

SACRED REST

STUDY GUIDE

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STUDY GUIDE

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CHAPTER 1: LIVING THE BURNED-OUT LIFE

Scripture Focus

Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality.
Romans 12:11-13 The Message

Key Chapter Quotes

"It takes strength to walk away from good in the pursuit of better."

"Funny how everyone can smell the char of your slow burn except the one standing in the fire."

"Sleep is solely a physical activity. Rest, however, penetrates into the spiritual."

"The most underuse, chemical-free, safe, effective, alternative medicine is spelled R-E-S-T."

"Our problem isn't simply a need for more sleep. Our problem is that we are missing the good."

Reflection Questions

1. Peace comes in many forms- what are some of your ritualistic peace activities? When is the last time you did one of these?
2. Lying on the floor is physical submission- for rest, poor health, bad backs, tickling kids, wrestling with the dog. So is it more difficult for you to get down to the floor, or get up? Why?
3. What is your breaking point, trigger point, or personal markers for a longing for rest?
4. Have you ever experienced peace in the middle of a mental storm? What initiated your peace state of mind?
5. The metaphors of burned out and kindling and eternal fire are used in the first chapter of Sacred Rest. Which metaphor describes you today- right now?
6. What is the difference between a sacred sanctuary and a human sanctuary? How might your heart be a sanctuary? What invades that personal heart space? What heals that space?

CHAPTER 2: THE SECRET LIFE OF THE WELL-RESTED

Scripture Focus

When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Silence! Be still!" Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm.

Mark 4:39 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"The optimist in me refused to accept brokenness as a resting place."

"The most effective rest occurs when we are purposefully reviving the parts of our life we regularly deplete."

"The human default mechanism is to do what's easy rather than what's beneficial."

"Downsizing your life without a restful plan for filling the gaps opens the door for other enemies like laziness and apathy."

"Sometimes the unusual opens the door to the miraculous."

"Rest requires submission of the soul."

Reflection Questions

1. A tired body and mind crave stimulants such as caffeine or exercise to keep it fueled. Jesus rested in the midst of His storms, yet we neglect to do the same. What keeps us from rest?
2. What is your daily grind? Does it repeat throughout the week or do you allow time each day to unplug and unwind?
3. Examine a sleep tracker and you'll quickly see a pattern of imbalance. Sleep is physical and rest is spiritual. What "tracker" are you using to measure each of these?
4. Do you have a problem with productive people, or worn out people?
5. We surround ourselves with people who mirror our activity and lack of rest. When an outsider comes into the group with an alternative plan, how does that affect the pack? Why?
6. Why is REST so often underused?

CHAPTER 3: THE REST YOU'VE BEEN MISSING

Scripture Focus

My insides are turned inside out; specters of death have me down. I shake with fear, I shudder from head to foot.

"Who will give me wings," I ask—"wings like a dove?" Get me out of here on dove wings; I want some peace and quiet. I want a walk in the country, I want a cabin in the woods. I'm desperate for a change from rage and stormy weather.

Psalm 55:6-8 The Message

Key Chapter Quotes

"Brokenness is beautifully ugly, drawing to the surface everything ready to be pruned.

"Healing occurs when we allow ourselves the time, space, and grace to be in the presence of God in the middle of our busy lives.

"Healing and wholeness require access into our lives, and room to make us better.

"You can either honor your need for rest or surrender to the one-two punch of a mandatory rest.

"Your body needs physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, sensory and creative rest. Omit any one of these, and you will feel the consequences of the resulting rest deficit.

"For every depleting activity in your day, there is a counter reviving activity to balance the scales.

Reflection Questions

1. A passport is a validation stamp of travel- with an expiration date. If you have the resources and time, where would you travel? When is your anticipated expiration date? (Example: before kids are born, when kids are in college, before my knees and back give out)
2. We often look for satisfaction which is immediate, such as chocolate or the exhilaration that comes after jogging. What are your immediate satisfaction methods? Are you using immediate satisfaction to satisfy a different longing, such as rest or relationship?

CHAPTER 3: THE REST YOU'VE BEEN MISSING

Reflection Questions

3. What would it feel like if you seek satisfaction in prayer, worship, or praise? When are you willing to try this? Is it a 21 day experience or a one-time deal?
4. Write a list of the people you are too busy to spend time with and those you are intentionally keeping at a distance. Are some names on both lists? Have you taken this to Jesus in prayer, to friends in gossip, or internalized it as bitterness?
5. Our soul is refreshed with beauty, yet each of us has a different vision of what is beautiful. For some it's laughter on a child's face; for others it's the colors of the ocean or an evening sky.
6. What three things do you consider magnificently beautiful?
7. Do you fanaticize about rest, or make time for it? Are you waiting for illness and forced rest, or refreshing voluntarily?
8. Which of these rest types do you rely on most often: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, sensory or creative rest? Which are you deficient in? (Take personal rest deficient assessment in the back of book or online at RestQuiz.com)
9. Write this down in your phone: The best time to rest is when you don't have time for it. Did you write this as a memo/note, or as an appointment? Why?

CHAPTER 4: PHYSICAL REST

Scripture Focus

And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb.

Romans 4:19 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"It boggles my mind how little we trust our body to speak truth."

"None of us are at our best when depleted."

"It's time to transition from our daily hustle to daily hush. In the hush, tension releases and recovery begins."

"We have to stop acting like honoring our body's physical needs is a sign of weakness."

"Rest is a time-tested weapon that can help you be victorious in battle."

"Next time you're tempted to grab a can of Red Bull, force yourself outside for a ten to twenty minute walk."

Reflection Questions

1. Dr. Sandra writes, "In the stillness, we fear what we will find, so we keep moving." Do you agree or disagree with this diagnosis?
2. When we face stillness induced fear, we are absent of our strength in Christ. How can we develop a continuous communication with Him to combat the virus of unbelief?
3. Physical rest is both active and passive; both can be measured. A sleep tracker on your smart watch or fitness tracker measures your commitment to physical passive rest. A planner measures your commitment to active physical rest. If I looked at your measurements for physical rest, what would I see?
4. In God's brilliant master design, He created bodies that communicate with their residents physically. What is your body communicating to others and how is that different than what it communicates to you privately?

CHAPTER 4: PHYSICAL REST

Reflection Questions

5. Put a check next to the signs of physical rest deficit in your life:

- _____ You lack the energy to do all the physical tasks on your to-do list
- _____ You feel tired but have difficulty falling asleep
- _____ You have a weak immune system with frequent colds and illnesses
- _____ You experience frequent muscle pain and soreness
- _____ You depend on substances to give you more energy (caffeine, energy drinks/bars, sugar)
- _____ You depend on substances to give you more rest (alcohol, pills, comfort foods)

6. God fearfully and wonderfully creates us with body chemicals to signal our bodies to increase or decrease activity. What activities energize you and what habits calm you? Are these food related, addictive related, or movement related?

7. You are the keeper of your body and know it better than any doctor, Google search, or selfie posted online. What is your body telling you about physical rest?

8. Visualize a 15 minute prayer walk in your mind. What path are you walking, what homes are you walking past, who are the people in these homes, what time of day is this happening, are you walking fast in authority or slow and dragging your feet? Are you wearing warrior boots on the ground, princess heels with battle scratches, or running shoes to get out of there fast? Repeat this daily until you're up and walking.

9. Imagine someone is walking past your home, praying. Do you feel loved (command to love neighbors)? Are you mad that she is invading your privacy (vulnerability)?

CHAPTER 5: MENTAL REST

Scripture Focus

You have closed their minds to understanding, but do not let them triumph.
Job 17:4 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

The mind is magnificent, but it has its own agenda.

A purging of the mind before turning in for the night is needed to declutter your mental space.

We hold on to some mental baggage past its expiration date.

Mental fatigue is one of the most significant causes of avoidable accidents.

Reclaim your mental territory.

*One way to create a mental sanctuary is to choose a characteristic of God to rest on each day.
(See Galatians 5:22-23)*

Reflection Questions

1. Tidying up your mind starts with letting go of those thoughts that are not producing a positive effect in your life. What things occupy space in your mind right now? Which are occupying more space than they deserve?
2. Social media news feeds are often saturated in negativity. Knowing this, how does your online time affect your state of rest? Are you willing to make the changes necessary to limit your access, such as unfollowing negative people and pages that pollute your thoughts? (note: you don't need to unfriend a family member, just click unfollow so they do not appear in your content feed).
3. What useless information occupies your mind today? Write this down and then beside each item write the source of that information. What is God telling you to change, based on this information?

CHAPTER 5: MENTAL REST

Reflection Questions

4. Mind chatter is the background noise that influences your day. What internal running commentary is sitting in your heart this week? How can you quiet this with rest?
5. Which mental noise from page 51 is the Goliath of your life?
- _____ self-critiquing
 - _____ endless loop thoughts
 - _____ reliving the past
 - _____ fearing the future
 - _____ measuring stick of past vs present
 - _____ constant escapism
 - _____ inner commentary
 - _____ not being totally present
6. Grab a sheet of paper and write down the thoughts you carry unnecessarily. Why do you think you are carrying this baggage? What needs to happen for you to release it to God?
7. Put a check next to the signs of mental rest deficit in your life:
- _____ You feel as if you can't keep up mentally with your to-do list
 - _____ You experience irritation or frustration when thinking about your day
 - _____ You avoid some activities because you fear you will make an error
 - _____ You feel drowsy or as if you are in a mental fog during the day
 - _____ You snap at your family and coworkers about insignificant things
 - _____ You spend most of your day on tasks you find overwhelming
8. Do you agree or disagree: If the mind can deplete you physically, it stands to reason the reverse can be true: You can be physically strengthened by the renewal of your mind.

CHAPTER 5: MENTAL REST

Reflection Questions

9. For the next two weeks create a time block and record your activities in 30-minute intervals. At the end of your tracking, mark those activities that fail to yield consistent positive gains. Eliminate the activities through teamwork, hiring out, or letting go. (example: housecleaning, delegate to family or hire professional cleaning service). Time block into 30 minute intervals those activities that are energy draining and limit your exposure to them.
10. Mental rest is allowing your mind to be vulnerable, shutting off the activities and thoughts that drain you. Knowing this, what does your personal mental sanctuary look like for sacred rest?
11. The Fruit of the Spirit is a benefit of mental rest. What poison is the opposite of this? (hint: see the verses right above Galatians 5:22-23). Write these down on your phone app and pray over both sets: fruit and poison.

CHAPTER 6: EMOTIONAL REST

Scripture Focus

At last he stood up again and returned to the disciples, only to find them asleep, exhausted from grief.

Luke 22:45 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"Emotions are to be explored, encountered, and enjoyed. They were never meant to be bottled up."

"You experience emotional rest when you no longer feel the need to perform or meet external expectations. It is the cessation of emotional striving."

"Emotions are similar to infections; they are highly contagious."

"We are more emotionally connected to the world than ever before, and because of this fact, we have tapped out our emotional capacity."

"The truth is that we all have moments of inauthenticity."

"Comparisons limit individuality and destroy the ability to be authentic."

"It's time to stop hustling for your worthiness. Instead, rest in the self-awareness of your unique quirks and propensities."

Reflection Questions

1. Many are taught not to bring their emotions to the table, to bottle up feelings. What happens when we leave emotions unexplored? What would be a benefit to giving our emotions to God through prayer?
2. When our emotional withdrawals exceed our emotional capacity, we will experience emotional fatigue. What events or people are draining your emotional capacity? Are these present, past, or future events?
3. Social media is an emotional amusement park- where we visually ride through thrills and disappointments all in the span of five minutes. Why is it easier to share emotions online with strangers than in person with a close friend? What happens when tone of voice and body language are removed from our verbal message?

CHAPTER 6: EMOTIONAL REST

Reflection Questions

4. Face-to-face interaction leaves no place to hide. Draw two columns on a sheet of paper. Create a visual map of your interactions this past month. In one column write the events that were face-to-face. In the other column write the online events. Where are you spending the most time? What can you intentionally do to change the balance sheet?

5. Put a check next to the signs of emotional rest deficit in your life:

- _____ You have a tendency to focus on your failures and flaws
- _____ You experience self-doubt and insecurity, which prevent you from trying new things
- _____ You constantly compensate for who you are with apologies or clarifications
- _____ You beat yourself up when you make even the slightest mistake
- _____ You feel depressed or angry when you think about your life
- _____ You exhibit worrying or display feelings of inadequacy

6. Our predisposition to empathize causes us to mistakenly interpret the feelings of others as our own. How can we buffer our heart so we are not subject to injury from the emotions of others? What Scripture verse can you find and apply to this situation?

7. On a scale of 1 to 10 how authentic are you with others, with yourself, and with God? Mark each spot on the number line.

Not authentic 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Authentic

8. Take an inventory of the people in your life who drain you and those who refresh you. Pray over your list and look for ways to minimize the toxic people and maximize your healthy relationships.

9. Write down those situations where you find yourself being inauthentic or performing too much to please others. What about yourself are you compensating for with inauthenticity? Acknowledge those areas and give yourself permission to cease comparing.

CHAPTER 7: SPIRITUAL REST

Scripture Focus

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

Psalm 91:4 NIV

Key Chapter Quotes

"We all need sanctuary, a secure place where protection reigns and comfort is received."

"Sanctuary is where we lay down our fight and rest."

"You are made up of a body, mind, and a spirit. Three unique parts make a whole. Whole is what your body thrives to become."

"Brokenness is a journey everyone must take. To be born is to be broken...Spiritual rest is where the broken places mend."

"There can be no healing without pain...Our pain testifies that restoration back to a place of wholeness is available."

"God is much easier to know when you take religion out of the equation."

"Love is not religious; love is relational."

"Not understanding the holy does not make you any less worthy to receive."

"Healing is a journey, and part of the process is gradually removing those things that have been blocking your path to wholeness, one stumbling block at a time."

"If you want the help of the Healer, you must get to where He is and be still long enough to be examined."

Reflection Questions

1. "My spiritual journey was never about finding God. My journey has always been about finding home—a place of rest." What does this statement mean to you personally?

CHAPTER 7: SPIRITUAL REST

Reflection Questions

2. We often hear the words RIP or "rest in peace" after someone has died. What does it look like if we change this to "rest-ing in peace" before our earthly bodies have perished?
3. Are you walking in the Valley of the Wounded or climbing the Mount of the Healed? Which one offers the greatest sense of safety, peace, and contentment? Which one will move you closer to God's best in your life?
4. Sanctuary is not a place; it's a state of being. Describe the sanctuary you envision in your mind. Find a Scripture verse to support that vision and memorize it this week.
5. You are made up of body, mind, and spirit. Which part of your body is strongest and which part is weakest right now? Spiritual rest is where the soul mends. How will your practice of sacred rest restore balance to these three parts?
6. Put a check next to the signs of spiritual rest deficit in your life:
 - _____ You feel a loss of motivation
 - _____ You feel decreased satisfaction and sense of enjoyment
 - _____ You feel helpless, hopeless, trapped, or defeated
 - _____ You feel like life is a total waste of energy
 - _____ You feel distant from God
 - _____ You experience suicidal thoughts and depression
 - _____ You feel numb and apathetic
7. If prayer makes you a healthier person, why do we avoid it? What needs to happen for you to pray more often?
8. The capacity of your personal sanctuary enlarges with meditating on Scripture, prayer, praise/worship, and journaling. Which of these are you implementing into your schedule this week?
9. For the next seven nights, share your day with God via either written or verbal communication. Eliminate ritualistic prayer. Jot down some memories from these moments together.

CHAPTER 8: SOCIAL REST

Scripture Focus

My friends scorn me, but I pour out my tears to God.
Job 16:20 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"The need for social connectedness is encrypted into your DNA."

"Loneliness is the soul's plea to feed your need for social rest."

"Social rest is about making space for those relationships that revive you."

"It's not uncommon for someone to have thousands of social media friends and still feel isolated and alone."

"Our social reach has exceeded our social capacity."

"The quality of your social connections is significantly more important than the quantity."

"Relationships are social investments."

"Find your tribe, the people you feel naturally connected to, and you will find an endless source of social rest."

Reflection Questions

1. Social rest is about making space for those relationships that revive you. Write down the names of those people or communities where you find personal revival. What needs to happen for you to plan more time for this in your life?
2. Do you agree or disagree: Our social reach has exceeded our social capacity? Why?
3. Social overload brings an outer circle of relationships into our hearts and homes. We dwell on experiences or things we see online. Knowing this, how can you be more intentional to limit your online social experiences?

CHAPTER 8: SOCIAL REST

Reflection Questions

4. Put a check next to the signs of social rest deficit in your life:

_____ You feel alone in the world

_____ You feel detached from family and friends

_____ You are attracted to people who mistreat you or are abusive to you

_____ You find it hard to maintain close relationships or make friends

_____ You isolate yourself from others

_____ You prefer online relationships to face-to-face relationships

5. Take a moment and identify those relationships in your life that leave you feeling rested, accepted, and at ease. How do you feel about spending time with someone from your list—guilty or excited? Why?

6. Imagine you are living with a tribe of like-minded friends. Describe the scene: where do you meet, where are you sitting, who is talking, what are you eating or drinking, how long do you plan to stay? Add the extra element of "sanctuary" and what did you add to the scene?

CHAPTER 9: SENSORY REST

Scripture Focus

When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he instructed his disciples to cross to the other side of the lake.

Matthew 8:18 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"The ability to enjoy simplicity has been anesthetized and with it the loss of our ability to experience sensory rest."

"We all need a break, a time to rediscover life in small tangible ways and to rediscover ourselves apart from the people we serve, the roles we play, the titles we carry, the goals yet fulfilled."

"The world won't stop if you miss a Facebook post and your life will not suffer from ignoring a few texts or tweets."

"The most stressed out people in my practice are those most responsive to technology."

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever experienced sensory overload, a time in life when the sounds, scene, and smells have overwhelmed you? Describe the experience.
2. What is your natural reaction during sensory overload? Do you stay and tough it out, hide in a corner, reload your senses with different images and sounds, or run away fast?
3. If you were observing a child or adult with sensory overload, what would be your immediate response to calm the storm?

CHAPTER 9: SENSORY REST

Reflection Questions

4. Put a check next to the signs of sensory rest deficit in your life:

- _____ You have a sensitivity or adverse reaction to loud sounds
- _____ You experience blurry vision and/or eye pressure, fatigue, or strain
- _____ You believe natural foods don't have any flavor and crave processed foods
- _____ You dislike being hugged or touched by others
- _____ You are desensitized to aromas others seem to smell easily
- _____ You are unable to enjoy periodic sensory-rich experiences like concerts or fireworks

5. The most stressed-out people in my practice are those most responsive to their technology. How much time per day are you in front of an electronic device?

- _____ computer
- _____ phone
- _____ television
- _____ tablet or ipad
- _____ electronic books
- _____ electronic games
- _____ music earbuds
- _____ other

6. Make a list of your sensory stressors and beside each one write down a restful alternative. What is the biggest stressor for you right now? What needs to happen for you to target and conquer that stressor, so you can move on and target the next one on your list?

CHAPTER 10: CREATIVE REST

Scripture Focus

Sing a new song of praise to him; play skillfully on the harp, and sing with joy.

Psalm 33:3 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"Creative rest uses all God has created around us to create something inside of us."

"We are not made for rest; rest was made for us."

"Rest for a moment, and listen to the still small voice of truth instructing you to escape the cycle of busy."

"You are the judge and jury of your sabbatical time."

"Work with your body's internal clock and you will find yourself being more productive with less effort."

Reflection Questions

1. Creative rest is allowing white space in your life and giving room for your creativity to show up. It often requires a change in environment to break a creative block, such as a writer's block or musician with a lost groove. Where are you best able to experience your creative resting? List one place that requires pre-planning and a second place that can be done impulsively- on a whim.

2. Complete the sentence: The last time I experienced creative rest is when_____.

3. Put a check next to the signs of creative rest deficit in your life:

_____ You always focus on the needs of others and don't consider your needs a priority

_____ You talk yourself out of self-care as if you don't deserve being cared for

_____ You do self-destructive things or make choices that sabotage your happiness

_____ You rarely feel your work is of value or that others appreciate your contributions

_____ You find it difficult to enjoy things in nature or in their natural state

CHAPTER 10: CREATIVE REST

Reflection Questions

4. What needs to happen for you to build sabbaticals into your life? When are you planning your next sabbatical?
5. Practice the flow-break-repeat cycle of moving your day into time blocks. Set a personal time to rest. How does it feel doing this and being in control over your time, instead of time (and people) controlling you?
6. What activities do you most often scheduling during your peak mental capacity (before noon)? Is there anything that should be moved to creative time, in the late evening hours?
7. What activities do you most often incorporate into your distracted time (between 1 and 4 pm)? Is there anything that should be moved to productive time, before noon? Or creative time, in the late evening hours?

CHAPTER 11: GIVE IT A REST

Scripture Focus

Therefore, thus says the Holy One of Israel, "Because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perverseness and rely on them, therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach in a high wall, bulging out and about to collapse, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant; and its breaking is like that of a potter's vessel that is smashed so ruthlessly that among its fragments not a shard is found with which to take fire from the hearth, or to dip up water out of the cistern." For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." But you were unwilling.
Isaiah 30:12-15 ESV

Key Chapter Quotes

"The sacred is unexplainable. It bears witness with our soul without the need for interpretation."

"Lovely is a life anchored in rest."

"Excuses are invented reasons we create to defend our behavior."

"Rest is a taste of Heaven."

"Rest reveals things about ourselves, and that process can be messy."

"Many of us run from rest because it seems like giving up."

"Lies are just twisted truths awaiting a revelation."

"A well-rested life requires a delicate balance between pruning and growth."

CHAPTER 11: GIVE IT A REST

Reflection Questions

1. What excuses are pulling you away from rest? How many of these invented reasons are from other people, and how many did you craft on your own?
2. An excuse is a mental block which paralyzes you and keeps you from moving forward. Imagine yourself writing your "not resting" excuses on stones or rocks. If you put them into a backpack and carried these around all day, how heavy is that weight on your back? List the first three stones or rocks that need to come out of the bag...
3. Are you afraid to rest? Do you think this is generational from your upbringing, or self-imposed?
4. Finish the sentence: I am afraid to rest because: _____ and I feel guilty when I rest because_____. When I avoid rest I am running towards _____.
5. Finish the sentence: Rest is important to me because: _____ and I feel peace when I rest because_____. When I rest I am running towards _____.
6. In three sentences or less, write yourself a resting pledge. Make a commitment to how and why you will rest.

CHAPTER 12: FINDING A SWEET PLACE TO LAND

Scripture Focus

The Lord himself watches over you! The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade.

Psalm 121:5 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"Contentment has a quality that refuses to be ignored."

"When you're faced with the option to envy or encounter, always encounter."

"Your choices either create space or destroy it."

"Work without the benefit of enjoyment kills the spirit."

"Failure to see goodness leads to an endless cycle of dissatisfaction."

"You'll never find happiness if you major in producing goodness and minor in experiencing it."

Reflection Questions

1. Why is it hard to ignore contentment?
2. When faced with the option to envy our encounter, which do you choose? Explain your answer.
3. Physicians and nurses examine unmasked patients for the purpose of restoring health. What in your life needs to be unmasked- what are you hiding from yourself, others, or God?
4. What are you hiding in plain sight?
5. Which of the 7 Secrets of the Well Rested motivates you to begin a plan for increased rest?

CHAPTER 13: THE GIFT OF BOUNDARIES

Scripture Focus

Jumping up, they mobbed (Jesus) and forced him to the edge of the hill on which the town was built. They intended to push him over the cliff but he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.

Luke 4:29-30 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"Contentment has a quality that refuses to be ignored."

"When you're faced with the option to envy or encounter, always encounter."

"Your choices either create space or destroy it."

"Work without the benefit of enjoyment kills the spirit."

"Failure to see goodness leads to an endless cycle of dissatisfaction."

"You'll never find happiness if you major in producing goodness and minor in experiencing it."

Reflection Questions

1. Today is your day for soul-care. What is stealing you from rest? Write this down.
2. Without boundaries we relinquish control to another person (or event). What are some of your existing boundaries?
3. Boundaries by definition are confrontational. How do you feel about enforcing your boundaries in the face of conflict?
4. Role-playing for conflict lessens the fear of confrontation. Knowing this, write down a few sentences you can use to respond to your boundary-invaders, those people who want to change your boundaries.

CHAPTER 13: THE GIFT OF BOUNDARIES

Reflection Questions

5. People-pleasing is exhausting and demands time away from crowds. Who is the last person you invested time trying to please? How did that investment affect your ability to rest?
6. Looking at your personal boundaries, what qualities, relationships, and experiences have high value and priority in your life?
7. Look at the Sacred Rest Boundaries at the end of this chapter. Which boundary is your top priority: emotional, sensory, physical, social, spiritual, mental, or creative? Rank these from highest to lowest personal importance.

CHAPTER 14: THE GIFT OF REFLECTION

Scripture Focus

As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person.
Proverbs 27:19 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"The gift of reflection allows us to see how well we give and receive love."

"In choosing to omit rest, we choose to look away from God."

"Contemplative rest offers opportunities to see how well our lives reflect God's goodness."

"As our lives testify of God's faithfulness, His reflection permeates through our spirit."

"Glory can only be witnessed; it cannot be manufactured."

"Be a gift reflecting the glory you behold."

Reflection Questions

1. You are an expression of the image of God, a representation of love. What aspect of His character is embedded in your DNA?
2. What part of "thy kingdom come" are you equipped to help His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven?
3. Contemplative rest offers opportunities to see how well our lives reflect God's goodness. What part of your heart mirrors His?
4. We often see God's glory through other people and their words. Think about someone you know who radiates God's goodness. What are the attributes you see in her (or him)?
5. Take inventory of what God sees in you, based upon your family, friends, home, location, work you do, foods you eat, music you play, entertainments you enjoy. Without being legalistic, write down the best qualities He sees in these choices.

CHAPTER 15: THE GIFT OF FREEDOM

Scripture Focus

If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.
Matthew 10:39 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"Surrender is the process through which we gain all."

"There is freedom available to anyone with the audacity to trust God's ways and enter into His rest."

"It's hard to rest in the arms of someone you're fighting back against."

"Freedom is this: instead of trying harder, trust more."

"My circumstances do not change who He is."

Reflection Questions

1. Do you pick a single word at the beginning of each year, as one focus word? What is your word for this year? What are words from years past, and what did you discover in the timing of those words?
2. There is freedom in surrender, as we trust God with those things we stop clinging to. What are some things you've surrendered since you became a believer? Name something you need to surrender as you continue to mature spiritually.
3. There's a wilderness between the busy life we used to live and the restful life we deserve. Where are you now in this wilderness: at the beginning, in the middle, or nearing freedom?
4. Discuss the 5 Steps to Surrender to the Gift of Freedom with a friend. Which step needs your attention the most? Why?

CHAPTER 15: THE GIFT OF FREEDOM

Reflection Questions

5. You can't surrender to someone you don't trust. You can love God and still not trust God. Where are you at in your relationship with Him: surrender or building trust and mending bridges?
6. If you have a broken relationship with God, who or what caused that breakage of trust? How do you see the bridge mending?
7. It's easy for idols to position themselves into the center of your heart. Who or what idol is sitting on the throne? How do you see the idol coming down and God restored to the throne of your heart?

CHAPTER 16: THE GIFT OF ACCEPTANCE

Scripture Focus

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Ephesians 2:10 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"I strived to build a reputation as one who accomplished much when all I really wanted was to know I was loved much."

"Purpose is the DNA of your soul, knit into you from the moment of conception."

"You are made for something bigger than your schedule or your ability to get things done."

"You are made to abide in the gift of acceptance."

"You can rest in smallness, and you can rest in greatness. Each has a time and a season designed for you to prosper."

"Contentment can be found in every season, whether in obscurity or on a platform."

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever felt your life was "underaffirmed?" Describe the experience.
2. We have many life opportunities but only a few will align with your purpose. Write a list of five or more things which are anchored to your purpose, and five more things you're doing which are anchored to pleasing others. How do you feel about this acceptance assessment?
3. Imagine your life is no longer about a magnitude of work done, and more about the meaning of the work you are doing. What are your key observations from living under this meaning?
4. What impact does overplanning or overachieving have on your life? Are these self-imposed or imposed upon you by others, by someone such as a coworker or family member?

CHAPTER 17: THE GIFT OF THE EXCHANGE

Scripture Focus

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Matthew 11:28-29 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"Some life events burn everything in their path."

"When we come to the end of our abilities, we find God waiting."

"Rest is a divine exchange...you give God your fatigue; He quiets your body and gives sweet sleep."

"The soul is insatiable until it finds rest."

Reflection Questions

1. Rest is a divine exchange: you give God your fatigue; He quiets your body and gives sleep. How hard or easy is it for you to rest your fears, anxieties and doubts - to empty yourself before God?
2. The Lord invites us to rest, not to a cessation from work. Give an example of this.
3. Have you been fitted to do the work you were designed to do, or the work others desire to load upon you? Explain your answer.
4. What do you need to exchange to go deeper into a restful state?
5. Look at the list of seven Life's Exchange Stations. Which of these will you activate first, and which will be the most challenging for you? Explain your answer.

CHAPTER 18: THE GIFT OF PERMISSION

Scripture Focus

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Work six days and do everything you need to do. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to God, your God. Don't do any work—not you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your servant, nor your maid, nor your animals, not even the foreign guest visiting in your town. For in six days God made Heaven, Earth, and sea, and everything in them; he rested on the seventh day. Therefore God blessed the Sabbath day; he set it apart as a holy day.
Exodus 20:8-11 Message Version

Key Chapter Quotes

God did not make rest a mere suggestion, He commanded it.

Our twenty-first century lives reek of exhaustion.

There is value in work and there is value in rest; both are vital for a life well lived.

Rest is the grace we give to ourselves.

The only one holding you back from rest is you.

Reflection Questions

1. What were your early learnings about God? Where did you learn these lessons: in church, at home or from a family member?
2. We often ask others for permission to do things in life, but do not need permission to rest. Are you the one holding yourself back?
3. What needs to happen for you to accept the gift of permission to rest?
4. Think of someone in your life who is an example of worthy rest. What attracts you to the things she (or he) is doing? Do you feel inspired or jealous when you envision this person resting? Explain your answer.
5. Permission to rest can seem like laziness or holiness? How will you differentiate?
6. Lack of rest reinforces our superhuman image. Explain how this might be a symptom of pride.

CHAPTER 19: THE GIFT OF CESSATION

Scripture Focus

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

James 1:19-20 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

We all need neutral moments in our fast-paced lives.

You can identify rest by the fruit it produces.

We each need some unoccupied time every week to let the fertile ground of our heart and mind regenerate and replenish.

Sometimes the greatest power move you can make is doing nothing intentionally.

Purposeful rest leaves behind a residue of joy...

The gift of cessation awakens you to the present.

Resisting the need to hustle and bustle takes willpower.

It takes a mountain-moving, prayer-circling, water-walking, mentality to determine the best thing you can do in a situation may be to do nothing.

Reflection Questions

1. When you receive the gift of cessation, you've decided you don't need to justify your existence through pointless activities and can delight in rest. What do you need to cease doing to allow room for intentional rest?
2. There must be some unplanned and unstructured time in your life, where you can do whatever you feel like doing. How do you feel about having this cessation time?
3. What natural resources within you are being depleted by your lack of rest?
4. What are the benefits of intentional rest and purposeful rest?

CHAPTER 19: THE GIFT OF CESSATION

Reflection Questions

5. Mark a SRD- Sacred Rest Day- on your planner. List the things you will not do and the pleasures of cessation.
6. Fear can cause you to accept a truth that does not exist. Give an example of fear leading you down the wrong path. Is there any fear in your heart about the gift of cessation? Explain.

CHAPTER 20: THE GIFT OF ART

Scripture Focus

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

Key Chapter Quotes

God loves to not only create beauty; he loves to share beauty.

We are connoisseurs of beauty.

Art is humanity displayed for all to see.

From the depths of our soul, we release the gift of our art.

The gift of art sifts the lovely out of the ugly. It calls forth the purpose from the pain. It carves out the faith from the worry.

Reflection Questions

1. There are many forms of artistic expression. The activities are not rest but they arise from a place of rest. How do you personally experience or create art?
2. The Bible is written with poems and metaphors, expressions of creative art. Write down your own metaphor to describe yourself, your work/home environment, or your identity as a child of God.
3. The Bible uses descriptive language to define a cultural setting for modern readers. Using descriptive language how would you describe your home or town?
4. There are 66 books in the Bible, including several stories. How many stories can you name? Looking at your list, are these memorable because of the event, the people, or the setting?
5. Take out a journal and begin crafting your own story of faith. When did you come empty to the Lord? When did you hid like a prodigal? Were there seasons of anger, fear, or doubt? Write these down.

CHAPTER 21: THE GIFT OF COMMUNICATION

Scripture Focus

Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit—you choose.
Proverbs 18:21 Message Version

Key Chapter Quotes

"The gift of communication restores your ability to listen to your body so you can become a better listener in other areas of your life."

"We often confuse listening with hearing."

"Rest quiets life so you can listen with your spirit."

"When words become your weapon, practice silence."

"Your prayer life can suffer if you ignore the gift of communication."

Reflection Questions

1. The body communicates physically, yet we often ignore the opportunity to listen. This gift of communication is absent when we engage with each other online or through technology. What long-term consequences do you perceive if we continue to minimize nonverbal communications?
2. Summarize the differences between listening and hearing. Are you most active in listening, or hearing? How do you feel about this?
3. Rest quiets life so you can listen with your spirit. Based on this, how is rest a weapon or strength?
4. What does your current prayer life communicate to God: busy and rushed, or rested and purposeful? Explain your answer.
5. Imagine for a moment, you are resting beside the calm waters, leaning upon the chest of God. What is He saying to your heart right now?

CHAPTER 22: THE GIFT OF PRODUCTIVITY

Scripture Focus

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

John 15:1-4 NIV

Key Chapter Quotes

"You can be busy and still lack productivity."

"The very idea of rest leading to productivity is at odds with our current work culture."

"Presence does not equate to productivity."

"We often confuse activity with productivity."

"Sometimes the most important thing in a day is the sacred rest you take in between your times of doing and existing."

Reflection Questions

1. How can you be busy and still lack productivity?
2. Is your productivity a purpose-driven bee or a pesky mosquito? Explain your response.
3. The idea of rest leading to productivity is counterintuitive. Give an example from the Bible where Jesus rested, and was immediately productive after his rest.
4. Rotten fruit is evidenced by bitterness, resentment, anger, fear, insecurity, exhaustion and hopelessness. Which one of these strongholds have you conquered and which one is your current Goliath?
5. Can you rest in waiting? How do you differentiate a pause from an end?
6. After reading Sacred Rest and identifying your rest deficits, how would you redefine success?

CHAPTER 23: THE GIFT OF CHOICE

Scripture Focus

“You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.”

Matthew 7:13-14 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

Every yes and every no is a choice, and these choices affect your future.

Rest reminds you that you are not the creator of power, but the recipient.

Rest is always a good decision for a tired body and a weakened spirit.

The ability to rest boils down to the condition of your heart.

Reflection Questions

1. Your social health is determined by the choices you make for or against building relationships. How do you build healthy social connections? How do you create distance from unhealthy connections?
2. Rest reminds you that you are not the creator of power, but the recipient. What needs to happen for you to receive the gift of sacred rest?
3. Rest is a heart choice, and every heart needs rest. What is the condition of your heart?
4. What heart choices (see list in chapter) do you need to make to live a well-rested life?

CHAPTER 24: THE GIFT OF FAITH

Scripture Focus

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

John 10:10 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"The gift of faith is how you find your way back to discover your life's splendor."

"The secret place is a holy place close to God...it is the sanctuary of the well-rested."

"There isn't one dry place in your life that God does not have the ability to speak life back into."

"It's a beautiful moment when someone realizes they don't have to stay broken."

"The gifts of rest do not cease being gifts because you choose not to receive."

"Rest is a living testimony of your faith."

Reflection Questions

1. What is the greatest obstacle keeping you from entering into the secret place of GRACE?
2. Do you need a resurrection of gratitude in your life? What needs to happen to implement this healthy choice?
3. What areas or situations on your life do you feel powerless to change?
4. With each choice, you pick up something and release something. Rest flows from this release. What are you willing to exchange for the gift of rest?

CHAPTER 25: I CHOOSE MY BEST LIFE

Scripture Focus

He led me to a place of safety; he rescued me because he delights in me.
Psalm 18:19 NLT

Key Chapter Quotes

"Every day I make a choice to rest, and it has transformed me."

"Life's too short to sit by and let it slip away untouched."

"Rest has become my go-to source for strength, creativity, productivity, peace, joy, hope, and contentment. I've found it to be the best-kept secret in medicine."

"You alone can make the choice to choose your best life."

"Your ability to identify which types of rest you are missing and correcting your rest deficit is the key to enjoying the gifts and promises of rest."

Reflection Questions

1. What do you need to protect from unrest?
2. What's sitting in your mind that should be discarded so it will not become permanent there?
3. How does intentional rest transform your heart?
4. How does intentional rest transform your relationship with God?
5. Which benefit of rest do you need the most: renewed energy, restored sanity, recovered life?
6. What are the next steps you need to take to find the rest you desire?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith is a Board Certified internal medicine physician, author, and speaker. She shares with audiences nationwide on the topics of eliminating limiting emotions and overcoming destructive mindsets so you can live fully, love boldly, and rest intentionally. Dr. Dalton-Smith is a national and international media resource on the mind, body, spirit connection and has been featured in many publications including Women's Day, Redbook, and First For Women magazine. She has written 2 award-winning books, *Set Free to Live Free: Breaking Through the 7 Lies Women Tell Themselves and Come Empty: Pour Out Life's Hurts and Receive God's Healing Love*. She is one of the 100 experts included in the 2017 book *Good Housekeeping Doctors' Secrets: Fight Disease, Relieve Pain, and Live a Healthy Life with Practical Advice from 100 Top Medical Experts*. She blogs at IChooseMyBestLife.com where she shares tips to help you heal from the inside out and has an active medical practice in Alabama where she lives with her husband and two boys.

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