

Rest in the Lord

What does it mean?

If I spend time working in the yard to the point that I need a rest, I may sit in the shade with a cool drink, or I may lay down on the couch to take a nap. If I play a sport and I exert energy on my shift, I will need to rest and recover for my next shift, so, I would stop exerting energy and hydrate. If I am working a job for a significant amount of time, I may need a break in the action to rest my body or eyes or mind. If I am battling an illness or ailment, I may need an extended time of rest so the systems of my body can fight off the attack and restore my physical health. If it is a battle for mental or emotional health, rest is also a major aspect of restoration.

That is the general concept of rest in the world in which I live. When I consider the promise of Christ Jesus to give me rest, or when I am to rest in the Lord, what does that mean? How do I accomplish that?

Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online

Rest

1 : REPOSE, SLEEP

specifically : a bodily state characterized by minimal functional and metabolic activities

2 a : freedom from activity or labor

b : a state of motionlessness or inactivity

c : the repose of death

3 : a place for resting or lodging

4 : **peace of mind or spirit**

5 a (1) : a rhythmic silence in music

(2) : a character representing such a silence
b : a brief pause in reading
6 : something used for support

Matthew 11:28 ESV

*Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and
I will give you rest.*

- “Come to Me”: Jesus is calling – an invitation to a group.
- “all who labor” is “those toiling”: to grow weary, toil (exhausting labor or effort).
- “heavy laden” is “being burdened”: to load, weighted down.
- “I will give”: the source is Jesus.

Rest

The phrase, “will give rest” is:

Strong’s Concordance – Greek, word 373. *anapauó*

Definition: to give rest, give intermission from labor, by implication **refresh**.

Usage: I make to rest, **give rest to**; mid. and pass: I rest, take my ease.

HELPS Word-studies

373 *anapauó* (from 303 /*aná*, "up, completing a process," which intensifies 3973 /*paúō*, "pause") – properly, **to give (experience) rest after the needed task is completed**; to pause (rest) "after precious toil and care" (Vine/Unger, White, NT).

Is the task that is completed the work of salvation?

Is my labor, and heavy burden, the struggle, the precious toil and care, or the work I do, to gain my salvation?

Does that struggle intensify as I age and realize more acutely my mortality?

How do I gain rest from that labor and heavy burden?

Simply by calling upon, and trusting in, Jesus as Lord and Savior. His work on the cross has provided for my salvation. Through His works I have been given the right to become a child of God. Because He did the work, I can rest from my labor, and not only rest from it, but cease to do it any longer. This is revealed in the next verse.

Matthew 11:29 ESV

*Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and **you will find rest for your souls.***

Rest

The word, “rest” is:

Strong’s Concordance – Greek, word 372. anapausis

Definition: cessation, rest.

Usage: rest, cessation from labor, **refreshment**.

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 372 *anápausis* – **inner rest (tranquility)**. See 373 (*anapauō*).

[Cognate: related or analogous in nature, character, or function.]

Here, rest is “inner rest” or “tranquility” (an untroubled state). Jesus says it is rest for my soul. This, I believe, is the peace that He gives; a peace that no one else can provide.

This passage of Scripture is an invitation to receive salvation for one’s soul. Jesus calls out, “Come to Me,” which is an invitation to me to step out in faith. I am invited to receive what He has to offer; salvation for my soul. The condition of my soul toiling and being burdened already exists. Religion cannot give rest from that condition, in fact, it adds to the burden. Jesus said as much about the religious leaders he dealt with.

Matthew 23:4 ESV

“They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.”

What about those who have already received that salvation, becoming children of God?

I am given rest from that burden on my soul. The needed task is completed. That does not mean, however, that I am free to sit and do nothing. There are times when this sort of rest is needed, but it is not to be the norm. I am to take upon myself His yoke, and I am to learn from Him.

The call is not only to receive the salvation Jesus has to offer, but also to surrender to Him as Lord. I am to walk in obedience in love, both to Jesus and His commands to me.

If following Jesus, or walking in obedience, becomes wearisome or burdensome, perhaps that is a sign that I need to evaluate my behavior and activities. Have I missed the mark, (possibly sin)? Have I diverted from the path I was instructed to walk? Am I maintaining, and growing in my relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Am I working in my own strength rather than walking hand in hand with God? Am I walking by faith or in the flesh?

If my mind is worrisome or troubled, I need to evaluate my level of faith and trust in God, as well as my own behavior that may be leading to my struggle. The enemy will also strive to disrupt my peace and stir up chaos and bring temptations to sin. He needs to be actively resisted by me.

I also need to be careful of whom I follow. Like the religious leaders accused by Jesus of adding burdens to the people, religion and religious leaders like to exert control today. I need to maintain an intimate relationship with God, knowing where I am to be and what I am to be doing. Anyone, or anything, that distracts me from God or my calling, needs to be dealt with. Paul describes what the leaders in the faith are to do; equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

Ephesians 4:11-16 ESV

*And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, **to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ,** until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking truth in love, **we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ,** from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

This passage ought to be studied and broken down, as it is the template for discipleship.

- Who: the leaders and the saints.
- What: leaders equipping the saints.
- When: until we all attain ...
- Where: side by side, under one's wing.
- Why: to mature to the fullness of Christ.
- How: Matthew 28:19-20

Matthew 28:19-20 ESV

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

There is no rest from the commands of Christ to His disciples. Likewise, though possibly physically tiring, those commands are not wearisome or burdensome if accomplished with Him. The apostle Paul exhibits this.

2 Corinthians 7:4-6 ESV

I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy. For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn – fighting without and fear within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

The rest I am given at salvation is not a one-time or momentary thing. It is ongoing as I rest in Christ Jesus. I rest in the peace that only He can give, as He said to His disciples.

John 14:27 ESV

*Peace I leave with you; **My peace I give to you.** Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*

Rest is a weapon. The enemy doesn't like to see me at rest in the Lord. He seeks to stir things up to steal the rest, and the peace, I have in the Lord. The rest, and peace, in the Lord is a reflection of the faith and trust in Him which is developed through an intimate relationship with Him. That relationship is developed through time spent with God; in Scripture, in worship, in thanksgiving, in prayer, in meditation, in listening, in being still.

Psalms 46:10-11 ESV

***“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”**
The LORD of hosts is with us; **the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah***
