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THE WINE PRESS

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THE WINE PRESS



Pressing into Truth, Pouring out His Grace

February 2026

Finding True Rest

It is so easy to feel overwhelmed when we look at our never-ending lists of to-do's. Life feels louder, faster, and heavier than ever. One day bleeds into the next, rest is postponed, and before we know it, our souls are weary. Yet the Bible gently reminds us that rest was never meant to be optional—it is part of God's loving design for our lives.

In this issue of Wine Press, we've included articles that encourage us to regularly lay aside the weights that so easily beset us and to truly rest. Sabbath is a gift from God, designed not just to stop our work, but to restore our hearts and renew our strength.

Resting in the Lord is more than taking a break. It is choosing trust over striving, presence over pressure, and faith over fear. Jesus' invitation still stands: "Come to Me... and I will give you rest." We pray that this issue will encourage you to slow down, turn your heart toward Jesus, and rediscover the life-giving rest only He can give.

The Wine Press is a thoughtfully curated collection of articles from across the web, compiled to inspire, encourage, and deepen your walk with our King and Savior, Jesus Christ. All articles remain the property of their respective authors to whom we joyfully give full credit and our appreciation for sharing their wisdom and experiences with us. May these words uplift your spirit, strengthen your faith, and draw you into ever deeper communion with the God of all grace.

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Rest in God's Goodness

By Rick Warren

Surveys have shown that people would actually rather work than play. And studies have shown that we actually prefer employment over enjoyment. The truth is, a lot of people don't know how to relax. We're addicted to adrenaline. We don't know how to slow down.

A lot of Americans are like Job 20:18: "They are unable to relax and enjoy anything they've worked for. So busy getting more."

Let's do a little quiz to see if you are a workaholic. Be truthful—no cheating.

- Are you always in a hurry?
- Is your to-do list always unrealistically long?
- Do you use days off to catch up on unfinished work?
- Has more than one person told you to slow down?
- Do you feel guilty when you relax? "I've got so much to do."
- Do you have to get sick to get time off?

I remember many years ago a lady said to me, "Pastor, I tried to call you all day Monday." I said, "I'm sorry, Monday is my day off—my Sabbath." She said, "Well, the devil never takes a day off." I said, "Yeah—and if I didn't, I'd be just

like the devil. So you want me to take a day off."

I'll never forget the first year of Saddleback Church. I was working 18 hours a day—and Kay was too—to begin this baby church. For the first two years, twice a week Kay cooked meals to have people in our home from the church. Every member of our church came to our home at least once in the first two years. That ain't going to happen anymore, friends.

We were working hard, hard, hard—18 hours a day. And at the end of the first year, I stood up to speak on the last Sunday of the year and fainted. I was worn out—physical, emotional, spiritual, relational—in every area.

Over the next year, God had to teach me balance—something I've had to learn over and over. But God gave me a verse at the end of that first year. It's Exodus 23. God said to the Israelites as they were going into the Promised Land:

"I'm not going to give you everything I've promised you in a single year, because you are not prepared to handle that much blessing, and it would be too much for you to manage. Instead, you'll take possession of what I want to give you little by little, so that you can grow. Then you'll be strong enough to handle it all."

That verse changed my life. I call it

acing growth. Rome isn't built in a day—and neither is a church or anything worthwhile. God doesn't want you to accomplish it all at once. He wants you to learn: little by little—pacing growth. While God is growing your business, He's growing you. While God is growing your children, He's growing you. While God is growing your career—whatever matters to you—He's growing you.

The fact is, God considers rest as important as work. Some people think God only smiles on them when they're working, or praying, or doing spiritual things. God smiles on you when you rest. If you've ever watched your children sleep and felt joy just watching them, God enjoys watching you sleep.

God rests. Are you busier than God?

Exodus 31:17 “One day a week will always serve as a reminder that I made the heavens and the earth in six days, and then on the seventh day, I rested and relaxed.”

Why did God rest? He wasn't tired—God doesn't get tired. He was modeling what He wants us to do: to rest and relax, to keep a Sabbath, to have balance, to relax in the goodness of God.

Jesus is the good Shepherd, and He cares about your physical, emotional, and spiritual health. If you don't have rest, you're going to be stressed. Often the difference between being blessed and being stressed is rest.

Trust your Shepherd

So how do you learn to relax? You trust your Shepherd.

“The Lord is my shepherd; I will lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.”

If you follow the good Shepherd, He won't lead you into the rat race. He'll

lead you to green pastures and still waters—peace and tranquility.

Five ways to relax in God's goodness

1) Remember my value to God.

This is the opposite of basing worth on work. We live in a culture that asks, “What do you do?” as if your job is your identity. But God says, remember your value to Him.

If you follow the good Shepherd, He won't lead you into the rat race. He'll lead you to green pastures and still waters —peace and tranquility.

How valuable are you? The Father created you. Jesus died for you. The Holy Spirit lives in you. God doesn't create without value, purpose, or intention. You are priceless, unique, no clones, no copies.

James 1:18 says God made us “the most important of everything God has created.” You matter more than the rest of creation.

Isaiah 49:16 says: “I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.” When Jesus was nailed to the cross, God permanently showed how much you matter. In heaven, Jesus will still bear those scars. That's how valuable you are.

So relax. You are already infinitely valuable according to the cross.

2) Enjoy what I already have.

This is the antidote to materialism. Contentment doesn't come naturally; it can be learned. Paul says in Philippians 4 that he learned the secret of being

content.

We can become so preoccupied with getting more that we don't enjoy what we have. People buy homes they can't afford, get overextended, and then relationships deteriorate. Ecclesiastes 4:6 says: "A little food eaten in peace is far better than having twice as much earned from overwork and chasing the wind."

The greatest things in life aren't things. I've never stood by a deathbed and heard someone say, "I wish I'd spent more time at the office."

Matthew 6:31 says Jesus is trying to get you to relax—not be so preoccupied with getting that you can respond to God's giving. Resting is a spiritual issue. Resting is part of trusting.

3) Limit my work to six days a week.

This is not optional. It's one of the Big Ten. God put Sabbath right up there with the major commandments because rest and recreation are essential.

Exodus 23:12 says: "Work the first six days of the week, but rest and relax on the seventh." It's for everyone—even your animals—and even foreigners among you. God wants everybody protected from overwork.

Exodus 20:9–10 says: "You have six days in which to do your work, but the seventh day is to be a day of complete rest... dedicated to Me." That's the Sabbath—meaning a day of rest.

Jesus said in Mark 2:27: "The Sabbath was made to benefit man." God didn't make Sabbath for His benefit; He made it for ours. When you ignore God's laws, God doesn't get hurt—you get hurt.

It doesn't matter which day your Sabbath is, but you need one every week.

And don't call it your "day off," because you'll cheat on it. Call it your Sabbath.

What do you do on your Sabbath? Three things:

- Rest your body. If you don't take time off, your body will make time off.

- Recharge your emotions. Through quietness, solitude, recreation that rejuvenates you (not competitive stress), and relationships.

- Refocus your spirit. Worship in community and time alone with God.

You have to decide how many hours you want to work and stick with it. You schedule doctor appointments—so schedule recreation and Sabbath. This is especially important if you're self-employed. If you don't schedule it, you'll never take a break.

4) Adjust my values.

To reduce busyness you have to change what you believe is important. Ask: What is really important?

Mark 8:36 asks: "What good is it...?" What good is all you accomplish if you lose your soul? How is your soul? How are your relationships?

I got a note that said: "Pastor Rick, it was like holding up a mirror. I've been filling my life with activities—even ministries—so I wouldn't have to face issues I need to deal with... Yesterday I rested and the world didn't end. I read the entire Sunday paper. I talked to friends without rushing. I watched my kids play. I sat in a room I redecorated but never enjoyed."

Sometimes we stay busy to avoid what we need to face. But God wants to trade our restlessness for His peace.

5) Exchange my restlessness for God's peace.

Jesus points to the birds and wildflowers: God feeds them; God clothes them. You're worth more than they are. You can't add time to your life by worrying.

God loves you more than you'll ever know. And there's nothing you can do that will make Him love you more or

love you less.

And this gets to the root of workaholism and stress. There's physical fatigue, emotional fatigue, and spiritual fatigue. Sleep helps the body, but it doesn't cure emotional and spiritual fatigue. People say, "I just need a vacation." You might—but you need more than a vacation. What you need is a relationship with Jesus Christ.

We're not made to live the way we've been living. The insistence on "I'm trying to stay awake" is what little kids do. It's a mark of immaturity. Maturity knows how to rest.

Sheep aren't very smart. Sheep don't like to lie down, and yet Psalm 23 says, "He makes me lie down." If you won't slow down, God will make you lie down.

So I challenge you: start immediately. Plan your Sabbath. God's way is the right way, the healthy way, and the enjoyable way to live.

And if you're tired of living the way you're living, here's my answer: come to Jesus.

**Start immediately.
Plan your Sabbath. God's
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Matthew 11:28–30 says: "Are you tired? ... I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me, work with Me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. You come to Jesus. He's not going to

load more on you, he's going to take it off you. So in summary, here are the five points:

1. Remember my value to God.
2. Enjoy what I already have.
3. Limit my work to six days a week.
4. Adjust my values.
5. Exchange my restlessness for God's peace.

What does that spell? Relax. That's what God wants you to do.

Prayer: Jesus, I want to change. Today I want to learn to relax. You are the Good Shepherd. I want to lay down in green pastures. I want You to lead me beside quiet waters. Help me to remember that my value to You is greater than anything else, that You love me unconditionally, that I don't have to prove anything to others.

And God, help me to enjoy what I already have instead of always be reaching for more. Help me to limit my work to six days a week and to obey the commandment that says, take a Sabbath.

Help me to adjust my values, to put first things first and to focus on the major, not the minor things of life. Help me to take a day of rest every week. And today, I want to exchange my restlessness for your peace, my pressure for your peace, my problems for your peace.

I want to live in the love and goodness of My Good Shepherd. Jesus Christ, I give every area of my life to you. I want to love you and follow you. In your name I pray. Amen.

Watch video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvZpQRXLirc>

An Invitation to Rest

By Stephen Unwin



His life was fraying at the edges. His emotions were stretched and his soul was brittle. He felt like a fence that could topple over with one small push. He didn't just need a break for a moment. No amount of leisure time or holiday would fix the issue; he needed rest for his soul and restoration for his spirit.

We can all get to that point. The day-to-day responsibilities of work, caring, studying, and serving can tire us out. Add in a troubling visit to the doctors or a family crisis, and our need for rest goes beyond what a leisurely long weekend can fix. Physical tiredness is one thing, but sometimes our very soul feels weary,

fragile and spent. We're not a car in need of fuel; we're a beat-up car in need of restoration.

That's what the person mentioned above needed. This isn't some imagined person, this is David—King David. The renowned King who ruled for forty years needed a rest (2 Samuel 5:5, 1 Chronicles 14:17). And rest is what he found, or rather, rest is what he received. Despite the whirlwind he found himself in, he really could exclaim, "Truly my soul finds rest in God" (Psalm 62:1).

As we receive the Bible's teaching and reflect on this theme of rest, we'll see that God's gift of rest promises much more than what any of the above can provide. God's gift of rest isn't just about refueling us for work or providing us with some downtime; God's gift of rest goes far deeper. This rest stretches back into the creation of the world—and even further back than that—and pushes beyond into the new heavens and the new earth. The Bible speaks of rest in the beginning and rest at the beginning of everything new (Genesis 2:2, Revelation 14:13).

Asking God for Rest

There's one important thing to notice about the rest of God: it doesn't take much effort to experience it. It's very

easy to turn ‘resting’ into just one other item on our packed to-do list. The very act of resting can become something that (ironically) we don’t have the energy to do. Some ‘time away’ sounds lovely in principle, but actually doing it can feel like too much effort when our energy is already spent.

The good news is that experiencing the rest of God doesn’t take much effort from us. There are certainly good habits we can form, but true, lasting rest is a gift from God that meets us beyond our circumstances and efforts. In Psalm 62, David just does one simple thing: he cries out to God. He tells his soul to find rest in God and he encourages us to “pour out our hearts to God” because “God is our refuge” (Psalm 62:8).

So if you’re feeling weary, if you’re weighed down, know that the Lord is inviting us to go to Him and cry out. You can never be beyond the scope of God’s rest. Experiencing His rest doesn’t involve much effort. We don’t have to make a plan or form healthy habits before we can go to Him. We don’t have to work hard and complete our tasks before we can rest. Not at all. Christ is inviting us to come to Him with our weariness and burdens and know rest. As He said in those wonderful words: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

What Rest Is: Stop & Smell the Roses

When the Bible talks about our rest, it actually starts by talking about God’s rest. In Exodus 20:8-11, when God’s people were told to stop and rest (the command to remember the sabbath), they were pointed back to the rest that God enjoyed after creating the universe.

Our starting point for thinking about rest is to see that rest is something that God enjoys—rest is His thing first.

The Infinite God Rests

Genesis 2:2 is the Bible’s first mention of rest. God’s creative masterpiece is finished, and then we hear words that catch us off guard: “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done” (Genesis 2:2-3).

When we pause to think about it, this may sound quite surprising, and maybe even a little strange. Why did God rest?

Our majestic, sovereign, infinitely powerful God is capable of creating the universe by the word of His mouth (Genesis 1:3). We’re told in Psalm 121:4 that God doesn’t “slumber or sleep”. In Isaiah, we’re told that “the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary” (Isaiah 40:28).

Yet on the seventh day, God rested.

This tells us something about rest: if God rests, then rest can’t just be about resting so we can work. God doesn’t need to rest. He is the “everlasting God” so it’s not like His battery is running low. He doesn’t need to take a lie-down in the afternoon so that He can fling more stars into space in the evening. God rests even though He doesn’t need to.

As human creatures, we need to rest in order to work, especially in a world broken by sin where life is hard (Genesis 3:16-19). Yet the fact that God rests even though He doesn’t need to shows that there is something more to rest than simply recharging our batteries for work.

Rest is something to enjoy, to delight in.

The Joy of Rest

The garden imagery of Genesis 1-2 can help us understand. This last weekend I was planting some new flowers in our

garden. After planting them, I sat back to enjoy the garden. I wasn't tired, there was no particular purpose to this moment of rest, I just wanted to enjoy the garden.

Perhaps this is a little like what God is doing in Genesis 2:2 when He stops to rest. He's planted the world and now He's resting, enjoying it, delighting in it. He doesn't just move on to the next thing. He stops to enjoy it for the sheer sake of enjoyment. In the words of a song by Mac Davis, there's a joy to be found when we 'stop and smell the roses'.

Rest is a joyful, delightful, celebratory thing. In a word, it's gratuitous. It's not just a necessity; it's a gracious gift to be enjoyed.

The writer of Hebrews depicts eternity with God as "eternal rest" (Hebrews 4:1-11). And the tone for this eternal rest is one of joy and celebration. It's ushered in with a marriage feast to be enjoyed by Christ and His bride, the church (Revelation 10:6-7). The 'rest' of eternity doesn't start with a meager meal that simply meets our needs; it starts with an exuberant, lavish feast!

God's gift of rest is less like the Christmas 'gift' when a husband and wife

agree to 'give' each other a new Dyson because the old one broke; God's gift of rest certainly serves a function, but it's more like the beautiful Christmas gift that is primarily to be delighted in. This is why Jewish people talk of celebrating the Sabbath, because it is a day of joy.

Rest is Not Like Hard Rubbish

There's also something else here. God's gift of rest is not like hard rubbish on the side of the street. It's not something that God doesn't care about and just wants rid of. When God gives us rest, He's giving us something that He Himself enjoys and He delights in sharing that with us. That makes rest an incredibly precious and gracious gift! How generous is our Father to give us something which He enjoys!

Why We Rest: God Works to Give us Rest

Our Father is not only generous in giving us the gift of rest, He's actually so eager to give us the gift of rest that He's willing to work so that we can enjoy it. God works so that we can rest. We can see this play out when God works to rescue His people from slavery in Egypt.



In Egypt, the Israelites were making bricks for Pharaoh's vanity projects (Exodus 5:1-9). Pharaoh and his cronies were cruel taskmasters. The Israelites couldn't escape their enslavement to these cruel slave drivers. They were downtrodden, beaten and bruised. But what did the gracious, loving Lord do? He rescued them! And after being rescued from this cruel, demeaning, and nonstop work as slaves in Egypt, what does God call them to do? Rest. (See Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

The Israelites were enslaved to work, but God frees them to rest! With the slave-driving work masters of Egypt behind them, God calls His people to stop and look back and remember what He did for them. Enjoy it. I've done this for you, I've set you free, enjoy this day. His people can rest because He has redeemed them for it. He's so eager that they rest that He even commands them to rest. Let that sink in for a moment: God commands His people to rest.

This is the kind of God our kind Father is. The Sabbath commandment isn't there to stifle fun; it's less an obligation and more an elevation to joy. God is commanding His people to enjoy the privilege that He Himself enjoys and has worked hard to give to them. This is a staggering truth.

How We Rest: Relinquishing & Trusting

A good friend of mine is an officer on a merchant ship. One night they were sailing across the North Atlantic and the dreaded alarm rang: "Man Overboard". My friend was the officer in charge of the rescue so he and a few other crew launched a lifeboat into the pitch-black darkness of a cold Atlantic night. Hope was almost lost but suddenly they caught sight of the man in the waves. He was so exhausted that he was moments away from drowning; his legs could kick no more.

My friend reached out his arms to the man and in turn, the man reached out his arms to my friend. In a moment, he was pulled from the waves into the refuge of the lifeboat. People tend to drown because they run out of energy and can't keep themselves afloat. There are times in life when we can feel like that. We can be so exhausted—whether physically, mentally, or spiritually—that we're struggling to stay afloat. In times like those, we can't magic up restorative rest from within ourselves; we need help from outside ourselves and our circumstances. That's what Christ offers us, and that's what King David experienced for himself.

When we're worn down, we can't magic up rest from within ourselves. God can use good things like a holiday, a quiet cuppa or exercise to help us unwind, but ultimately we won't find rest until we grasp that true rest comes from far outside of ourselves and our circumstances.

That's what David does in Psalm 62. In the midst of trouble, David finds a rest that comes far from this world. As we saw earlier, rest is God's thing first, so true rest can only come from Him (Psalm 62:5). It is in God's presence, by being with Him, that we find rest.

Yet sometimes, even though we know we need rest, we can actually be nervous to take God up on His offer. Stopping to rest can be a little scary and even anxiety-inducing. We're scared to rest because it means stopping our attempts to make things happen, to keep our world spinning, and to fix the very problems that seem to be making us need rest. If we're to know lasting rest, the kind of rest that calms our souls, the kind of rest that brings peace in the midst of the roaring waves, we need to stop and look to God for help. Looking beyond ourselves means relinquishing our attempts to find rest by ourselves and instead find rest in God. Like the man rescued from the waves, it will involve

reaching out our arms to the One who is already reaching out His arms to us.

Relinquishing

The gift of rest is something that will build us up and restore us, yet to receive it, we need to lean not on ourselves but on Christ. In fact, in Leviticus we even read that enjoying sabbath rest actually involves “denying ourselves” (Leviticus 16:29). The gift of rest will prove elusive until we relinquish control, look beyond ourselves and embrace Christ instead. Yet this can be hard to do.

Life today is full of opportunities to make things happen. We can start global businesses with a laptop and a dining table. We can perform groundbreaking surgery (at least some of us can). We can order products for delivery the next day (mostly). In a world like this, it’s easy to fall into the trap of thinking that we are the ones who make the world go round. And this leads us to believe that if we stop for rest, our worlds will crumble and cease to be.

However, the Bible reminds us that God is in control. He is the one who builds the house (Psalm 127:1). He sustains all things by the word of His mouth (Hebrews 1:3). “All things are held together by Him” (Colossians 1:17). This means we can trust God to keep our world spinning when we stop and rest.

Trusting

David knew this well and it’s part of what made rest possible for him despite the overwhelming circumstances he was in. He knew that God is both mighty and loving: he says of God that “power belongs to you” and that God is a God of “unfailing love” (Psalm 62:11-12). Those two things are integral to finding restorative rest, to finding a refuge when the storms of life circle and pummel us. Because if God was only one or the other, true rest would escape us. If God

were just powerful but not loving, then what reason would God have to share rest with us? And if God were just loving but not powerful, then He’d be incapable of providing meaningful, lasting rest. Yet wonderfully, God is both at once. So we can trust, knowing that His rest is both good and secure. He truly is a fortress that provides peaceful rest (Psalm 62:2). We really can “trust in him at all times” (Psalm 62:8).

Lean on Me

All this means that we really can go to Him for rest. He’s inviting us to look beyond our circumstances, look beyond our empty batteries, and lean on Him. We can stop our striving, our hectic coming and going so that we can cast ourselves on God and enjoy the rest He offers.

Rest will elude us until we look past ourselves, relinquish our grasp on making things happen by ourselves, and instead look to Christ. He is the only true source of rest. Stopping to rest takes some trust, but it’s so worth it. As we reach out our hands to Christ for a safe place to rest, we can know with assurance that He’s got us and He’s already reaching out His hands to us.

What Happens When We Rest: Pausing and Praying

There’s a very entertaining scene in the film ‘Mr. Bean’s Holiday’ that resonates with me and probably most of us. Bean is on a long drive in his classic Mini and he’s desperately trying to stay awake. He goes through all the typical methods like having the windows down, putting on loud music and slapping his own face, but then he resorts to more desperate measures like burning his finger on the cigarette lighter and finally he tries keeping his eyes open with matchsticks. I’m sure we’ve all been there while on a long drive. The reality, though, is that matchsticks don’t work. What you really

need is to pull over at a ‘rest stop’ and get some sleep. Of course, to do so, you actually have to stop.

Enjoying God’s rest involves stopping. The verb sabbath means ‘to cease’ and that’s what we need to do to enjoy God’s restorative rest. This isn’t rocket science, yet in our self-reliant and busy world, we can miss these obvious things. To take Jesus up on His invitation, we have to stop our frenetic activity and go to Him. If we press on with our activities, however important we think they may be, we’ll miss out on Christ’s invitation to enjoy rest. As He did for the disciples in Mark 6:3, Jesus invites us to step out of our lives for a moment and pause in His presence.

God Himself enjoys rest, so it’s unsurprising that Jesus Christ stepped out of the busyness of His life to rest with His Father—and He invites others to do the same. When Jesus took these momentary pauses, He would often spend time listening to and talking with His Father (Luke 5:16, Mark 1:35). As we pause for a moment, God invites us to speak with Him, asking Him for rest and renewal. It can be a few simple words asking that God would lead us to still waters and refresh our souls (Psalm 23:2-3). These small momentary pauses can help us orient our hearts to God and be reminded of the strength and peace He supplies.

Taking in the View

Stopping to rest won’t just help us enjoy God’s rest, it will also help us to enjoy more of God.

If you’ve ever driven along an exceptionally beautiful scenic highway, you’ll know how hard it is to keep your eyes on the road. Whenever I drive along it, I find I have one eye on the road and one eye on the view. The views out the side of the car are just so beautiful! But

it’s a silly way to do it. If I really want to enjoy the view, I need to stop and get out of the car.

If we’re always on the move, we’ll never get to appreciate God in all His wonder. For many of us, life slowed down during the lockdowns of the Pandemic. I found that slowing down meant I saw far more of the streets surrounding our apartment than I’d seen before. I noticed intriguing street art and pretty gardens. I’d walked past them before, I’d seen them before, but I’d never really noticed or appreciated them.

There are truths about God that we can know in the busy times, perhaps like the strength that He provides. But there are other truths that we may have to pause in order to really notice and appreciate, perhaps things like His patience. Not stopping to rest in God is like driving along a beautiful scenic highway without ever stopping and getting out of the car; we’d miss so much of the beauty on offer.

Rest is something first enjoyed by God Himself and remarkably, it’s something He then invites us to enjoy with Him in His presence. Our God is a gracious God who knows our troubles. By giving us rest, He not only meets our needs but gives us a gift to delight in. Rest is a gift that we’ll be enjoying for eternity, yet it’s also something God is inviting us to experience today.

Let’s remember those wonderful words of Christ. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28-30).

<https://ourdailybread.org/invitation-to-rest/>

Come All Who Are Weary

By Jon Bloom

Deep soul weariness: We all experience it, though in different ways and for different reasons.

Sometimes we can point to a significant factor, but often we can't. Our weariness results from the cumulative, multilayered intersections of life's complexities, bodily frailties, emotional heartbreaks, and the consequences of sin. It surpasses understanding.

Because our burdens are not simple, they are not relieved by simplistic platitudes ("Cheer up! Things are bound to turn around!"). But a simple promise can relieve a complex burden, provided we

believe that the power behind the promise is complex and strong enough to relieve our heaviness.

And into our weariness steps the most complex power in existence speaking a promise as simple, hopeful, and refreshing as we could possibly want:

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
[\(Matthew 11:28-30\)](#)



Come to Me

The simplicity of Jesus's promise is both striking and refreshing. Jesus doesn't offer us a four-fold path to peace-giving enlightenment, like the Buddha did. He doesn't give us five pillars of peace through submission as Islam does. Nor does he give us "10 Ways to Relieve Your Weariness," which we pragmatic, self-help-oriented 21st century Americans are so drawn to. Unique to anyone else in human history, Jesus simply offers himself as the universal solution to all that burdens us.

"Unique to anyone else in human history, Jesus simply offers himself as the universal solution to all that burdens us."

And his simple promise is audacious: "Come to me." The only way that this isn't megalomaniacal lunacy is if Jesus is who he claims to be: the eternal Word made flesh, our Creator ([John 1:1-3](#), [14](#); [John 8:58](#); [Hebrews 1:1-3](#)). His simple promise implies a power behind it more than sufficient to lift what weighs us down.

What does coming to Jesus mean? When we read the context of this promise (Matthew 11-12), his meaning becomes clear. In his rebuke of the cities ([Matthew 11:20-24](#)) and religious leaders ([Matthew 12:1-8](#)) that saw firsthand his miraculous works, so clearly demonstrating who he was ([John 5:36](#)), and still refused to believe in him, we know that when Jesus said, "come to me," he meant, "believe in who I claim to be and therefore what I am able to do for you."

And here is where our burdened souls are tested. Will we believe in him; will we trust him? We want to rest our souls on the knowledge of how and when our burdensome problems will be addressed. But Jesus does not provide those details. He simply promises us that they will be addressed.

Jesus does not want our souls resting on the how and when, as if we are wise enough to understand and determine them. Rather he wants our souls resting on the surety that he will keep his promise to us in the best way at the best time. "Come to me," he says, "cast your anxieties on me for I care for you" (see [1 Peter 5:7](#)). "Trust in me with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding" (see [Proverbs 3:5](#)), he says, "and you will find rest for your souls."

Rest for Your Souls

Our souls only find rest in hope. That's what we're frantically looking for whenever our souls are burdened and restless: hope. And that's what most of the marketing of most of the products in the world tries to offer us: hope. But they are false hopes for soul-rest, providing only temporary distraction from or briefly masking the effects of our burdened souls. They don't truly lighten our loads.

Jesus is the answer to every question, concern, fear, and need we will ever have.

No, our burdened souls only truly find rest in one place:

"For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, or my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God." ([Psalm 62:5-7](#))

Jesus knows that he only is our salvation, our fortress, our mighty rock, our refuge. He is the one answer to every question, concern, fear, and need we will ever have. And so he simply and

comprehensively offers us himself. For our hope is from him. Only in him will we find rest for our souls.

Take My Yoke and Learn from Me

But if what he promises us is rest, why does he tell us to put on his yoke? A yoke is placed on a beast of burden in order to do some work. Is Jesus offering us rest or work?

That is precisely the question Jesus wants us to ask: What work must we do for him that supposedly will give us rest?

Jesus answered this question in [John 6:29](#): “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” And he answered it in [John 15:4](#): “Abide in me” (like a branch in a vine). Believe and abide: that really is all the work God requires of us. Faith (believing and abiding) is resting on the hopeful promises of God. That is the yoke Jesus calls us to put on.

And what is happening here is a yoke-exchange. In the cross, Jesus takes our inconceivably and unbearably heavy yoke of sin’s condemnation and penalty, and offers us in exchange the easy yoke and light burden of simply trusting him. He does all the work and gives us all the rest. And his work not only fully addresses our sin problem, but also provides the supply of every other need we will ever have ([Philippians 4:19](#)). All we are required to do is trust him!

And if that wasn’t enough, in becoming human and dwelling among us, Jesus makes it possible for us to learn from him how to live by faith. That’s why the author of Hebrews tell us to,

[look] to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ([Hebrews 12:2](#))

Believe, abide, and follow in his steps ([1](#)

[Peter 2:21](#)). That’s the light yoke Jesus calls us to put on. It is the only yoke in existence that gives us rest for our souls.

Let’s Come to Jesus Together

Jesus’s great invitation for us to come to him, exchange yokes, and find rest is not intended for us to do in isolation. He intends for us to come to him in community, to come together. That’s one massive reason the church exists.

Believe, abide, and follow Jesus’s example. And you will find rest for your soul.

We all bear burdens and become weary, but in different ways, for different reasons, and often at different times. When we are weary, we are easily discouraged and can be given to cynical unbelief. In those moments we are often not the best preachers for our souls. We need others to speak truth to us and help us believe in Jesus.

That’s why we are not to neglect “to meet together, as is the habit of some, but [to keep on] encouraging one another” ([Hebrews 10:25](#)). We are to “exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” ([Hebrews 3:13](#)).

So if you are weary, for whatever reason, however complex, Jesus invites you to come. Come, take his light yoke of believing in him. And if it’s hard, don’t come alone. Come to Jesus with and through a believing friend. Believe, abide, and follow Jesus’s example. And you will find rest for your soul.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/come-all-who-are-weary>

Talking to Yourself Not Listening to Yourself

By Tim Keller

My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?” These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you. Psalm 42:3–6

Now, it’s interesting that the condition of this psalmist is downcast. As he says, “My soul is downcast.” It’s a word for despondency or despair. And a lot of us are experiencing that, especially during this time of the pandemic.

Now, what do we do about that? The psalmist says there are three things we should do.

1. Pour Out Your Soul

The first thing is that you pour out your soul. The very first verses talk about “I pour out my soul to the Lord.” That’s a godly, ancient version of what today we call getting in touch with your feelings.

That is to say, you don’t take your feelings and say, “Oh no—if I trust God, I shouldn’t have these despondent



thoughts. I shouldn’t be upset.” No—he is getting in touch. He is pouring out his soul. He is actually listening to the emotions and the feelings of his heart.

So the first thing he does is get in touch with his feelings and pour out his soul.

2. Engage in Self-Dialogue

But the second thing is self-dialogue.

Now notice: he speaks to himself. When he says, “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?”—that’s the old King James version, which I remember from my youth.

He’s not praying to God, but he’s also not speaking to readers. He’s talking to

himself. It's a self-dialogue, and this is the very essence of understanding how you can handle anything.

Many years ago, David Martin Lloyd-Jones preached a sermon on this text, later written down, and it had a big impact on me. I couldn't say it better than he did, so let me explain by reading what he says:

"The first thing we have to learn is what the psalmist learned. We must learn to take ourselves in hand. He is talking to himself; he is addressing himself. It is important to see that this is not the same as morbidity and introspection. We must talk to ourselves instead of allowing ourselves to talk to us. In spiritual depression, we allow ourselves to talk to us instead of talking to ourselves.

Am I being deliberately paradoxical? Far from it. This is the very essence of wisdom in this matter. Have you realized that so much of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?"

So this man stands up and says, "Self, listen for a moment."

Then you must go on to remind yourself of who God is, what God is, what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then, on this great note, you defy yourself, defy other people, defy the devil, and defy the whole world, and say with the psalmist, "I shall yet praise Him, for He is my God."

What Lloyd-Jones is saying is this: when you listen to your heart, your heart is saying all kinds of panicky things.

"Oh my goodness, it's never going to get better."

"Oh no—this might happen, that might happen."

But you turn and say, "Heart, let me talk to you about some things. This is what I know about God. This is what He has

planned. This is what He has promised."

You're not listening to your heart— you're talking to your heart.

So first, there's pouring out your soul. Secondly, there's self-dialogue.

3. Reorder Your Hopes

And thirdly, reorder your hopes.

The psalmist says, "Hope in God. I shall praise Him." He's redirecting what he puts his hope in.

And of course, as Christians, we have another psalm—Psalm 103—where it says, "Forget not all His benefits." "Why are you cast down, O my soul? Forget not all His benefits. Bless the Lord, O my soul."

Don't forget what He's given us.

As Christians, we know this:

- When I think about my justification, I won't dwell on the past or guilt.
- When I think about my sanctification, I realize I can change, and I won't say, "I'll never change."
- When I think about my adoption, I remember that God hears me and loves me the way a father loves a child.
- When I think about my future resurrection, I'm not afraid of aging or dying.
- When I think about how much He loves me in Jesus Christ, I gain confidence.

Reorder your hopes.
Talk to yourself.
Pour out your soul.

And you will praise Him—your Savior and your God.

<https://youtu.be/RZQQwAActog?si=KdgzFX-yHJ85b7Zw>

Peace That Passes All Understanding

By Edward Welch

It is one of the better known passages in Scripture:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6–7)

That’s certainly easy enough: prayer + thankfulness = peace. Go through the steps, get to peace. Then why doesn’t the formula work? When I am anxious I pray, but my mind keeps drifting back to the anxious circumstance, and before I know it I am trying to solve the problem. After again confessing my distractibility, I get back to praying, only to have the cycle continue. Thinking I might do better at thanksgiving, I write out a thanks list, but the list rarely dislodges my anxiety, and for good reason. No matter how long the list, there is no guarantee that I will be spared my most recent doomsday scenarios.

Now what? I just tried one of the classic passages on anxiety and it didn’t work.

A-ha, there is a clue. I was looking for a pill. I visited God-my-pharmacist and asked what to take for my anxiety. That’s not the way Scripture works. I should have noticed it when I reduced the

passage to a formula. Scripture, instead, is about the triune God. It is about knowing and trusting a person, and our formulas can actually turn us away from that person and cause us to rely on a series of steps.

So go back to the passage and look for the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

The Lord Is Near

Commands such as “do not be anxious” typically come after the reason why we don’t have to be anxious. In this case, the reason was slipped into the preceding verse: “The Lord is at hand” (Phil. 4:5).

That changes everything. The emphasis is not on how we pray. It is on the God who has come close, who hears, and who is with us. The only thing that could separate us from His love and presence are our sins, and they have been washed away by Jesus’ blood.

Isn’t it true that the presence of another person in our frightful situations can lessen our fears? Fear doesn’t want a series of impersonal steps; it wants a person. Walk in an unknown dark place by yourself and you are afraid. Hold someone’s hand while you are in that dark place and fears ebb. If we are comforted by the presence of a mere human being, who might be less strong

and brave than ourselves, how much more will we be comforted by the sworn presence of the reigning Christ?

This is the path toward peace and comfort. Meditate on Emmanuel, which means “God with Us.” Remember how the Spirit of Jesus has been given to us (John 14:27). He is not limited by a physical body that confines Him to one place and one person at a time. He is with all God’s people all the time.

Emmanuel Will Give Us Manna

But what will He do when He is with us? Will He give us the money we need? Will He zap the person who wants to do us harm? Will He keep the kids from all accidents? We have a pretty good idea that the answer to these questions is “not always.”

We know that bad things happen to God’s people. So what difference does God’s presence mean when, although He is the Almighty God, He doesn’t always use His power in the way we would like? We feel like we are left where we started—trusting in some steps that we hope will make us feel more peace. There must be more that God says.

And there is more. First, we should understand that when God says He is present (or hears, sees, remembers), He is saying that He is doing something. He is never a passive bystander. Second, what He is doing is this: He gives us what we need when we need it (Matt. 6:19–34). In the New Testament He says that He will give us the grace we need, and that grace is part of a tradition that began with the appearance of manna for the needy Israelites. In times of trouble, God promises to give us the manna that we need.

He even spells out how this will happen (Ex. 16). There are times when we will feel like destitute wanderers in the wilderness with little hope of food and water. God will then give us manna at the

time we need it. He won’t give us so much that we will have enough for tomorrow because then we would just start trusting in the manna rather than trusting Emmanuel.

The emphasis is not on how we pray. It is on the God who has come close, who hears, and who is with us.

God makes a promise. He will give you manna—or grace—when you need it, but not before. That means you will be anxious if you forecast the future because you are making your prediction based on the manna you have left over from today, and there is none. What you don’t factor into your prediction is that you will receive fresh grace when you need it.

That should sound familiar. Think of the times you dreaded an upcoming event and it was not as bad as you anticipated. You were given manna when you needed it. Think of the times when you were surprised by something especially difficult. Though painful, you received grace to endure with faith.

We will have hardships in life, of that there is no doubt. Scripture does not offer a kingdom that spares us from pain. The King does promise, however, that He will be with us in every trial and will give us all the manna we need so that we can know Him better, trust Him, live for Him, and be increasingly transformed to look more like Jesus no matter what the wilderness of life might throw at us.

In other words, He will give us the best of gifts when we need help. Manna was pointing forward to something much better (Deut. 8:2–3); it was pointing to the Bread of Life who would satisfy our hunger in such a way that we wouldn’t

always feel hungry two hours later. Manna was pointing to Jesus and what we are given in His death and resurrection.

Do you notice any hope stirring? The opposite of anxiety is hope. Anxiety predicts that manna will not come. Hope predicts that God will be with us and give us something better than manna. Where does peace fit in? Peace is the companion of hope.

Humility Is the Path

Hope and peace don't come without a fight. God is pleased to work hope and peace in us surely but gradually. They come as we meditate, feed on Scripture, feed on Christ, and keep calling out for manna and grace. The kingdom of God advances through weakness and dependence on the King, not through quick and bloodless victories. If you are feeling a bit weak, you are probably on the right path.

Essential to this battle with fear and anxiety is the gift of humility. It fits perfectly, doesn't it? In our anxiety we are usually concerned about things we love. We want control. We want to take matters into our own hands to protect our future, but we are finding that it is impossible to manage all possible contingencies. We want to protect our kingdom. Find anxiety and you often find that your agenda is more important to you than God's. You might find that you adopt your own interpretation of God's world rather than submit to God's clear words about His power, love, and care.

Here is how the Apostle Peter makes the link between humility and anxiety:

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6-7)

He is asking us to do just one thing—humble ourselves before the Lord. Humility is expressed by casting our anxieties on the mighty and trustworthy one.

When a child's fears are not assuaged by a parent's attempts at comfort, the child is essentially saying either that the monster under the bed is stronger than the parent, or the parent doesn't really care about the child's best interests. The child's fear shows his or her lack of trust or confidence in the parent. Humility, in contrast, hears the voice of the parent and believes that the parent can be trusted, even when the evidence suggests that circumstances are out of control. Humility says, "I believe you more than I believe my eyes or my imagination." Humility is submissive.

This means that mere information and knowledge will not bring peace. Even more, we must respond to what we hear with humility and trust.

Pursue Peace for God's Glory

There are steps toward peace, but they are a little different than the steps we take in following a recipe. These steps are all personal. Know the God who comes near, expect the better manna, and walk before him in humility.

Don't give up on the pursuit of peace. Peace will make you feel better, which is a good thing, but there is something greater at stake. In a world where true peace seems impossible, we want to be ambassadors who say that real peace is available to us only in the Prince of Peace. This, indeed, will bring glory to God.

<https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/peace-passes-all-understanding>

A Boy They Called Horse

By Adam Johnson, Biblicalman

Tonight, families across America will gather around the television. They'll watch a bald kid try to kick a football. They'll watch a beagle dance on a dog house. They'll watch Charlie Brown get a rock instead of candy. They'll laugh.

They won't know they're watching a man's autobiography. When Charles Schulz was a little boy, the other children called him "Sparky." It wasn't a term of affection. Sparky was the name of a horse in the comic strip Barney Google. A dumb horse. A joke horse. They were calling him an animal.

And young Sparky Schulz never shook that name. Couldn't. It followed him like a curse. He failed every single subject in eighth grade. Not one or two. Every. Single. Subject.

In high school, he flunked physics so spectacularly that his teacher gave him a flat zero. The worst physics student in school history. Latin. Failed. Algebra. Failed. English. Failed. The pattern was set early. But the grades weren't even the worst part. Paul Harvey told this story on the radio, and when he got to this line, you could hear something crack in his voice:

"Sparky wasn't actually disliked by the other youngsters. No one cared enough about him to dislike him."

Read that again. He wasn't hated. He was nothing.

If a classmate said hello to him outside of school, Sparky was astonished. It never

happened. He never once asked a girl out in high school. Not because he got rejected. Because he was too afraid to try.

Through all of it—the failing grades, the invisible existence, the losses stacked like unpaid bills—one thing kept Sparky alive. His drawings. He was proud of them. Worked on them constantly. Believed he had something.

His senior year, he submitted cartoons to the school yearbook. Rejected. The one thing he thought he was good at. The one ember he'd been guarding against the wind. They said no.

After graduation, Sparky had one dream left. Walt Disney. He wrote to Disney Studios. Gathered his best work. The letter came back requesting samples: draw a Disney character repairing a clock by shoveling springs and gears back inside.

He poured himself into those drawings. Everything he had. The reply came. A form letter. Disney Studios, it explained politely, only hired the very finest artists—even for routine background work. Based on Sparky's submissions, they had determined he was not among the very finest.

Paul Harvey paused here in his broadcast. Then he said something that cuts to the bone: "I think deep down, Sparky expected to be rejected. He had always been a loser. And this was simply one more loss."

Here's where most motivational speakers would pivot to triumph. But he never

gave up! He showed them all! I'm not giving you that. Because the next part of the story isn't about winning. It's about what you do with your wounds.

After Disney rejected him, Sparky did something strange. He didn't try to prove them wrong. He didn't set out to become what they said he wasn't. He wrote his autobiography in cartoons.

He drew himself. The loser. The kid who failed everything. The boy no one cared enough to hate. The young man whose kite would never fly. He named this character after himself. Charlie Brown.

You know what Charlie Brown never does? Win. His kite crashes. Lucy pulls the football. The Little Red-Haired Girl doesn't notice him. He gets a rock.

And yet—Every year, for sixty years, families have gathered to watch. Not because Charlie Brown succeeds. Because Charlie Brown keeps showing up. Here's the rest of the story that even Paul Harvey didn't tell.

Charles Schulz was a devoted member of the Church of God in Minneapolis. He taught Sunday school. He read the Bible so constantly his strips are filled with scripture.

When Linus stands in that spotlight and recites Luke 2 in the Christmas special...

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night...”

—that wasn't a writer trying to be “religious.”

That was a believer who knew exactly what message he wanted at the center of his life's work. The Peanuts Christmas special almost didn't happen. Network executives wanted to cut the Linus scene. Too religious. Too preachy. Schulz refused. Either the Gospel stays, or there's no special.

It stayed.

Think about it. A boy called a horse. A student who failed everything. An artist rejected by Disney. A young man so invisible that no one bothered to dislike him. That man created the most beloved cartoon characters of the twentieth century.

And at the center of his most famous work—his Christmas special—he planted the Gospel of Luke. Millions of children have heard Linus recite those words. “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.” The loser became the messenger.

I don't know what you're failing at today. I don't know how many rejections you're carrying. I don't know if anyone cares enough about you to even dislike you.

But I know this: God has a history of using the rejected ones. Moses had a stutter. David was the forgotten son. Peter denied Christ three times. Paul murdered Christians.

And a boy they called a horse gave us Charlie Brown—a character who loses everything, tries again, and in his most famous moment, stands in bewildered wonder as Linus points him to the manger.

“That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.”

The kite never flew. But the Gospel did.

When you watch that bald kid fail again, remember: You're watching the autobiography of a loser.

A man who was rejected by everyone who mattered.

A believer who put Christ at the center anyway. And his wounds became a witness to sixty million homes.

Still falling? Good company, brother. Get up. He's not done with you yet

Read it: <https://open.substack.com/pub/biblicalman/p/the-boy-they-called-a-horse>

Check It Out: Books, Apps etc.

Please send in your recommendations of books, podcasts, apps or shows to:
contact@thewinepress.org

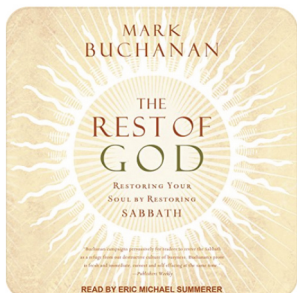


Books

Soul Rest: Reclaim Your Life

By Curtis Zachery

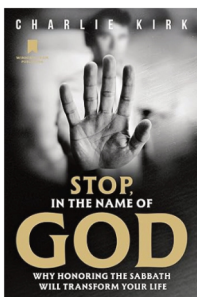
With so many responsibilities and distractions vying for our attention, too many of us have built unhealthy cycles of rest. As a result, we burn ourselves out, striving and straining against God's intent for our lives. We can only sustain a life of purpose if we learn to truly rest.



The Rest of God

By Mark Buchanan

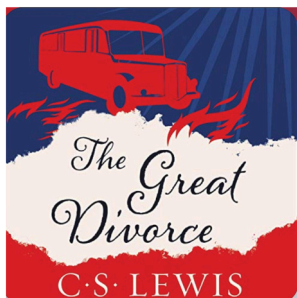
Stillness as a virtue is a foreign concept in our society, but there is wisdom in God's own rhythm of work and rest. Jesus practiced sabbath among those who had turned it into a dismal thing, and he reminded them of the day's true purpose: liberation - to heal, to feed, to rescue, to celebrate, to lavish and relish life abundant.



Stop in the Name of God

By Charlie Kirk

Discover how observing the Sabbath isn't a rejection of modern life but a rebellion against busyness and a pathway to genuine connection, peace, and presence. How to unplug, recharge, and reconnect with God, family, and yourself in a way that nurtures your soul.



The Great Divorce

By C.S. Lewis

In *The Great Divorce*, C.S. Lewis finds himself in Hell boarding a bus bound for Heaven. The amazing opportunity is that anyone who wants to stay in Heaven, can. Lewis's revolutionary idea is the discovery that the gates of Hell are locked from the inside. The Great Divorce will change the way we think about good and evil.

Speak O Lord

Song by Keith Getty / Stuart Townend

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of Your holy Word
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us
All Your purposes for Your glory
Teach us, Lord, full obedience
Holy reverence, true humility
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority
Words of pow'r that can never fail
Let their truth prevail over unbelief
Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity
And by grace, we'll stand on Your promises
And by faith, we'll walk as You walk with us
Speak, O Lord, 'til Your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory

