worries of life don't swamp us, the upkeep will.

The third danger is that busyness can cover up the rot in our _____. What we may not recognize is that our crazy schedules are often signals that the sickness has already set in. Busyness doesn't mean you're a faithful or fruitful Christian. It only means you're busy, just like everyone else.

What Does Worldly Rest Look Like?

What Rest Does Jesus Give?

While the world constantly demands performance and conformity from us, Jesus give rest to stay in His unchanging presence. We no longer have to strive to be perfect because Jesus gave His life so that we could be set free. We gain spiritual rest as well as an eternal rest spent in the presence of God, starting right here and now with Jesus.

It doesn't mean life will be easy. He tells us of hardship and rejection from the world, but when we have Him, we can rest secure knowing His promises are good and paid in full with His death and resurrection.