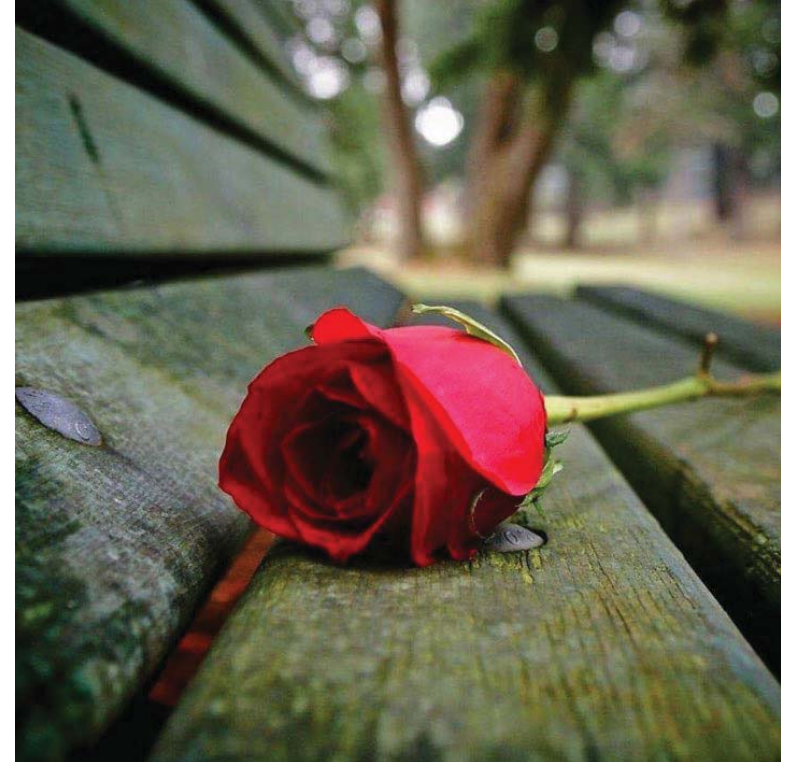



*“Come to me all you who are weary and
burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

Matthew 11:28



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network of evangelical women in ministry

The Springs 

This booklet is full of insight from various authors about solitude, silence and prayer. Read one or two at a time. They are intended to inspire your reflection. Consider what stands out to you. Use your own journal or the space provided to ponder what you think in response to what is stated. Does this ring true? Is there an “ah ha!”? Does it raise more questions? The point is to find what is helpful for you, what expands your thinking and speaks to your heart, and teaches you something about prayer.

Thank you, Father, for inviting me to come away on retreat, a time to rest from a busy life of deadlines and significant needs to meet. What a wonderful gift this retreat is: time to read, and pray, and take a nap; time to reflect and worship, time to gather myself from the various places I’ve been and refocus my attention on You. I’m realizing that I’m weary, concerned about a lot of things. What a gift that You’ve invited me to come away and have offered to give me rest. I need rest. Dear Lord Jesus, I open my heart to You. Every aspect of my life is open to You. During this retreat may I know your presence with me. May I draw near, sit close, and rest my weary body against on your chest.

“We worship God when we Rest: indeed there is no greater worship of God than this.”

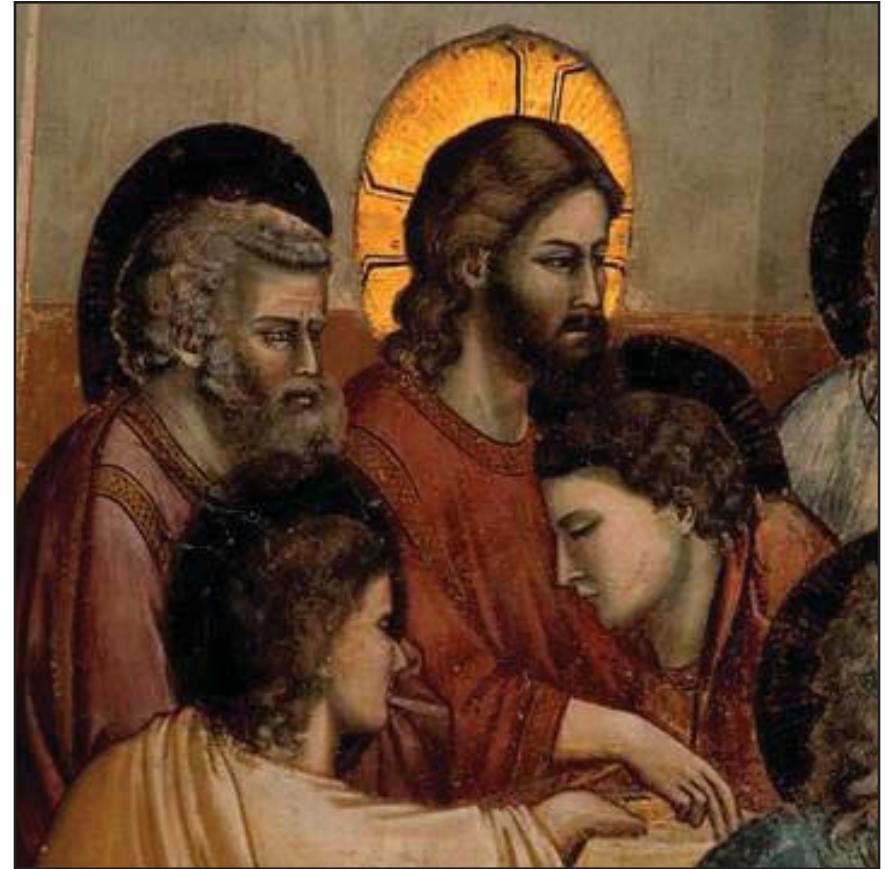
 *Martin Luther in a letter to Melancthon, May 12, 1539*

“God is God and He alone is the creator. We can worship God by resting, indeed in resting we can worship Him better than any other way because it is when we really relax our body and our soul that we cast our cares on God. We thus honor God as the One whose blessing rests upon and surrounds all our work, and Who keeps on working for us even when we rest and sleep. The capacity truly to rest from our cares with our body and soul is a special confirmation of our faith and is related to justifying faith.”

 *Althaus, stating Luther’s theology of Rest, “Ethics of Man”, pg 104.*

“Liberation from your own desires is one of the greatest gifts of solitude and silence. When this all begins to happen, you will know you are arriving where you ought to be. Old bondages to wrong-doing will begin to drop off as you see them for what they are. And the possibility of really loving people will dawn upon you. Soon you may even come to know what it is like to live by grace rather than just talk about it.”

🍃 *Dallas Willard, Divine Conspiracy, pp. 359-60*



🍃 *Figure, Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337)*

“When you go into solitude and silence, you need to be relatively comfortable. Don’t be a hero in this or in any spiritual discipline. You will need rest. Sleep until you wake up truly refreshed. And you will need to stay there long enough for the inner being to become different. Muddy water becomes clear if you only let it be still for a while.


 *Dallas Willard, Divine Conspiracy, pp. 359-60*

“I want to invite you to join me on a life-changing journey in the presence of the living God. Today, this very moment, He bids you come and sit at His feet where you can experience reflection in place of restlessness, meditation instead of mindless activity, quiet in the midst of clamor, and waiting on Him rather than running about.... Perhaps you aren’t familiar with the term “contemplative prayer.” It is an ancient term for a form of prayer that has been almost lost to the modern world. Very simply, contemplative prayer is communing with God through quiet moments of meditation, listening, and reflecting on Him. It is our response to God’s call to “be still, and know.” This is called the “inner prayer journey” because instead of rushing into prayer with an agenda or grocery list of requests we quiet our souls until God can speak and we are able to hear His gentle voice. His Word breathes new life into our spiritual walk as we let Him write its truths on our heart. We enter a love affair with the God of the universe.“

 *“Soul at Rest—A Journey into Contemplative Prayer”, Tricia McCary Rhodes, p 12-13*


Resting helps us to learn how to simply “be” – how to offer to God ourselves, our attention, our devotion, our heart, rather than all of the things we do. We love to be seen doing and when we are with other people we use all of our activity to demonstrate that we have value. So Jesus instructs us to go into our rooms, and close the door. Turn off our electronics. Be with Him. And in the quiet, we will find rest for our souls.

“Let the Beloved of the Lord rest secure in Him for He shields him all day long and the one the Lord loves rests between His shoulders.”

 Deuteronomy 33:12

Rest and Stress

“I had come to Oxford and this year abroad in part to rest. After a decade of starting and leading a new church, having four children, writing my first book and fixing up an old house, I was exhausted. I wasn’t burned out or washed out or struggling with my faith. I wasn’t bitter or angry to trying to run away. I wasn’t at a crisis point or lost or in need of direction. Any of those would have made a good story. But I was simply worn out, depleted, like Bilbo in *The Lord of the Rings*: “I feel all thin, sort of stretched...like butter that has been scraped over too much bread.” I needed time away, to rest and to contemplate.”

 *“In Search of Deep Faith – A pilgrimage into the Beauty, Goodness and Heart of Christianity”, by Jim Belcher, IVP Press 2013, page 12*

Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods;
though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.

One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard:

that You, O God, are strong, and that You, O Lord, are
loving.

Surely You will reward each person according to what He
has done.

 *Psalm 62, For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.*

“My soul finds rest in God alone;
my salvation comes from Him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation;

He is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

How long will you assault a man?

Would all of you throw him down--

this leaning wall, this tottering fence?

They fully intend to topple him from his lofty place;

they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless,

but in their hearts they curse.

Selah

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation;

He is my fortress, I will not be shaken.

My salvation and my honor depend on God;

He is my mighty rock, my refuge.

Trust in Him at all times, O people;

pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge.

Selah

Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie;

if weighed on a balance, they are nothing;

together they are only a breath.

*“Return to your rest, O my soul, for
the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.”*


 Psalm 116:7

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

 *Psalm 46:10*

A contemplative retreat is not the same as getting away on vacation; it's not simply stopping all of our vocational work so we can get away and work on what we want. No, on retreat, we cease all work—we intentionally stop. Our retreat has times for rest, silence, and solitude as integral components of our time away because stopping our work, being alone and being quiet helps us connect with the Lord. And it is the connection with the Lord, recognizing that we are in His Presence, that enables our soul to rest. When we come away with Jesus we will find that our souls can rest.

“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between Me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy. Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people. For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested.’”

 *Exodus 31: 12-17*

“Then He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.’”

 *Mark 2:27*

“*Every* person should have regular periods in life when he or she has nothing to do. Periods of solitude and silence are excellent practices for helping us learn how to do that. The law that God has given for our benefit, as well as His, tells us that one seventh of our time should be devoted to doing nothing—no work, not by ourselves or any of our family, employees, or animals. That includes, of course, religious work. It is to be Sabbath...

☞ *Dallas Willard, Divine Conspiracy, pp. 359-60*


“*Jesus* never promised that He would take difficult assignments away from you. However, He did promise that if you would come to Him, He would give you the rest you need in order to be refreshed for the continuation and conclusion of the journey. So when it seems like you’ve given all you have, but there’s still so much more for you to do before you’re finished, just take a break from your journey and go to Jesus for some supernatural refreshing. This is Jesus’ offer to the weary and tired worker. Jesus offers to come alongside the worker and join him in his assignment or affairs. However, the worker – the weary soul – has to make the deliberate choice to enter into this working relationship and to come under the yoke of Jesus. One reason the devil has access to people’s emotions is that they keep flying through life without taking time to get renewed in the Presence of the Lord. They ignore their need to sit, to rest, and to wait upon the Lord. As a result, their perception of things around them gets blurred. Doing too much at too fast of a pace has worn them down, causing them to lose their focus and affecting their ability to see things the way they really are. To anyone who responds to this invitation and comes to Jesus, He promises that He will give them “rest.” The word “rest” is the Greek word *anapauo*, the word that means to refresh, to rejuvenate, to reinvigorate, or to revitalize.

☞ “*Sparkling Gems from the Greek*”, by Rick Renner, *pgs 542, 543, and 993*


“My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken.”

 *Psalm 62: 1-2*


all that i want is
to know
that
you are there
if only
i could
walk
to your door
you would
let me in
without question
i could
be with you in silence
perhaps
i would know
that you wanted me
there
that you loved me
no matter
what

 *Phyllis Goodnow, Discoveries, 10.20,83*
From Calligraphic Artists' Books, Scritisit xv 3 Sept. 1992


“You will know this finding of soul and God is happening by an increased sense of who you are and a lessening of the feeling that you have to do this, that, and the other thing that befalls your lot in life. That harassing, hovering feeling of “have to” largely comes from the vacuum in your soul, where you ought to be at home with your Father in His kingdom. As the vacuum is rightly filled, you will increasingly know that you do not have to do those things—not even those you want to do.

 *Dallas Willard, Divine Conspiracy, pp. 359–60*

Archibald Hart of Fuller Seminary’s School of Psychology, who is an expert on stress-related problems, said that the two professions that suffer the most post event adrenal let-down are trial lawyers and pastors. I buy it. I felt it each Monday morning when I woke up the day after preaching. Even so, I struggled to take a solid day off each week. I found it hard to relax, partly because of the 24/7 demands of pastoring but also because the adrenal let-down made me anxious, tired, lethargic. I discovered that I only felt better when I finally ramped up the stress for the upcoming Sunday and started the cycle again, sometimes as early as Monday afternoon. Even on my vacations, I still had to work to keep the adrenaline flowing. I was addicted to stress.

 *“In Search of Deep Faith – A pilgrimage into the Beauty, Goodness and Heart of Christianity”, by Jim Belcher, IVP Press 2013, page 44*

“Our hearts are restless until we rest in Thee.”

 *St. Augustine (354–430 A.D.)*

In St. Augustine’s view, people do not get what they deserve; life would be hellish if they did. Instead, people get much more than they deserve. God offers us grace, which is His unmerited love. God’s protection and care comes precisely because you do not deserve it and cannot earn it. Grace doesn’t come to you because you’ve performed well on your job or even made great sacrifices as a parent or as a friend. Grace comes to you as part of the gift of being created.

One of the things you have to do in order to receive grace is to renounce the idea of you can earn it....Then you have to open up to it...’Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when we walk through the dark valleys of a meaningless and empty life...It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference our weakness, our hostility, and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us. It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when despair destroys all joy and courage. Sometimes at that moment, a wave of light breaks into our darkness and it is as though a voice were saying: “You are accepted. You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted.” If that happens to us, we experience grace....


If you are passionately in love with a person, you naturally seek to delight her all the time. You want to buy her presents. You want to stand outside her window singing ridiculous songs. This is a replica of the way those who feel touched by grace seek to delight God. They take pleasure in tasks that might please Him. They work tirelessly at tasks that they think might glorify Him. The desire to rise up and meet God’s love can arouse mighty energies.

And as people rise up and seek to meet God, their desires slowly change. In prayer, people gradually reform their desires so that more and more they want the things they believe will delight God rather than the things they used to think would delight themselves.

The ultimate conquest of self, in this view, is not won by self-discipline, or an awful battle within self. It is won by going out of self, by establishing a communion with God and by doing the things that feel natural in order to return God’s love.

This is the process that produces an inner transformation. One day you turn around and notice that everything inside has been realigned. The old loves no longer thrill. You love different things and are oriented in different directions. You have become a different sort of person. You didn’t get this way simply by following this or that moral code, or adopting a drill sergeant’s discipline or certain habits. You did it instead because you reordered your loves, and as Augustine says again and again, you become what you love...

Augustine is reminding believers that the center of their lives is not in themselves. The material world is beautiful and to be savored and enjoyed, but the pleasures of this world are most delicious when they are savored in the larger context of God’s transcendent love.

 *“The Road to Character” by David Brooks, chapter 8, “Ordered Love.”*