

LIVING  
IT OUT



**DAILY  
BIBLE  
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Selah - Pause and Reflect

November 5, 2018

This Tuesday, I have a fairly major surgery scheduled. I am actually looking forward to it because the recovery will force me to sit still for a couple of weeks! How bad is that? I'm retired, for Pete's sake! There is something seriously wrong with this picture...just ask my husband who daily asks me for my schedule, then shaking his head asks, "Will you be home for dinner?"

How does this happen? Why do we cram just one more thing into already crazy schedules? Where does our relationship with God fit into all of this? Yesterday, as I finally acknowledged that trying to make a 7:30 am breakfast meeting was not going to be best for me, I texted my friend who graciously let me off my self-imposed hook. I thought to myself, it's such a relief to finally say, "I can't!" At that moment, when we finally decide to pause, God meets us where we sit! He waits for us, wanting our full attention! He says, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

This is the point of our new series, "Pause." God invites us to pause, and remember who he is. In his infinite wisdom, he created time, and then Jesus stepped into it showing us how to live. Jesus was never in a hurry. He got up early to spend time with his Father. He rested when he was tired, ate when he was hungry, wept when he was sad. I know he was never married or had kids to run here and there, but he did have a bunch of somewhat clueless guys who followed him around and multitudes of people who made demands on his time and resources. Yet he paused when, in a crowd of people, a woman touched him for healing. He stopped what he was doing and spoke to her. He paused to talk to a man up in a tree who was ostracized and isolated, and he spent time with him. He paused - suspended an action. He paused - took a hiatus in activity for a calculated purpose or temporary respite. It seems to me that in all his interactions and activities, he remembered that God was with him. He remembered why he had come, what his purpose was, and he did not let the tyranny of the urgent distract him.

What does that mean for us? Can we purposely pause and remember that God is also with us? There is a beautiful transitional word sometimes used in the psalms. It doesn't have an exact translation, but it is believed to mean "pause and reflect". The word is *selah*. As you read the psalms, so often the writers invite reflection on the events of their lives and their noticing the work of God within. This week, we encourage you to use *selah* in your lives to help you notice the

work and invitations God has for you. Take time to pause, remember, refocus, and maybe re-engage with the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. His gift is peace, a peace that is not of this world, a peace of mind and heart.

**Question:**

What do you do with the interruptions in your life? Are they a bother, a distraction, or an opportunity?

How does God's promise of peace make you feel? Anxious? Excited? Frustrated? Defeated? Why?

**Next Step:**

Evaluate your to-do list this week and see where you could create space to pause and reflect, to *selah*, opening your heart to the movement of the Holy Spirit. Meditate on his promise of peace.

**Prayer:**

*My Jesus, lover of my soul, I open my heart to your Holy Spirit, whom you sent to advocate, lead and encourage us. Show me where I can be more available to hearing and knowing you by being still!! Help me to love you through my obedience to your word. Give me the wisdom and courage to say "no" to the good, so I can say "yes" to your best. Amen.*

# You are Never Alone

November 6, 2018

Take a deep breath. In and out. And another deep breath. And finally, a third one. Sometimes, we need to make ourselves pause for a moment to gain clarity and reclaim our inner strength. Taking a pause allows us to reconnect with God and to give the Holy Spirit a chance to be our advocate.

A few months ago, I attended - as I do every year - the YMCA Women Adventure Wellness Camp. It is a very conscious choice to take a pause from my busy life of being a full-time working mom to two awesome girls (who are rapidly turning into two amazing young ladies). This was my third time attending the camp, and I knew visiting would be good for my soul. At the time, things were especially hectic at work due to some changes in leadership at the university where I'm employed. Some new faces on the team were putting considerable stress on everyone else, which created a challenging work environment. In addition to work, my daughters had kept me very busy at home (as is usual when one has two active daughters), and I also had a personal matter to deal with that caused me great sadness.

Where the camp is held, there are many fantastic facilities for all the awesome indoor and outdoor activities that you can do there (archery, kayaking, high-ropes course, horse riding, arts and crafts, and yoga, to name just a few). Although I did them all and much enjoyed them, this time around, I knew I needed something else. Something more. I needed to make a conscious choice to *pause*. There is an outdoor chapel on the vast grounds of the camp, which I had passed by in previous years but never considered investigating. This year, I knew that this was where I had to go to seek that moment to pause.

The chapel is surrounded by tall, majestic trees on three sides. Inside, are rows and rows of wooden benches and a wooden stage with a small podium-It weathered by the elements and simple but beautiful. I chose to go there on Sunday morning while everyone was still at breakfast. All alone, I sat down and prayed regarding that personal matter that had been weighing me down. As I prayed, tears streamed down my face. When I finished with praying, I paused. It had been wind-still the entire time. But the moment I finished my prayer, there was a sudden breeze that went through the trees around me. Just for a few seconds and then it was wind-still again. I knew at that moment that my prayer

had been heard and that I was not alone. It was a very special moment, and I felt an incredible inner peace. I felt reconnected with God.

### **John 14:16**

*In the spirit, you have an advocate who will never leave you.*

The Holy Spirit is always with us as he is inside of us if we have made a decision to follow Jesus. In him, we have an advocate who will never leave us. Someone who will bring our prayers to God as our advocate even when we cannot find the right words to express what is going on inside of us during prayer ([Romans 8:26-27](#)). It is important that we do take moments here and there to *pause*: to realize that we have an advocate and that we are not alone; to regain our inner peace and to let go; to let the Holy Spirit be our advocate; to surrender fully to the path that God has for us. I have carried this special moment at the outdoor chapel with me ever since. I know that God has his best plan for me. His plan is better than I could imagine. No matter what may happen, I will be okay if I pause and remember that I am not alone.

### **Questions:**

When was the last time that you took a moment to pause? If you did pause, how did that make you feel? If you have not taken a pause recently, what are the obstacles that prevent you from doing so?

### **Next Steps:**

Irrespective of how long ago your last moment of pause was, make a conscious plan to find a special place to do so today or sometime this week. Write down the results on the rest of your day.

What can you practically do this week that will help you remember to pause throughout your day? (Be Creative)

### **Prayer:**

*Dear father in heaven, thank you for providing me with opportunities to pause and connect with you. Thank you for letting the Holy Spirit within me be my advocate to you when words fail me. Please give me the wisdom to recognize opportunities to take a pause and the strength to let go and have faith in you. I know you are good and that you have a wonderful plan for me. Thank you for allowing me to pause once in a while. Amen.*

*This post was written by Cordula Mora, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.*

# GPS 10.0

November 7, 2018

Years ago, I used to have a Rand McNally road atlas. That was the GPS of my early years. That atlas had maps of every state, detailing the major highways and byways available for travel. I used it for directions for a long time as we traveled around the country. But there are some inherent problems with maps. First, you have to know where you are in order for the map to be any use at all. Second, not every road was on the map. Only those roads that the publisher thought were large enough or important enough were included. Finally, if you knew where you were and where you were going, there were at least 50 different routes available for you to get there! Using GPS these days in your car or on your phone is so much easier! It tells you where you are, it shows you where you want to go, and it maps out the best route to get there!! I would never go back to maps!!!

Sometimes, our spiritual journey seems like we are using maps. We want to rush forward to where we think we want to go. Unfortunately, we don't know where we are on the journey, and we don't have clarity about where we are headed. We need to pause and consult the GPS-for-life, which God has given us the Holy Spirit. When we become Christ-followers, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us.

## **John 14:16-17**

*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth.*

## **1 John 4:13**

*And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us.*

Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit will serve as a guide for us in the areas of truth and direction for our lives.

## **John 16:13-15**

*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'*

The Holy Spirit will help us to understand the truth of God's Word and how it relates to our relationship with God and to our life in this world. When we read, study, and understand God's Word and believe its truth, it equips us to face the ups and downs of our lives. It helps us to react to those events in a way more like Jesus would have us do. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand the map of our life by showing us where we are on the journey and helping us to follow the direction that God wants us to travel and then helps us to see the best pathway to make progress in that direction. We need to hit the pause button in our life from time to time, listen to the truth of God's Word, and allow the Holy Spirit to teach us how to live out that truth like Jesus did.

**Questions:**

What role does God's Word play in how you set the direction of your life?

When do you ask for the Holy Spirit to help you with understanding God's Word or God's direction for your life?

What events in your life need to be viewed through the lens of God's Word in order for you to react as Jesus would?

**Next Steps:**

Take time this week to read God's Word and ask the Holy Spirit to help you with your understanding and application of the truth.

Attend Growth Track and learn about the spiritual journey in more detail. This experience will help you know where you are on "the map" of your life's journey and provide help in understanding God's direction for your life.

**Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit in my life. Help me to pause and take time to read your Word and listen to the Holy Spirit as he seeks to help me understand. I pray that your truth would equip me to respond to the events in my life as Jesus would. In Jesus's name, I pray, Amen.*

# Fruit for the Soul

November 8, 2018

Several years ago, I went to lunch with two ladies I worked with. Somehow, the subject of religion came up. They believed there are many ways to heaven. I spoke up and told them what I believe – Jesus died on the cross for my sins, and God raised him from the dead on the third day and believing this is the only way to heaven. One of the ladies thought this was a very judgmental viewpoint and that Christians are self-righteous. I remember laughing and saying, "I don't think I am better than anyone else, but the truth is, I need Jesus to behave myself because I am a mess without him." I remember all of us laughing and feeling everyone instantly relax. Then, I remember thanking the Holy Spirit for working through me.

God has changed me through his Holy Spirit so much since I first believed, but I can honestly say the most significant changes have come in the last five years. Please, don't get me wrong - I struggle with sin every day. But guess what? God has blessed all believers with his Holy Spirit and with the fruit of his Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This is what has made the difference!

When I am stressed, hurt, angry, hungry (or hangry, as my family says), I have learned to pause, cry out to Jesus, and ask for help. As a new Christian, I would *react* instead of *pausing*. I would *try* to fix and manage instead of *trusting*. I would make a mess out of everything. I would lose my peace immediately. People would look at me like I was crazy. I would feel like I was a failure and experience so much self-loathing. I learned that I had to take time every morning to spend in his Word, meditating on it, praying, listening, and I had to pause. This weekend Ben defined a pause as a temporary interruption in order to redirect my attention and **the power in the pause is remembering THE ONE who is there WITH ME.**

If I wanted Jesus to work through me and demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit to others, I had to change the way I reacted to stressful situations. I learned to pause and take a deep breath. I learned to prepare my heart and mind to lean on God when difficulties came. I choose daily to make Jesus the Lord of my life. I repent for the times that I put other things before him. I choose to trust God and place my mind on the spirit which leads to life and peace.

## **Galatians 5:22-23**

*But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

I was so excited to have an opportunity to write on the fruits of the Spirit. I recently completed Beth Moore's: *Living Beyond Yourself and Exploring the Fruit of the Spirit*. This study helped me really understand the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus exemplified love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. I am so grateful that the closer I grow to Jesus, the more fruits of the Spirit he instills in my life. I can honestly say, I have more peace and joy in my life now no matter what is going on.

### **Questions:**

Which fruit of the Spirit do you need the most help with?

Do you believe God can not only *save* you but *transform* you? How can you prepare yourself to let the Holy Spirit work through you?

### **Next Steps:**

Really study the fruit of the Spirit. Imagine how the Holy Spirit can transform you. Write out a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to change you by teaching you how to pause and lean on him. Make a plan to pause when things go wrong. Stop and focus on Jesus instead of the situation, asking him to fill you with his peace.

### **Prayer:**

*Jesus, you are amazing! Please transform me to be more and more like you. Help me to love others as you have loved me. Give me peace and joy no matter what my circumstances are. Give me the patience to deal with difficult circumstances. Help me to always treat others with kindness and gentleness. Let your goodness and faithfulness shine through me. Please give me self-control in all situations. I love you so much, and I thank you for your Holy Spirit in me and for the fruit of your Spirit. Amen.*

*This post was written by Marsha Raymond, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.*

# The Choice is Yours...

November 9, 2018

When I retired in July, I decided I would start cycling again. After all, I loved riding my bike as a child, and when my kids were young, it provided great enjoyment to the entire family when we rode together. I had not ridden in almost 20 years, yet I was able to get on the bike and start riding without even a thought. I was able to do so because of a wonderful thing called *muscle memory*. What is muscle memory? According to the dictionary, the definition of muscle memory is “the ability to reproduce a particular movement without conscious thought, acquired as a result of frequent repetition of that movement.” The term is actually a bit of a misnomer because even though riding a bike does involve certain muscles, the process of learning this skill actually occurs in the brain.

## **Romans 8:6**

*“So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.*

In this passage, the “sinful nature” is referring to anything that is not done in reliance on God. Trying ourselves, instead of trusting God, leads to spiritual and eternal death. In stark contrast, when the Spirit is in control, we are alive with the beauty of the Spirit and thus open to a life that is full and peaceful.

Although we are Christ-followers, we still have leftovers in our minds from our sinful nature, which are a little bit like muscle memory. At some point, we believed a lie that was deep-seated in our brain. For example, the sinful habit of controlling. I once thought that it was all up to me. If I didn’t stay in charge, no one would be in charge, not even God. When controlling thoughts surface from my subconscious, I need to PAUSE and remember that the **POWER** in the pause is remembering the one who is with me all the time. I need to allow who God is to interrupt my thoughts.

## **Romans 7:24-25**

*<sup>24</sup> Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? <sup>25</sup> Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind, I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.*

What we set our minds on is not determined by intelligence or logic, but nevertheless, our choice will determine the direction our life will take - whether we choose life or death, blessings or curses. To set the right direction, we need our minds to be renewed by Christ's salvation--to replace our spiritual muscle memory with the Holy Spirit whenever we are lead astray by sin to prepare us for the day we come face-to-face with Christ.

### **Deuteronomy 30:19-20**

<sup>19</sup> *"Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life so that you and your descendants might live!"* <sup>20</sup> *You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This[a] is the key to your life.*

### **Questions:**

Is your mind set on death or on life and peace?

Are you living in peace? Peace with God? Peace with your loved ones and your neighbors? Peace with yourself?

### **Next Steps:**

This week, make a conscious effort to set your mind on the Spirit. Start your days by coming to the Lord in prayer and in the Word before you are distracted by worldly things.

Take time to write scriptures on an index card. Read those verses while you are shaving, putting on makeup, or brushing your teeth. As you go through your day, write down things that draw you closer to God. Send a text to someone telling them how glad you are that God is the center of your life.

### **Prayer:**

*Dear Heavenly Father, grant me the wisdom to know the **power** of the pause. Thank you for the gift of Christ's salvation that has taken my sin from me. Keep me ever mindful and looking toward eternal life. Help me to understand that good intentions are never good enough--I need to see and do things as Christ would. Keep my mind sound so that I may experience life and peace. In Christ's name, I pray, Amen.*

*This post was written by Jenn Macke, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.*