

Rest

Philippians 4

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me -put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Have you ever noticed how difficult it is to be in rest when you are anxious or worried about something? You don't sleep good, you don't speak wisely, that jovial side of you doesn't make an appearance nearly as much as it should, and you are just not the best person in the world to be around. Most times, the very reason we are worried and anxious, as Christians, can be tied to our "rest" in God. From a "soul health" standpoint, which is the location where worry, anxiety and fear wage their wars, our relationship with the Father is always the baseline. He said above, "Don't be anxious ... but pray." My experience, with myself and others, tells me that we will pray if we believe it will make a difference, and if not ... we won't. It's a baseline assessment of our relationship with the Father. We can check ourselves by it at any given moment.

That we belong to Him, and what that actually means to us and about us, is a truth and a revelation that can slip away from us with relative ease. We need to wash ourselves regularly with the knowledge and revelation that we are owned by Him ... a member of His immediate Family. There is a great big God and a little bitty devil ... and we belong to the great big God.

Paul writes about what to think on in the passage above ... which means we have a choice in the matter. Our thought life, and how we control it, plays a huge roll in what we are able to see as truth and how we are able to walk through life in the rest of God. Did you ever notice when your kids have a bad dream or hear a scary noise at night how if they can get in bed with mom and dad it all goes away in a moment? Why is that? It's because they rest in knowing that mom and dad are bigger than that bad dream or scary noise. Poof! Problem solved ... instantly. A small change in how they view where they are at and what is true brings rest. That's one reason God likes for us to spend quality time with Him. It renews our mind, causes us to think on the right things and brings rest.

2 Corinthians 10

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Recently, I was explaining to my nine year old daughter early one morning about how to take thoughts captive and how to cast down imaginations as the bible instructs us to do. She had had a bad dream and subsequently had trouble getting back to sleep. I could tell my explaining and encouragement wasn't making a lot of sense to her until I focused on some examples of what to "start" thinking about when a bad thought came to her mind. Above, when Paul said, "Think on these things ...", he was really giving us a means and a weapon for taking thoughts and images captive that are contrary to God's Word. He was telling us what we have the God given ability to do just because we want to.

So I told my daughter, "Choose to start thinking about this specifically and this other thing specifically ...", and I listed off about five or ten things in her life that she could immediately choose to think about instead of the bad thought or dream. I took her through some examples of how I do it to demonstrate. She began to see the control she had ... the choice she had of allowing or not allowing a thought to dominate. When we make a choice to do that, the bible is clear that He will bring peace and guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. That's a heck of a promise if you think about it. It ties directly to "entering His rest".

Hebrews 4

9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. 11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Matthew 11

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

In Matthew 6, when Jesus asked the multitude the question of "Why do you worry?", He was asking the question from the position of someone who never worried. He saw the people doing what He knew they didn't have to do, nor should

they be doing, so He asked "Why do this?" It would be like a mechanic watching another mechanic in training drop the rear axle on a truck in order to change the flat tire. He would be thinking, "Why are you doing that man? You don't have to. You are wasting your time."

Just like Jesus states above, He knew (and knows) there is a rest in Him that can be entered into ... but how? The same way the child crawls in bed with mom and dad. He said, "Come to me ... take my yoke upon you ... learn from Me." The resulting promise ... you will find rest for your souls (mind, will, emotions, intellect). So, in order to "be diligent to enter that rest" as mentioned in Hebrews 4 above, what do we do? We come to the Father, we pray, we develop a relationship with Jesus, we get to know the Teacher (the mighty Holy Ghost). His part is leaving His peace with us to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. God always does His part.

When Jesus was walking out His earthly ministry, He walked in this position of understanding ... *John 5:19 "... Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner."* In another place He said, "The Father in Me, He does the works." If we realize the Father is in us, like a child, we are always in bed with mom and dad so to speak ... and we rest. It doesn't mean we "do" nothing. It means we "do" from a position of rest.

I remember a situation in business not too long ago where some controversy was rising as it does in business on occasion. But on this occasion, it seemed like some real ill will was being used to really do some damage to our company. It was politically charged and highly frustrating to me personally because I just never think about doing business in the manner that this guy was doing it to us. It was getting me out of rest and I knew it. But I also knew the answer ... think on these things, take thoughts captive, spend time with Him, walk through it in rest. So, by the grace of God, each morning I would re-stir myself up. Have you ever had to "re-stir" yourself up (meaning the first "stir" didn't work out to good)? Maybe I am the only one ... but I doubt it.

Anyway, this went on for a while, then early one morning, in the midst of my daily re-stirring, I distinctly remember God speaking to my heart these words about the situation, "He doesn't have enough power to damage Our company". I knew He was not referring to money power or political power. He was talking about real POWER! ...the power that trumps all power. What a comfort the truth of those words were to me. Peace came just as He said it would. I was spending time with Him, praying, taking on His counsel, and it brought rest. He spoke to me something that He wanted me to "think on". Now it was my turn to think on it. It didn't mean that the situation was going to change overnight. It didn't. We still had to walk through it, but the victory was ours and rest was available for the entering into. It

was up to me because God had already done His part.

The sad thing on my part was that I realized as long as I allowed frustration and worry and anxiety over that situation to dominate in my soul, guess what I didn't do much at all (besides not rest)? I didn't "pray for those who despitefully use you" ... a biblical command that always produces results. However, once I got a hold of the truth, turned my thoughts toward that truth, cast down the images my flesh loved of me confronting this guy with a closed fist, I would then sense prayer coming up in my spirit in the morning times for this man (not so much during the day ... but definitely during the morning times ... ☺).

Exodus 33

12 Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' 13 Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people." 14 And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Remember, there is a connection between God's presence and rest. Spending time with Him and rest ... they go hand in hand. Like the Sabbath in the OT was a day that was holy and His ... set aside for rest. So now, in the new covenant, we are His, bought with a price, called to enter His rest ... a perpetual Sabbath if you will.

I can't think of a better way to start out a new year than to enter into and stay in His rest. That's a new year's resolution that will add days to our lives without question. Rest has been suffered us to have so let's have it. Amen.

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