

Pursuing Rest

God's Words:

Matthew 11 ²⁸ Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Reflection:

Jesus describes His heart as “gentle and humble.” He’s giving us essential information, not only about His character but about the character He intends to produce in us.

After I gave myself to Jesus over thirty years ago, I prayed repeatedly for Him to teach me to rest. I diligently spent time pursuing rest ... and always rest eluded my grasp. Then I read Jesus’ words in Matthew and discovered I’d focused on the wrong goal. I’d sought relief from stress. Jesus had a different scenario in mind.

Jesus doesn’t tell me (or you) to pursue rest; He tells us to pursue *Him*. Rest, as it turns out, is not a goal but a gift, not something we achieve but something God provides. To receive this gift we must come to Him. We can’t find rest, but we can find Jesus; we need to seek not rest, but the Lord.

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When I come near Jesus, I learn from Him. I’m not talking about head learning (although that may start the process), but heart learning, the deep learning that comes from walking by His side and drinking in His character. We walk, yoked together, my legs moving with His, turning as He turns, keeping His pace, waiting as He waits, starting when He starts. As we walk together, I discover who He is. I am changed by His presence. I become like Him.

As I walk next to Jesus I discover who He is; I am changed by His presence; I become like Him.

Rest flows from our intimate knowing. Now, finally, I understand: before I can rest, I must stay near Jesus – close enough to see His gentleness and humility, consistently enough to become gentle and humble as I walk with Him. Then rest finds me.

Prayer:

Lord, forgive me; free us from pursuing anything but you. And thank you that rest always finds me when I walk by your side.