

# Finding Rest in Weary Times

*God says, "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. (Isaiah 32)*

It is a common human experience to sometimes be tired. We get tired for many reasons. Sometimes because we work hard. We live with many demands and lots of stress in our daily lives. We get tired when circumstances seem too much for us. We get tired, also, when life is empty and there's no structure. Lack of meaningful activities brings a tiredness of soul as well. We feel exhausted when relationships don't go well. We tire when we try to make headway with various challenges and feel "stuck".

When we experience tiredness we must try to honestly ask ourselves, "Why am I tired and weary? What does God want to do about it?" Based on the answer to those questions we need to take appropriate action because God invites us to live in places of rest. In fact, God promises that those who follow Him will live in undisturbed places of rest.

***Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest .... Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matt. 11)***

***Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40)***

We're sometimes weary because we've been trying to solve life's problems alone. New energy comes when we step back and give God a chance to direct us. God sees more and knows more than we do. God wants to show us His will and plan so we can experience life as satisfying. Actions based in our own control issues leave us with an underlying sense of guilt, shame or dissatisfaction. That leads to a weariness and a feeling of being burdened down.

When I'm tired and weary for this reason God reaches out to me with tender care and loving attentiveness. God calls me to settle down and take a moment to remember He's with me. The God who died on the cross to forgive all my sin and rose from the dead in loving victory stands before me today affirming to us over and over again, "I have what you need. Come and learn from me. Receive love and strength from me right now. Ask me to direct you. I'll show you a good way to act in this moment so mercy and peace can fill you and surround you no matter the challenge before you."

***God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Cast all your anxiety on Him for He cares for you. (Psalm 46 & 1 Peter 5)***

People have many different reactions when they are tired or weary. Some get angry and argue. Others isolate. Some engage in unhealthy addictions. Complaining, self-pity and feeling sorry for ourselves increases the weariness, as does just telling ourselves how tired we are and how overwhelming everything is.

Some people overeat. Others put aside priorities and responsibilities and just go to sleep. God recognizes that times of weariness and tiredness will come to all of us. He has help for us and healthy responses we can use to deal with the weariness without causing harm.

***This is what the Lord says, "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. (Jeremiah 6)***

To find rest in weary times we actually have to turn away from our anxious thoughts, our stirred up anger, the paralyzing fear, or the frustrating confusion. We have to choose to look in the direction of our loving and kind Saviour and friend, Jesus, and acknowledge the invitation He's giving in that moment to enter into goodness. The rest-filled way of living is hinged on our willingness to turn from self-centered thoughts and emotions turn to a new focus on God's goodness generously poured out to us. To find rest we must affirm God is right here with us, personally interested, and ready to help. We must receive the power, love, and peace He's been providing all along. We must shift our attention from our need to His provision. As we do that, God will supply the refreshing strength that gives us peace and rest.

***Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. (Acts 3)***

Having an "attitude of gratitude" is another wonderful energizer. When we stop looking for God to act in the particular way we want Him to act and instead see what He is doing for us and around us, God will bring such security and rest to us that we will wonder why we never lived this way of rest before.

God's plan for us in the middle of a world of labour and challenge is to find rest. God promises that He will be with us "in the present moment" with help. As we choose God's way instead of complaining and giving up, we will find rest and solutions. The goodness of the with-God life will actually fill us when we set aside an anger, a harsh word, a worrying thought, or a personal I'll-fix-it-my-way plan, and consciously receive peace and help from God. God has sufficient power, comfort, and wisdom to offer us today. God wants us to enter into rest today. How will I respond?

## **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. In what ways am I weary today?
2. What would help me enter into God's rest?

- Admit that I need God and come to Him
- Trust that God's grace is enough for me
- Repent of whatever is keeping me from rest
- Pray and offer my life and situation to God. Hand over my burdens.
- Seek and follow God's guidance
- Receive strength and power from God
- Have an "attitude of gratitude"
- Speak to myself to find God's rest
- Make every effort to enter God's rest by not disobeying
- Make wise choices for what is good and then do it