

2022 ... A Year of Discipleship

Rest

Most people, at least at one time or another, have felt the need to rest. Most of the time, we think about rest as catching a nap, relaxing with a good book, or even getting a full night's sleep. It is true that our bodies need rest. God made us that way. While there is a great temptation, especially for those who are younger, to go as hard, as fast, and as long as one can; God made our bodies to need to rest.

God made our souls to need to rest, also. This rest also includes feeding our souls. There are times we are tempted at times to go as hard, fast, and long as we can between times in fellowship with our Lord. If we don't spend the time resting in God and learning from Him, we'll burn out our souls and our activity will become more about us than about Christ.

1. Read Psalm 46:10. There's a lot of activity in this psalm. Nations rage, the earth melts, God works peace. But what does it mean to "be still, and know that [God] is God"?
2. Resting in the Lord means listening to His Word. Read John 8:31-32. Here Jesus uses the word "abide" to describe those who are in His Word. Some translations use the word "remain." Jesus also uses "abide/remain" throughout John 15. What does it mean to abide or remain in Jesus' Word?

BLESSED LORD, SINCE YOU HAVE CAUSED ALL HOLY SCRIPTURES TO BE WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING, GRANT THAT WE MAY SO HEAR THEM, READ, MARK, LEARN, AND INWARDLY DIGEST THEM THAT BY PATIENCE AND COMFORT OF YOUR HOLY WORD WE MAY EMBRACE AND EVER HOLD FAST THE BLESSED HOPE OF EVERLASTING LIFE; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, YOUR SON, OUR LORD, WHO LIVES AND REIGNS WITH YOU AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD, NOW AND FOREVER. AMEN

(COLLECT FOR THE WORD)

3. Look at the Collect for the Word (right). A "collect" is a prayer; this one offered to the Lord at the close of Divine Service 3 in our hymnal. What does it mean that we "hear," "read," "mark," "learn," and "inwardly digest" God's Word?

God's desire for us is that in the time we spend reading and studying the Bible that the words of Scripture become part of us. The Bible isn't to merely be a book we read in worship or Bible study, and it's not to be a book of ancient words from ancient cultures. The Bible doesn't just tell us the history of God with His people. The Bible is to become our story with God.

4. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What does it mean when the apostle writes that Scripture is “breathed out by God”? What are some of the purposes of the Bible?

5. We rest in the Lord when we read the Bible. We rest in the Lord when we spend time with Him in prayer. Read Matthew 9:37-38. Here Jesus instructs His people to pray for more workers for His harvest of souls. Jesus actually says, “pray earnestly.” Prayer is the most powerful tool we have on earth. What can happen in the lives of people, especially those who pray, through prayer?

6. Bible reading, prayer, ... worship. Worship is defined as “the reverent love and devotion accorded to a deity, an idol, or a sacred object.” Worship certainly happens when God’s people gather on Sunday mornings, but worship is not merely a Sunday morning activity. Read Romans 12:1-2. What does it mean to offer ourselves as a “living sacrifice”?

7. Read Colossians 3:17 and put what was read in Romans 12:1-2 with it. Using these two verses when does, can, and should worship happen?

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO BE CELEBRATING CONSTANTLY. WE OUGHT TO BE PREOCCUPIED WITH PARTIES, BANQUETS, FEASTS, AND MERRIMENT. WE OUGHT TO GIVE OURSELVES OVER TO VERITABLE ORGIES OF JOY BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN LIBERATED FROM THE FEAR OF LIFE AND THE FEAR OF DEATH.

BRENNAN MANNING, “RAGAMUFFIN GOSPEL”

8. A final part of resting in the Lord is celebrating. Christians aren’t always known for their ability to celebrate. Look at the Brennan Manning quote (left). Why do you think Christians need to be full of joy?

Resting in the Lord is all about spending time with Him. You may have noticed that some of the parts of rest are also spiritual disciplines we’ve already discussed. Bible reading, prayer, and worship are important in and of themselves. Yet, bring them together and one finds that participating in these disciplines – and adding times of celebration – faith is grown and strengthened. When we spend time resting with Jesus, we find that our faith in Him is stronger.