



Spiritual Disciplines Toolbox

03 Rest

“My soul finds rest in God alone.”
— Psalm 62:1

What are Spiritual Disciplines?

At some point we all get stale, stuck, or start searching for more. Most often all we need is the right tool to break through in our relationship with God. Spiritual disciplines are the biblical tools Christians have been using for centuries to draw closer to God. We use the disciplines because we need help, not because we are so holy. Experiment with the tools to find out what helps you connect with God the best.

What is Rest all about?

In six days God accomplished the greatest building project of all time—He created the entire universe. Then God rested to give us a pattern for life (Gen. 2:2). God intends for us to work and work hard (Prov. 6:6-11, 2 Thess. 3:10-13, Gal. 6:4,5). But He also commands us to rest (Ps. 116:7) and encourages us to rest in Him (Deut. 33:12). When we work without regular rhythms of rest, we are in danger spiritually. A tired and spent Christian is more susceptible to sin, more likely to overlook God’s leading, and has far less to offer others (see John 15:5 & 7:38).

Let’s be clear about one thing—there is no one that gives more effort and attention to your spiritual growth than God (Phil. 2:12, 1 Cor. 15:10). He is and always will be the main contributor to your growth. You can forget all that business about it being all on your shoulders. At the heart of rest is the understanding that I must let God be God in my life. So, let God run the universe and your little world and grasp the Psalmist’s words: “Behold, You have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing before You. Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath!” (Ps. 39:5) and answer the sweet, sweet invitation to “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28).

Where do I start?

Take a Nap. That's right, break off your affair with busyness and just stop moving. Stop racing against the clock. Stop trying to finish the list. Stop striving like the world depends on you and rest. Lay down in a completely tranquil setting and just sleep. It might be the most faith-filled moment of your week.

What other ways can I use this tool?

Receive. God loves you without reservation. Yes, it's true, and there is nothing you can do to change it. Nothing you can do to increase God's love—He already loves you with perfect love (John 3:16, 17:20-26). Nothing you can do to lessen His love—your sin does not surprise God (Rom. 5:8, 1 John 1:8). Receiving means you sit in the presence of God and reflect on His perfect love and let God love you. A great way to do this is sit alone in a place where you feel secure; start by reading about God's love for you in Scripture and then open up your hands, palms up and allow yourself to imagine God smiling at you (Try passages like Ps. 139, John 17:20-26 and Rom. 8:31-39).

Play. Do something you love. Involve yourself in the kinds of activities that fill you up instead of drain you. Play ball, go for a walk, play with the kids, go to the driving range, paint, dance in the rain, go crazy lip-syncing to the radio, laugh, conquer a puzzle, write poems, craft something, draw something, or get muddy—you can involve a friend in any of the previously mentioned ideas—but remember to enjoy it with God (1 Thess. 5:10) and as a gift from your Father (James 1:17).

Reverse List. Sometimes we become exhausted from trying to be everything we think God expects us to be. We have a list in our minds of all the areas where we are falling behind. Try this instead of being overwhelmed: write the list of unspoken expectations down. Then thank Jesus for being perfect where you are not for every item on the list (2 Cor. 5:21). You'll find yourself feeling lighter, and your awe of God will be bigger!

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest.”

— Jesus Christ, Matthew 11:28