

The Joy of Resting in the God We Worship

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. -Isaiah 26:3

To worship God is a delight. It pleases the Lord. It honors Him. It brings untold blessing to the worshiping spirit.

But if worshiping God doesn't lead us to trust Him and rest in Him, if it isn't accompanied by rest in Him, much of the blessing is missed. The worship is incomplete. The pleasure God receives is limited. And He is not so greatly honored as He might be.

It's of First Importance

So it would be hard to overemphasize the importance of coming to rest in the Lord in the time of worship. It would be hard to give too great a place of importance to the need of returning over and over to rest in the Lord throughout the day.

Why is this?

Because resting in the Lord is the place every worshiping spirit should occupy. A lack of rest in the Lord raises questions about the genuineness of our worship. If we aren't resting in Him, we're probably not relying on Him but on ourselves. He is not the object of our trust. We are. Still, we've got to be careful here lest we produce guilt where we shouldn't. Most of us have learned all too little of resting in the Lord.

It Must Be Learned

It took me months of extended times alone with the Lord to begin to learn a little of resting in Him. And I still neglect it too often to my shame.

I'd been emphasizing worship prayer in my writing for months. Yet it came as a surprise to me in my time with the Lord one morning when, after coming to a place again of delightful rest in Him, I realized I'd been neglecting this privilege. I was overwhelmed by my folly and, oh, so grateful to the Lord that He'd brought me again to enjoy His rest, and peace, and joy.

What Released It?

Do you know what released it? A renewed desire for His enabling not to try to control things and people. A renewed desire to trust Him with all my circumstances and the people of those circumstances. This goes against the grain of our sinful human nature more than we dream. I don't know about you, but my natural response to everything that displeases me is to get angry. And to deny it. After all I'm walking with the Lord. After all I'm a teacher of others, showing them how to walk with God. What I'm feeling isn't really anger. It's just displeasure at what's wrong, hurtful, and unnecessary. And God doesn't like such things either. So I'm properly justified!!!

Oh, the unfathomed deceitfulness of my human heart. My wife's forebears were of a religious



heritage that taught nonresistance. They were noncombatants in times of war. They fled one country after another when the government sought to conscript their men to fight in their wars. But I remember hearing her father say, "How I wish they'd practice nonresistance in their relations with one another."

We need to live in constant nonresistance to the people and things God allows in our lives. But, too often, not only do we get "concerned," "upset," we actually get inwardly angry about them. We defend our anger by calling it by more acceptable names. And worse, deep inside, we enjoy our anger and want to continue in it.

As soon as we get "upset" at things or people that don't please us, any peace we've been experiencing in the Lord flees. Our fellowship with the Lord is damaged.

Return to Him

We dare not continue long in this state. We must return to Him. But, how? We worship Him. That's how! As soon as we realize we're not walking in nonresistance, and trust, and rest, and peace, we need to begin worshiping Him again. Adore Him, Honor Him. Praise Him. Thank Him. Or just look to Him as God.

Now, I know many will say, "No, first we need to repent of our sin and let Him cleanse and heal us." But, remember now, everything good is of God. We can originate nothing that is good. Only God can do that.

When we come to Him to worship Him, we come needy. We come poverty-stricken. We come with nothing to offer Him except our need of Him. We bow broken at His feet. If this is what you mean by repentance, then you're entirely right. But, if you're making some kind of a good work out of the act of repentance, then you're entirely wrong.

When we come in this kind of worship, He works in us the repentance we need. He restores our willingness to live in nonresistance. He opens the door to the rest, the quietness of spirit, and the peace we so sorely need. And we must settle for nothing else! Nothing!!

Learn to Rest in the Lord

If you know nothing of experiencing this kind of felt rest in the Lord, ask Him to teach you to seek Him, to know how to worship Him in spirit and in truth. If you're not spending adequate time with the Lord, talk to Him about it and determine by His grace to begin. If you need to turn away from those things that steal your time from Him, seek His gracious enabling to do it.

Just as often as possible, wherever you are, whenever you're reminded of your need to worship Him or to rest in Him, turn to Him in peace and expectation. Seek, by His enabling, to let go of everything. Be it a concern, a worry, a need, a desire, a hope, let go of every kind of interest but the Lord Himself. Just let go, let God take it all, let Him take charge.

Be quiet. Be still. Be at rest. Be at peace in the Lord. But remember, the Christian life is not a game of performance. You don't "have to" because He can and will. He's able. He's faithful. He's in charge. And that's enough for you. You can trust Him.

Enjoy the Spirit of Nonresistance

If you don't understand the concept of spiritual nonresistance, ask the Lord to be your instructor and guide. It doesn't mean permitting that which is blatantly harmful to people or dishonoring to God to go forever unchallenged. It certainly doesn't mean approving sin. Its meaning is probably not to be understood apart from experiencing it as a direct result of worshipping the Lord and entering into His rest and peace.

There, everything God sends our way is acceptable to us because we know He's seeking to work everything together to bring us eternal benefit. There, God's will and way is simply more important than ours. There, denying ourselves and taking up our cross isn't the difficult thing it otherwise is. There, love for others replaces our desire to straighten them out, to control them. There, patience displaces the need for immediate action. There, we can find kind and loving ways to do what otherwise would normally draw a harsh response from us.

There, we may even be able to thank Him for what displeases us because we know He has especially permitted it to help conform us to His image and bring eternal pleasure to Him and eternal blessing to us and to others who are affected, be it directly or indirectly.

Whatever you do, don't continue to deprive yourself of the great joy that awaits those who worship the Lord, and rest in Him and His faithfulness, and find in Him enough. But, beware of always looking for it as a felt experience. There will be many times when you feel deprived of a sense of rest and peace.

There's a dear lady who knows as much as I about spiritual truth, who after 40 years of seeking still felt no rest in God. She was still trying to perform to please Him. I told her to stop, even to stop reading and praying for a time if necessary, just to let God be God, to give and withhold as He would. After all it isn't peace or rest we seek, but the God of peace and rest!

Let Him teach you to worship and trust. Real heart rest will surely follow.

**ChristLife Inc
1642 Michigan Ave.
Niagara Falls, New York 14305
716-284-7625
1-800-676-3172
pastormarr@adelphia.net
www.pastormarr.com**