

**NBC Devotional**  
**June 2, 2021**  
**“When Will I Be Rested?”**

How many of you feel rested after the long holiday weekend? Most of us were involved with Commencement activities and perhaps additional activities with family and friends. But isn't it true that whenever we get an extra day and a long weekend, we fill that time we with so much activity we return to work exhausted?

You need rest, physical rest. But we tend to keep going, pushing ourselves, telling ourselves that someday, we'll catch up on our sleep. How many of you are still trying to catch up?

We are created to work. Regardless of what some of you think, work is not a symptom of the Fall but rather a joy and privilege given to us by our Heavenly Father. If you recall, prior to sin entering the human story, Adam and Eve labored for God. But too much working takes us outside the plan of God and forces us to labor in our own strength. Unfortunately, our society promotes the lie that resting is directly related to laziness or selfishness and continually working is good. It might seem productive to rush around nonstop, but your body, mind, and soul were not created to function that way. Daily rest is needed, just like daily bread. You know that if you skip eating, your body ends up depleted. In the same way, skipping rest leaves your body weak and deeply weary. Rest is not a sign of weakness; it's simply part of being human.

Just as work looks different for everyone, rest looks different for everyone. Perhaps rest is taking a sabbatical, an extended vacation, a nap, an hour of solitude, or simply, that complete eight hours each night. When you look over the course of your day, are there times for rest? Are there moments you can catch your breath, sit down, and reflect? Or are you going, going, and going until you drop into bed an hour later than you'd hoped?

It's in physical rest that you are refueled and made ready to receive grace to accomplish your tasks. It's in rest that we are able to take time to be thankful and celebrate what God has helped us accomplish, rather than always bearing the burden of the never-ending list of tasks before us.

However, there is another “rest;” “soul rest.” A famous prayer of St. Augustine says, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.” As essential as physical rest is, it does not provide the depth of rest that our souls long for and need. In his devotional, Matt Bennett says that, although it is counterintuitive, Jesus explains in Matthew 11:28-30 that divine rest comes by His grace through action.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you 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.”

Taking up Jesus' yoke is a purposeful action leading to supernatural rest, peace of soul; serenity of mind; freedom from worry and anxiety. We draw near to Him. We put down the burdens – issues, problem, situations and circumstances we are carrying- along with the anxiety that these create in our lives. We get close enough to Him to be yoked together with Him. And by that

yoke, we identify with Jesus. It is still possible to experience rejection, suffering and pain, but His strength comes to us as Jesus carries the yoke with us. Jesus directs us on a road that leads to peace in conflicting times; serenity during anxious days; and joy that renews. There is something restful to our souls when we learn to live this way.

Christ himself took time for this type of rest even when thousands of people were looking to Him to be fed. Yes, He fed them with loaves and fishes, but then He also fed Himself with solitude and prayer - a time to get close to the Father for His strength and direction (Matthew 14:23). Jesus himself was yoked to the Father. When we are yoked with Jesus, we are also yoked with the Father.

Part of being yoked with Jesus means studying and following His commands. Jeremiah 6:16 says, "Thus says the Lord: 'Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good ways is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.'" The scripture and the teaching of Jesus are good. When we learn them and follow them, we will find "soul rest."

King David's reflection in Psalm 55:6-8 reads,

'I said, "If only I had wings like a dove—I would fly away and find rest.

Indeed, I would run far away. I would stay in the desert.

I would hurry to find shelter from the raging wind and storm.'"

Isn't it ironic that genuine rest from your raging wind and storm isn't the result of doing nothing, but comes only when we expend the effort to be yoked with Jesus, to draw close to the only One who can put our hearts at rest? God Himself is our rest.

Let us read Matthew 11 once more, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you 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."

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