

I don't like to rest. I mean, I know it's important, and that you should do it—like flossing, eating your vegetables, and filing your taxes—but as a recovering workaholic there is an Energizer bunny nestled inside the bones of my rib cage that propels me forward, even when I should probably stop. Perhaps you're like me—tired, but yet on the go; burnt out, but still saying yes to another project. So when the words “rest is achievement” resonated in my mind and spirit, there was a strange clarity to the words, and a counter-cultural uppercut to the voices that tell me that rest is laziness, and that achievement only involves doing as opposed to simply being.

Sleep is an integral part of rest, but resting is not only about sleep. Resting was God's idea from the beginning of creation. And like with any creation, it only works well when it is used as intended. I typed this newsletter on a computer, and although I love my wife's cooking, my computer was designed for web surfing, emailing, etc.—not as a spoon, nor a fork, nor a knife. The more I attempt to use my computer as an eating utensil, the more frustrated I become, and the messier things will get.

Anne Lamott says it well, “Almost everything will work again, if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.” As much as I like this quote, it speaks to a reactionary way of responding to a breakdown—unplug briefly so you can get back to work. Therein lies the issue—we view rest as a means to an end instead of an end unto itself. Rest is NOT an achievement to us, but a necessary “evil”, if you will, so that we can get back to work.

I had a black hat made with the words, “Rest is achievement” written across the top. I wanted a physical reminder for myself (and others!). So when I walked into my mechanic's waiting room, he said upon seeing the hat, “Rest is achievement? You have to work before you can rest” As we'll see in the weeks ahead, resting must be distinguished from languishing, but resting has its own rhythm and is the catalyst for the kinds of “achievement” that some people chase after.

Achievement aside though, rest is God's idea for us—after all, does God really need to rest?? I never thought of the creation story as seven active days of creation (as opposed to six) until I read *Breathe* by Priscilla Shirer. Her references to Sabbath and the ancient rabbinical understanding of creation are what inspired this newsletter. I was reading about “menuha” or “Sabbath” and she mentioned that contrary to the popular belief that the creation account was 6 days long, after which God rested, instead, God was creating on the 7th day, too—he created rest as a capstone of his earlier creative exploits. Rest is far from being an inert, disengaged, throwaway day, but is the basis for the creation process to begin with.

