

A REFLECTION ON REST

# *Rituals That Relax*

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*Gentle, Bible-rooted ways to quiet your body and soothe your soul*

*Simplify to Glorify*

# *Rest Is Not One More Thing*

By the time most women hear the words self care, they are already too tired to add one more thing to the list. Maybe that is where you are tonight. You have given all day to people who needed you, and the idea of caring for yourself feels like another task you will fail to finish.

So let me say it plainly before anything else. Rest is not one more thing you have to be good at. It is something God offers you, freely, in the middle of a life that asks too much.

## **Rest was God's idea first**

We tend to treat rest as the reward we earn once everything is done. The trouble is that for most of us, everything is never done. There is always another load of laundry, and another person who will need us by morning.

Scripture tells a quieter story. When God finished making the world, He rested, and He called that rest holy. He did not rest because He was depleted. He rested to show us that stopping is woven into the good design of things, not a failure of it.

*Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*Matthew 11:28-29 (NASB 2020)*

Notice that He does not ask you to arrive rested. He asks you to come weary, exactly as you are, and to let Him be the One who carries the weight.

## **Caring for your body is not unspiritual**

There is a moment in the life of the prophet Elijah that I keep returning to. He had just done something brave and faithful, and then he collapsed under a tree in the wilderness and asked God to let him die. He was spent in body and in soul.

God's response is tender in a way we rarely expect. He did not correct Elijah or hand him a longer list of duties. He let him sleep. Then He sent an angel with bread and water, and He let him sleep again before a single thing was asked of him.

Sometimes the most faithful thing you can do is feed your body and close your eyes. The God who made you knows that you are dust, and He is gentle with the dust.

## **Small rituals that soothe the soul**

Rituals do not have to be elaborate to be holy. A warm cup of tea held in both hands can be a kind of prayer. So can a slow walk where you name the things you are thankful for, or a few minutes by a window letting your shoulders drop while you breathe.

Read a psalm out loud, slowly, the way you would read a letter from someone who loves you. You might light a candle while you pray, or rest your hand over your own heart and simply tell God that you are tired. None of this is magic. It is a small way of turning toward the One who is already near.

Maybe you're reading this and wondering where you would even begin. So here are a few gentle rituals, each one drawn straight from Scripture, to give you somewhere soft to start. They aren't rules to keep, and there's no wrong way to try them. Think of them less like a checklist and more like a few open doors back to the God who is already near. Take whatever helps you breathe, and leave the rest without a second thought.

## **Keep a small Sabbath**

If you can't remember the last time you truly stopped, you're not alone, and you're not lazy. Most of us were quietly taught to treat rest as a reward we earn once everything is done. But for a tired woman, everything is never quite done, so the rest keeps getting pushed to a someday that never comes.

Here's the gentle surprise tucked into the first pages of the Bible. When God finished making the world, He rested. He wasn't worn out, and He didn't need it the way we do. He simply stopped, and then called that stopping holy, as if to show that rest belongs inside a good life, not at its far edge.

So your Sabbath doesn't have to be a whole, flawless day. It can be one slow evening, or a single afternoon when the laundry waits and the phone stays face down. You're not earning anything by resting. You're simply trusting that God keeps the world turning while you finally breathe. Start smaller than you think you should, and let even that be enough.

## **Pray a psalm out loud**

Some days you go to pray and the words just aren't there. That's a tender place to be, and please hear this gently, it doesn't mean anything has gone wrong with your faith. More often it simply means you're worn thin, and tired hearts don't always have language ready.

This is one of the kindest things the Psalms are for. They were written by people who were weary and afraid, people who never tidied up their feelings before they came to God. So on the days your own words won't come, you're welcome to borrow theirs.

Pick one that meets you where you are, maybe the quiet comfort of Psalm 23 or the honesty of Psalm 62. Read it slowly, out loud, letting the lines move at the pace of your breath. There's something about hearing the words in your voice that reaches a place silent reading often misses. You're not performing anything here. You're just letting an old and faithful prayer carry you on a day you can't quite carry yourself.

## **Sit still and let God be God**

If sitting still makes you restless, you're in good company. When you're the one everyone leans on, quiet can feel almost uncomfortable, like you've forgotten how to simply be, and the stillness can even feel a little like falling behind.

But there's a moment in Psalm 46 where God gently tells His people to stop their striving and remember that He is God. It isn't a scolding, and it isn't one more thing to get right. It's an invitation to set the weight down for a few minutes and let Him be the strong One for a while.

So try just a few minutes at first, with no goal except to be quiet with Him. Sit somewhere unhurried, let your shoulders drop, and breathe slowly while you remember that God is holding everything you set down. When your mind wanders back to the list, and it will, you don't have to scold yourself. Just come back, gently, to one steady thought, and let Him hold the rest. Stillness like this isn't emptiness. It's trust, practiced quietly until it reaches your heart.

## **Name the mercies before you ask**

When you're worried about someone you love, the worry has a way of filling the whole room. It can quietly crowd out the small, good things still happening alongside the hard one, until the fear is the only thing you can seem to see.

Paul once wrote to a worried group of believers and told them that gratitude and prayer, kept close together, guard the heart with a peace we can't fully explain. He wasn't asking them to pretend everything was fine. He was handing them a quiet way to breathe through it.

So before you bring God your long list of needs, try pausing to name just one or two mercies you've already been given. A warm bed, maybe, or a kindness you didn't expect today. This isn't about denying that things are hard, because they are. It's about widening the view a little, so the hard thing stops being the only thing in it.

## **Hand over the day before you sleep**

For so many of us, the worry waits until the lights are off. You lie down, finally still, and everything you've been carrying all day decides to speak up at once. The quiet you longed for turns into the loudest hour of the night.

The psalmist knew that exact ache, and yet he could still write that he was able to lie down and sleep in peace, because God kept watch over him through the night. Peter says it just as tenderly, that we're invited to hand our anxiety to God, because He truly cares for us, not the version that has it all handled, but the worn-out, wide-awake version too.

So before you drift off, you might picture yourself placing the unfinished day into His hands, one worry at a time. You'll probably have to do it again tomorrow night, and that is not a failure on your part. It's simply what it looks like to trust a God who stays awake while you finally rest.

## **You are allowed to rest**

You do not have to earn your rest by emptying yourself first. The rituals that relax you are not indulgences stolen from a more important life. They are how a tired woman lets her good Shepherd lead her beside still waters again.

So tonight, let one thing stay undone. Let your breathing slow. The God who rested, and who fed His exhausted prophet without a word of reproach, is not standing over you with a list. He is inviting you to be cared for, starting now.

You do not have to do more to be worthy of rest. You only have to let the One who loves you tend to the part of you that is worn thin.

## *More Resources*

*When you are worn thin and rest feels out of reach, these passages remind you that God makes room for stillness. Return to them on the days you need permission to stop.*

### **Genesis 2:2-3**

After making the world, God rested and made the seventh day holy, showing that stopping belongs to a good life.

### **Mark 6:31**

Jesus saw that His disciples had no time even to eat, and He called them away to a quiet place to rest.

### **Psalms 23:1-3**

The Shepherd leads the weary beside still waters and restores the soul that has been poured out.

### **1 Kings 19:5-7**

God let His exhausted prophet sleep and gave him food before asking anything of him at all.

### **Matthew 11:28-29**

Jesus invites the weary and burdened to come to Him and find rest for their souls.

### **Exodus 33:14**

God promises that His own presence will go with you, and that He will give you rest.

# *Notes*

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