

R&R: Repentance and Rest

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"This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says:

"In repentance and rest is your salvation,
in quietness and trust is your strength...."

(Isaiah 30:15)

You've probably heard that God has a "still, small voice." Generally, He does not yell over the noise and busy-ness of life to make Himself heard. He waits for us to "be still and know that [He] is God," and then he speaks.

Unfortunately, it is very easy for life to get so busy that we rarely have time to be still at all! The needs of a family, a house to run, homeschooling, church activities, jobs, extra-curricular activities, babies, teenagers, the pace of life these days - on and on we run like a rat on a treadmill.

If you are the mother of little ones, you may be thinking "Ah, when the children get a little older, and babies aren't waking me up at night any longer, when they're a bit more independent, things will be simpler and I'll have a little more time to myself." Actually, that's not true. Life gets busier and more complicated as the children get older. They may not need you to feed them or change their diapers any more, but they will need you for a myriad other things. They also will need your time and attention to talk with them, listen to them, help and encourage them.

Perhaps you are the mother of teens, thinking life will get quieter when they all leave home. It probably won't. There will be weddings to plan and grandkids to welcome, and you'll probably be in demand in a whole host of new ways.

We need to face it - life is never going to just slow down on it's own - at least not any time in the foreseeable future. But if we want to really hear God, if we want to be truly transformed, then we MUST have time to be still and know Him! It is possible - but it will only happen with deliberate, decisive action on our part.

Over the last year, God has been calling me to do less. To pull back. To say no. To drop things. To let go of my huge expectations for what I could accomplish. To be still and know. To deliberately live life at a slower pace. And guess what? Nothing terrible happened! :-D The things I didn't do, the activities I didn't organise, the clothes I didn't sew, the groups I didn't actively run, the extra schoolwork I didn't plan.....well, the "wheel" didn't fall off on any of them! Things that needed to continue, did - without me (and perfectly well, I might add). The things that needed to be provided, were - in other ways.

And as a result I've been more.....

More relaxed, more rested, more peaceful, closer to God, more available to my husband and my kids, more able to hear the "still, small voice." :-)

Recently I was reading a book by Joni Eareckson Tada called "*The God I Love*." Joni (pronounced *Johnny*) has been a quadriplegic in a wheelchair since a diving accident in her teens. She is now about 60. She talks in the book about how her wheelchair is a gift - a gift that has brought her closer to God, that has caused her to be still and know Him. She quoted Isaiah 30:15, which is at the top of this email, and that verse has really stuck with me. To me, it so summarises exactly what we all need in the midst of these busy lives.....

"In *repentance* and *rest* is your salvation....."

"To repent" means to turn away from an old way of living, and to turn your heart and will towards God. We know that when we first come to God we need to repent of our sin, and turn to Him to be saved. We know that we need to regularly confess our sins and repent of them. But I think this verse goes a little further than that. Perhaps we need to turn away from the things in our lives that keep us so busy we don't have time to properly fulfil the purposes of God in our lives - to have fellowship with Him, to be a helper suitable to our husbands, to mother our children, to love others. All the extra things may not be wrong of themselves - many may even be "good," but too much of even good things can be bad! We need to deliberately say no to more. Deliberately cut back. Not just on extra activities, but on too-high expectations, on trying to cram in too much. Repent and rest.....there you will find salvation.

"...in *quietness* and *trust* is your strength."

When we turn away from too much and find rest, we will also find quietness. Stillness. Peace. As we wait quietly for Him, we will be able to develop our trust in God - trust that He will work all things together for good, trust that He will provide, trust that HE is ultimately responsible to make everything work out right - not YOU, trust that He who is faithful to begin a good work in you will carry it out to completion. How restful! And you will find strength - renewed strength for the tasks God has called you to, to face the complexities and struggles of life with grace and strength.

Jesus said "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matt 11: 28-30)

My friends, if you are weary and heavy laden, if you desire transformation in your life, if you want to HEAR God's voice, then I encourage you to sit down and consider all the things you do in your life, and see how many of them you can withdraw from for a season. Reduce life to the basics, turn away from excessive busy-ness and turn your whole self towards God. He's waiting right there for you!

Do you need a little R&R?

Love

Cynthia