

"I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint. At this I awoke and looked around. My sleep had been pleasant to me." –Jeremiah 31:25-26

Rest to the Weary Soul

Are you soul-weary? Whether you're an at-home mom who cares for the constant needs of little ones, someone who finds herself exhausted at the end of each working day, a single person who experiences the unique demands of home and desire for relationships that are overwhelming at times...or maybe you're just plain tired from the daily grind of life? You could probably use a little soul refreshment from the well of Living Water couldn't you?

The Christian life has a lot to do with serving others and God reveals Himself beautifully as we do that. His Word is also quite clear that, in addition, we require rest, peace, joy and quiet in our lives. Remember that a day of rest was God's idea and even Jesus made time in His ministry schedule to get away for refreshment.

"It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He abstained from work and rested." –Exodus 31:17

"Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, He said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'" –Mark 6:31

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed." –Mark 1:35

Most women are naturally wired to spend their emotional, physical and spiritual energies on those around them. In many situations, we don't have to even think twice when it comes to lending a hand, engaging with the broken hearted or mothering a youngster. While we don't all do this in the same way, we usually spend and spend this energy until we're looking face-to-face with an "overdraft statement" of sorts.

A telltale sign of an oncoming overdraft for many is when just one more phone call, one more cry for help, or one more traffic pile-up leads us to a near breakdown in tears. For others, a seemingly uncontrollable sharpness to our responses, or even anger begins to appear. That's when we know we're overdue for a little spiritual re-charge. The busyness that most of us experience in today's world is really more than any of us can bear, particularly when it goes on for long periods of time. We all need times to rejuvenate the body and soul. By doing so, we'll often find ourselves ready to come back and joyfully give to those around us once again.

What are some ways you can recharge? Consider some of these possibilities and pray about how the Lord may want you to address your current "soul-weariness."

- Even if it's just for a day, get away for a quiet retreat. You can do this at a local or state park, or check out some of the nearby retreat centers open to the public. Be creative. The Minnesota Arboretum or a friend's cabin can make great spots. Take a good book, a notebook, your Bible, some worship music and spend time in reflection and prayer. Feel free to even take a short nap if needed!

- When is the last time you got away from your normal routine? Whether it's a "real" vacation or just a few days out of town, everyone needs time away. When you're looking for rejuvenation, it's important not to plan a jam-packed agenda. Let go of the unneeded guilt as you just rest and relax. If you're married, make a pact with your husband that it will truly be a time intended for relaxation. If you have children, find another trusted couple to care for them. Promise to return the favor in the coming months.
- Create a list of things you've always wanted to do in life. Then write down your gifts, skills, dreams and goals. Jot down some of the steps it would take to accomplish them. Then make a commitment to do one of the things on these lists in the next few months.
- Make a list of your favorite simple pleasures. Is it lunch with a friend? Sitting by a lake? Enjoying a wonderful cup of coffee while you read a good book? Maybe it's painting or taking a bubble bath? Whatever you include on your list, make a commitment to add one of these things to your calendar each week. Go ahead and actually write it on your calendar!
- You may feel like you can't possibly add one more thing to your agenda, but consider the refreshing, rejuvenating effects of spending time with God. These times can help you get through many stresses you encounter. It's also important to make room for extended times with the Lord every month or at least a few times a year. Talk with Him, heart-to-heart, about the real concerns and questions you have. Bring your burdens and projects to His feet. The Lord's ear is open to you in ways you'll never find with another person.
- Do you have friends with whom you feel free to just be yourself? Other women who invite you to share your soul with them and they do the same with you? The kind of kindred spirit with whom you can easily laugh, cry, confess, and ask the tough questions in life? These are the friendships that God often uses to send refreshment and a new perspective into our lives. They take time, vulnerability and trust, but they're so worth the effort!
- You can also make a point of reviewing your schedule twice a year. Is it too full? Are there activities that need to be eliminated or adjustments that need to be made? Ask the Lord what He wants your schedule to look like. Pray over the items on your current calendar. There are always more good things you can add to your life. The question is, "Which of them are part of God's current plan for you?" In addition, be sure to create space for the unexpected things that pop up or for a "soul-break" as needed.

While these suggestions may also be of great benefit to men, it's true that men and women tend to experience different types of soul-weariness from one another. Whether you're male or female, and regardless of the cause of your weariness, it's important and even biblical to find time for rest and retreat. Begin praying, bring your weariness to the Lord, and see how He provides through one or two of the ideas above.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." -Matthew 11:28