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# FINDING PEACE & REFRESHMENT\*

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## How to persevere in faith and obedience

Being in ministry can be a thrilling experience in many ways. Watching God work in amazing ways to bring your plans together. Working together on a team where God uses everyone's unique skills and gifts to accomplish a specific goal. Above all, seeing people grasp spiritual truths and begin to implement small heart changes that bring about transformation in their lives. Traveling to new locations and discovering the culturally different ways God builds His kingdom. Indeed, it is a privilege and honor to be included in His work.

Yet sometimes amid so much activity and time with other people, I find myself growing weary. I'm tired inside and out, the joy has gone, and what I'm doing seems like just another activity in a long line of activities that never end.

### So, how do I keep going?

I've found several practical ways God refreshes and renews my spirit:

- Sometimes I just need to go to bed. Like Elijah after he defeated the prophets of Baal, I'm physically and emotionally exhausted after I've worked hard and seen God do amazing things. I need to get away, sleep, and let God renew my body.
- When work is difficult or challenging because I'm not working in a strength area, it siphons off my energy and leaves me feeling drained. At these times, I like to do something where God has uniquely gifted me to energize me. I find renewed joy, energy, and perspective when I make greeting cards. I disappear into the basement for a few hours and cut paper, choose coordinating colors, and copy or create a pattern or image from God's beautiful world. As I create something tangible out of an idea, I'm reminded of God's creativity when He created the world out of nothing. Looking at what I've made and recognizing it as good speaks deeply to my heart. I'm reminded of God's creativity and the joy He must have felt looking at what He made and seeing that it was good.
- When I long to slow down, get away, and be inspired by the beauty of nature, I walk outdoors. In spring, I love seeing the many shades of green leaves as trees put forth new growth. I delight in the daffodil yellows, crocus purples, and forget-me-not blues. There's nothing like walking early in the morning and smelling the sweet and delicate scents of lilac, orange blossoms, and jasmine! In summer, I'm refreshed by the crashing waves of the ocean or quiet gurgle of a stream. In fall, the bright oranges, reds, and yellows of the changing leaves remind me that something beautiful

can come out of something that is dying. Walking through fallen leaves and listening to their crunch is one of my favorite things. In winter, I love to bundle up and walk outside while it is snowing. The falling snow muffles the sounds of our busy world. Seeing, hearing, feeling, and smelling the outdoors all calm my soul and call me to be quiet.

### **Internal renewal**

Besides the practical ways God refreshes me, I've discovered I need to search my heart to find what's going on deep inside. Sometimes I find myself getting angry at people or events for no apparent reason. I blame other people for how I'm feeling. I want to lash out, run away, or hide. Where did these thoughts and feelings come from to ambush me and turn me into a crazy person?

I've learned to examine my feelings and what I'm doing with them. Am I letting them push me to lash out in anger or retreat in isolation? Am I blaming others for what I'm experiencing?

As I dig deeper into what's going on in my heart, I discover misbeliefs and idols and bring them to the cross. That brings ultimate joy, relief, and refreshment.

In conclusion, I find it's important for me to discover what's going on in my life. Then I choose the appropriate practical or internal action that will restore God's peace, calm, and contentment to my life:

- Do I need to rest, or do some hard thinking and soul searching because I've veered off track?
- Can I take an hour to get away now? Or, do I need to wait and plan for a better time to be creative or be outdoors with Him?
- Finally, I realize that when I do everything wrong, He is still with me and loves me greatly. He's always waiting for me to come back to Him. As I confess my sin, He's there to comfort me, renew my joy and relief of being forgiven, and continue my transformation into His image.

***What practical or internal actions help you find peace and refreshment in ministry? What soothes your soul in the busyness of ministry life?***

\*Adapted from an article Jenny wrote for Cru staff women.

**We appreciate you!**

*Jenny & John*