

How to Live Free

*Ye shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free. -John: 8:32*

*For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel;
In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.
-Isaiah 30:15*

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. -Hebrews 4:9



All mankind longs to be free.

But it seems that, in spite of the Lord's promises, too few even of His own people experience much genuine freedom.

Like most things of value, it doesn't come quickly or easily. But if you really want to know the freedom He has for you, there *is* a way.

Yes, there actually is freedom from that tightness around the head, knot in the stomach syndrome produced by excessive stress and distress. There's freedom from unnecessary hurry and have to. There's freedom from the domination of fear, anxiety, anger, bitterness, hatred, and unforgiveness. There's freedom from the rebellion, resistance, and resentment that too often characterize our response to God and the problems He permits in our lives. There's freedom from the power of sin and spiritual failure of all kinds.

No, I'll not deceive you. In this life there's nothing perfect. So total freedom for the people of God awaits the final redemption of our bodies.

But there's more freedom available to us now than most have dared expect.

The Simple Secret

Just spend enough time alone with the Lord to let Him become the omnipotent God He is, fully in charge of all your affairs. Come to rest there in His peace. Stay there with Him in peace long enough to let Him gentle your spirit. Become sensitive to Him. Let the hurry and have to dissolve in His all-sufficiency. Let Him remove the rebellion, resistance, and resentment you feel toward Him for all the disappointments and pain He has permitted you to suffer.

This won't happen through any effort of yours. In fact any such effort is more likely to increase your tension and lead to more failure and more perhaps-wellhidden-resentment of the Lord. Instead, turn to the Lord Himself. Your thoughts need to be no longer centered on yourself as they so usually are, but on Him. Call it worship. Call it praise. Call it adoration. Call it love. Call it just being quiet in His presence. Call it whatever you will, let Him quietly occupy your attention as much as that

may be possible. Primarily prefer your attention to Him to your attention to you!
Stay in the Lord's presence until something of His peace and rest steals over you. It is failure to do this that has been most damaging to my spiritual life. God forgive me.

When other things are more important than the Lord and His peace, we will know little of His peace, and little of His presence!

But you say, "With *my* schedule it simply isn't possible to spend extended openended periods with the Lord." Then, my dear friend, ask the Lord to show you where there actually is time in your schedule or to change it.

Let's be honest. The housewife who is at home all day finds it just about as difficult to find open-ended time with God as the college student who carries a full load and works 30 hours a week on the side. Open-ended time with the Lord simply has to become our time priority. There's nothing else so important.

Why?

Because we're not by nature as responsive to God as we ought to be - no, nor as kind to others. We're too uptight, too self-centered. There has to be a place to start to see this changed! And self-effort is only more of self, not less. So, there has to be a place to start seeing God become more important to us than we are. And I know of no better place to start than being alone with Him.

Now, we're scarcely more likely to start resting in the Lord when we're out there pressured and preoccupied with the stress and busyness of life than we are when we're alone with God. So we must be willing as often as possible to stay alone with the Lord until we enter into His rest and peace.

We'll only be able to come to that place of rest in Him if we've first come to trust Him, if we see Him working our good in every circumstance of our lives no matter how seemingly disastrous, if He super sedes all our fears, failures, and frustrations, all our anxieties, ambitions, and possessions.

Unsubmissive responses to God or our circumstances hinder our entering into His peace. Each submissive response that God creates in us, on the other hand, encourages our coming to rest in Him.

It's All of God!

The work is all God's working from beginning to end. In my spending openended time with Him, He simply gets my attention and becomes important enough to me that I can receive His working. It may take months or years of faithfully spending extended times with God in prayer before you can be sufficiently freed from yourself and sufficiently able to trust God that He can visit you with His peace. But whether it takes you days, weeks, or years of being persistent in seeking the Lord in prayer to learn to let God show you Himself as He is, your Heavenly Father seeking only your good in all things -whether it takes you a long time or a little to know in your spirit that you really can safely trust Him and rest yourself and all your affairs in Him -you must never give up. Never. Never. Never.

Carry His Peace Into the Day

After coming to the place of rest in the Lord during your time alone with Him, you need to let Him teach you to carry that rest and peace more and more into the day. After you come to rest in Him, stay there alone with Him long enough for Him to create a deep desire in your spirit to carry His peace into the day with you. Let its gentleness, kindness, and sensitivity toward God and man permeate more and more of your thoughts, actions, and reactions.

As you recognize throughout the day that you've wandered from His peace, come apart often from the pressures of life to be alone with God again in the chapel of your spirit and once more come to rest in Him. As need and opportunity provide, come aside from time to time to be alone with the Lord

physically, too. Do it, even if the only place available is a cubby hole in the company washroom!

God is the God of Peace. He lives in the environment of peace. It is in that environment of peace that His life flows spontaneously into our lives and equally spontaneously out of our lives in peace to bring blessing and peace, freedom and joy to those whose lives we touch.

The Fruit of the Spirit

We find the fruit of the spirit being formed in our lives by His life in us, as we've never experienced before -and in the lives of others who catch the overflow. This is the same fruit of the spirit many of us have so longed for and so bemoaned its lack.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. -Galatians 5:22, 23

Wouldn't you like to be part of a family of God's people for all of whom this could be the epitaph?

Then *you* start it.

You begin spending time alone with the Lord.

Once there begin by preparing your heart in the Word and devotional material that sets your heart on Him.

Worship the Lord. Talk to God about Who He is. Let Him set your heart free from yourself and the things of time and space. Let all rebelliousness, restlessness, and have to subside.

Be willing for Him to make you willing to let Him be first, to slow down, to let go, relinquish and release everything to God. Be willing for Him to teach you to trust Him, to enable you to accept your circumstances as permitted by Him for your good and His glory, even to accept His timetable, to be content with what is.

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. -Philippians 4:11-13

Be Careful!

We must be careful not to confuse physical tension caused by poor nutrition or illness, or a chemical imbalance producing depression or other symptoms, with a lack of spiritual rest, trust, and peace in the Lord. As I was writing this message, I felt spiritually at ease but physically and emotionally stressed. Only after I had the proper nutrition did I feel entirely at ease. Now, if I hadn't known this and acted on it, I might have felt myself a spiritual failure and not have been able to minister to you in this way.

Remember, too, there's no have to in this way of life. We don't even have to "try to be good," to perform properly, to earn God's acceptance. We are already accepted in the beloved. We can rest in our acceptance by Him. We can trust even our failure and need with Him. We are united to Him. We are in Him and He in us. While not entirely yet in practice, positionally we're found blameless in Christ. In this quiet assurance we can rest, knowing that *"He who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,"* (Philippians 1:6).

What a difference!

As we rest at home in Him, confident of His acceptance, and His continuous transforming work in us, we will see our fear, anger, anxiety, hatred, stress, and distress replaced by love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

You see: The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked. -Isaiah 57:20,21

But: Thou (God) wilt keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee -Isaiah 26:3

His peace is to control our hearts, our lives, our manners, our demeanor, our spirits, our relationships with ourselves, God, and others. And, as a result, it is also the monitor by which we judge whether our hearts are where they ought to be. If we're not living in the peace of the God of Peace we're not right with Him, and we'll not be right with others either.

Let the peace of God rule in (umpire or monitor) your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful. -Colossians 3:15

**So, let us make it the great preoccupation of our lives to respond to the Lord's call of love:
*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.***

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. -Matt. 11:28-30

In conclusion let me encourage you to carry this message with you everywhere you go. Take it out frequently. Reread part or all of it. Let it remind you to ask the Lord again and again to teach you to live at peace in Him so He may flow out from you in peace to others who will eternally call you blessed.

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