

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

A Missing Key to Being Your Best

November 26, 2018

Recently, *Popular Mechanics* celebrated their 110th year of existence by publishing 110 predictions for the next 110 years. It is fascinating to see how people dream about the future. Lists like these are always full of predictions of amazing new inventions that will save us time by making our lives more manageable and less stressful.

This particular list predicts that in the next 110 years, our clothes will clean themselves. Imagine that! What could be done with all this freed-up time?

The reality is that no matter what new invention, plan, or idea is introduced into our lives, we will still find a way to fill our schedules. Most of us are really good at finding ways to fill every hour, every evening, and every weekend with something to do. Important or not, we make it a priority to be doing something all the time.

From the very beginning, God knew this about us. In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, we read about God creating the universe and everything in it. After each day of creation, God said, "It is good.". At the end of the sixth day when people were created, he said, "It is very good.".

Genesis 1:31

³¹ Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

The story of creation does not end at day six though. There is a seventh day in Genesis' account of creation. It is on that day that we see God rest. Not because he needed to, but because he knew the importance of rest in our lives and chose to model it for us.

Genesis 2: 1-3

¹ So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. ² On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

Generations after the creation story, we find another story in the Bible where God again elevates the importance of rest. The nation of Israel had been

enslaved by Egypt for 400 years. They worked day after day, enduring harsh conditions with little rest. But after 400 years, God worked and moved, and he led his people out of Egypt. They were no longer physically enslaved. However, being slaves is all they knew how to do. They needed to find freedom from their mindset of slavery. They needed to learn how to be free.

Their mindset was to work, work, work with little or no rest. But God's plan that he modeled for us in the creation story was for us to work and rest. This is why we see rest as part of the 10 commandments in Exodus.

Exodus 20:8-10a

⁸ Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ You have six days each week for your ordinary work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work..."

At your campus this weekend, your speaker shared this bottom line truth with you: **To be your BEST, pause and REST.**

I think deep down, we all believe this to be true, but for whatever reason, we keep going through life tired and exhausted. Knowing we are not at our best, but hoping it is good enough.

God knew the importance of rest, and that is why we see him both model it and command it. We hope that you will take a step in the area of rest and that you will evaluate the importance of it in your life.

Over the next four days, we will cover the R.E.S.T. acronym from this past weekend's service. As you learn how to apply it in your life, we believe you will learn to pause and rest so that you can be your best.

Questions:

What keeps you from rest? How have you seen the negative consequences of lack of rest in your life? How would your life be different if you were rested?

Next Steps:

Commit to making rest a priority in your week. Begin planning out your weeks with a day of rest included. Complete this week's LivingItOut and apply R.E.S.T. to your week.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you so much for caring so much about my well-being that you command me to rest so that I may be at my best for you and for those whom I love. Thank you for showing us what rest should look like and giving us opportunities to incorporate rest into our schedule. Amen.

This post was written by Ben Bockert, a regular contributor to and editor of the LivingItOut Bible Study.

Letting Go of Control

November 27, 2018

Today, we begin to look at the R.E.S.T. acronym from this past weekend's message. The "R" in R.E.S.T stands for "Release," which means to let go of what you can control.

Anyone who has ever attended a 12-Step Meeting will be able to identify the beginning of this prayer:

*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.*

It is commonly known as the Serenity Prayer. This portion is recited at the beginning of each gathering by millions of addicts, their friends, and families in thousands of meetings all over the world every week. But most people have never heard the second part of the of the prayer, as written by author Reinhold Neibuhr:

*Living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
trusting that He will make all things right*

*if I surrender to His Will; (my emphasis)
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
forever in the next.
Amen.*

Every phrase of this prayer suggests releasing our concerns to God, trusting him to affect his will in our lives. It reaffirms that he loves us, wants the best for us, and is on our side both now and in the future.

If anyone had good reason to question God's plans for him, it was David, the second king of Israel. The prophet Samuel anointed David at a very young age as the next king of Israel. Yet, for the next 15 years, not only was David NOT the king of Israel, but he was pursued for a long time as a fugitive by King Saul. Saul was determined to have his son Jonathan follow him on Israel's throne. David, on the other hand, decided to release what he could have changed by force to God, in whom he had placed his trust. This is what he sang on the day the Lord rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul:

Psalm 18:1-2

¹ I love you, Lord;

you are my strength.

² The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;

my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.

He is my shield, the power that saves me,

and my place of safety.

What does it mean that God is our strength, our rock, our fortress, and our savior? I believe it means we can trust him with all things - those things we 'think' we can control as well as those we know we cannot.

What does that look like today? What do we think we can control? Work, cell phone usage, emails, texts, chores, other people?

When you take a day off from work, you are trusting that God can provide more in 6 days than you can provide on your own in 7 days.

Studies show that it is important to take a day off and to build rest/breaks in our daily schedules. A study by the University of Illinois had these findings:

1. Adequate rest add years to your life.
2. You focus better at work when you take time off work weekly.
3. Completely withdrawing from work regularly reduces the likelihood of heart disease.

Not only that, but a Sabbath rest is one of the Big 10 (commandments):

Exodus 20:9-10

⁹ You have six days each week for your ordinary work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you.

Will you release your schedule and trust God at his word as David did? One way to find out!

Questions:

Do you make resting and taking time off a priority in your life? How do you feel during and after those intentional days off or rests? How can you incorporate a Sabbath rest into your schedule?

Next Steps:

List your top 10 priorities from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important). Now be honest and assess how much time you give to each. Check whether your time allocation matches the level of priority. Commit to working regular rests into your schedule. Give yourself a break!

Prayer:

Father, thank you so much for your love for me! Thank you for your good plans for me. Thank you for working all things that happen in my life together for my good and according to your will. Help me to trust you so that I can let go of things that keep me from you. I trust that you are enough. Amen.

This post was written by Lauri White, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

Come and Spend Some Time with Me

November 28, 2018

This week we are talking about how we can meaningfully spend our time when we pause and rest. Each day, we have been looking at a specific action that is part of the R.E.S.T. acronym, which the pastors at each campus had shared with us this weekend.

Today, we are looking at the action step for "E," which is "Engage Relationally." When we talk about engaging relationally with others, this refers to spending time with people that need our best. Time with our family and our friends - and not just sitting near one another while we are each engaged with our electronic device of choice. Spending meaningful time with those whom we love should come easily, one would think, because we all, of course, want to do this. But our lives are typically so busy that making time for this is often the first thing to fall off our to-do list.

I grew up with two younger siblings, and my mother was a divorced, full-time working mother. Now that I am an adult, I can appreciate that life would not have been easy for her. Working full-time meant the time she was able to spend with us was limited to the evenings after work and weekends. But despite those circumstances, my childhood was blessed with all of us making many special memories together because my mother chose to use the time she had with us in meaningful ways.

One of my fondest memories is baking Christmas cookies together during the Advent time leading up to Christmas. Baking Christmas cookies or *Weihnachtskekse* is a big tradition in Germany. We would typically make at least 10 to 15 different types, each absolutely unique in its ingredients and therefore, very different in taste from one another. We kids were tasked with some of the more boring jobs like blanching and peeling the almonds and grinding the almonds and other nuts through an old-fashioned, hand-cranked grinder. But, if we did our job well, we also got to roll out the dough and cut out the cookies. The best part was, of course, the glazing and decorating. During all of this, we would chat and sing Christmas songs - and make great memories.

Proverbs 27:9 The Message (MSG)

Just as lotions and fragrance give sensual delight, a sweet friendship refreshes the soul.

Spending time with loved ones refreshes our soul. So as an adult, I can now see that for my mother, it was also a way to rest from the busyness of her life. Us spending time together like this was surely no accident. It was something she had to plan and prepare for. Something where she had to choose to give her best to us when we were with her, even though she surely would have been tired after a full day of work. But having experienced the same kind of blessing with my kids, I understand now that consciously and conscientiously making the time to *pause and rest* by doing activities with my kids actually leaves my soul refreshed and rejuvenated.

Questions:

When was the last time that you consciously made plans to spend time with your family or friends? How did you feel afterward? How could you incorporate "rest time" with your family into your schedule? What are your favorite activities to do with your family or friends?

Next Steps:

Make a list of your family and closest friends. Plan one activity with each of them in the coming months. Put the activities in your calendar so that this time is reserved for you to pause and rest with them. Write down the memories you made with them and how that time made you feel.

Prayer:

Dear father in heaven, thank you for my family and friends. Spending time with them gives me time to rest from the busyness of life and to refresh my soul. Thank you for placing them in my life and for providing me with opportunities to make precious memories with them. Amen.

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

Savor the Moment

November 29, 2018

A few years ago, a friend told me about the book *My One Word* by Mike Ashcroft and Rachel Olsen. The premise of the book is that you pick one word and focus on that one word for an entire year. The hope is that God will change you based on what you learned from the word you chose. My life group decided that we would do this, and I immediately knew what my word would be: SAVOR. I wanted to learn to *savor* every moment of my life, and not be too busy or focused on perfection that I missed the joy Jesus died to give me. The meaning of the word savor is “to taste and enjoy completely or to delight in.”

Psalm 34:8

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts him.

I love the word savor. I imagine eating a large piece of carrot cake, with thick layers of gooey, sweet cream cheese frosting. Taking small bites and enjoying each morsel. I have never understood how someone could gulp down a dessert. As I have gotten older, I have learned to savor something much more important than cake; I *savor* each moment and blessing God has given me. I've made some major changes in life to be able to delight in every moment really.

Psalm 37:4

Delight yourself in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

I've had to slow down and stop rushing. I've had to give up *good* things to focus on much *better* things. I've really had to prioritize what is important in my life and to do a lot of praying. A year ago, I got a wonderful new job. I had a few concerns at first. For starters, I would have to be at my job earlier than I was used to because the drive was further than my previous job, but yet I wanted to have enough time for my morning quiet time with Jesus. I made the tough decision to get up at 5:00 am every morning (and not allow myself to hit snooze) in order to exercise, have quiet time, and eat a healthy breakfast. I have to be at work by 7:55 am, but I leave plenty early, so I don't have to rush or worry about traffic. I feel such peace when I drive to work because I give myself plenty of margin on workdays. I am not in a hurry. I usually listen to Christian music or pray while I am driving. I arrive at work full of peace, and that makes my day go so much better. I am much kinder to my co-workers and my patients. I have found I must

go to sleep earlier, and I've had to give up some of the activities I used to do in the evening.

Next to God, the most important people in my life are my family and friends. I make time daily for them. I am more concerned about the time I spend with my loved ones than everything being perfect. I am overjoyed right now because my daughters will be visiting for Thanksgiving. I am *overjoyed*. I am not going to worry about the silly stuff... I am going to treasure my time with them and thank God for this blessing. I am not going to focus on how quickly the time will go, or how much I will miss them when they are gone. I am going to be so grateful they got to come home. I know all of our lives would be so much fuller if we just paused and savored the important stuff!

Ecclesiastes 6:9

⁹ Enjoy what you have rather than desiring what you don't have. Just dreaming about nice things is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

Questions:

What can you do to slow down and stop hurrying? What blessing are you missing because you are so distracted by busyness? What do you need to give up in your life to focus on what is really important to God and you?

Next Steps:

Make a list of the priorities in your life. Study your calendar carefully. Make a list of what you need to cut out of your schedule. Schedule times of rest in your calendar. Give yourself some margin.

Prayer:

Jesus, I am so grateful for all the blessings you give me. Forgive me when I am too busy to notice or to be grateful for all you have done for me. Help me to focus on what is really important in my life: *YOU*. Help me to take delight in you, my precious Father. Thank you for coming to this world so I may live life to the full. Amen.

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

Rest and Trust

November 30, 2018

Yesterday's LIO was about savoring every moment we are graced with instead of rushing around from one "must do" to the next. But who are you trusting to get you through each day? Does getting across the deep ravines in your life depend upon you and your abilities alone? Or perhaps on other human beings with good intentions, but who are also flawed and imperfect, like we all are? Thankfully, there is a superior, better alternative.

In **Matthew 11:28-30** Jesus promises:

²⁸ Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

In other words, now is the right time to put down your heavy burden and entrust it to Christ. Let the creator of the universe, who loves you perfectly, carry your load. You may be thinking, "But I don't know him. How can I trust God?"

When trying to share my faith with my much younger brother, I said to him, "If our house was on fire, do you know without a doubt I would come in and rescue you?". He answered, "I sure do." So I asked him, "Why? It's never happened so how do you know?". To which he replied, "Because you always rescue me." I am sure I have since failed him a thousand times, but in God's case, it is the irrefutable truth that we can trust him with everything.

In **Hebrews 13:5**, it states we have no need to rush about seeking for wealth, safety, or power because, "...for He has said, "I WILL NEVER [under any circumstances] DESERT YOU [nor give you up nor leave you without support, nor will I in any degree leave you helpless], NOR WILL I FORSAKE OR LET YOU DOWN OR RELAX MY HOLD ON YOU [assuredly not]!" -Amplified Bible (AMP).

We should trust God because he is worthy of our trust. Trust in the all-wise, all-knowing, all-powerful, gracious, merciful, loving God, who saves us and gives us not only life here on Earth full of deep meaning and purpose but also everlasting life with him thereafter.

Today's pause revolves around trusting God. So make the decision to get to know God by intentionally spending time in his Holy Word, his love letter to humanity. Do it before any other activity of your day every day. Pause to take time to learn who he is and how much he loves you. Pause to learn your best life begins when your will and your way, the path you walk every day, is determined by your trust in and will to follow and obey God. The only way to know God is to seek him daily in his unerring Word, the Bible. If you do this, you will find him there waiting and willing to carry the burdens of your life for you while you walk in his ways and share the Good News of his love for all of us.

Questions:

Are you sick and tired of being sick, tired, and defeated by life? Are you ready to seek the truth and embrace God's love for you?

Next Steps:

Talk with your campus team, group leader, Celebrate Recovery leader, or check out Week One of Growth Track to learn more about having a personal, forever relationship with the one true God. It will change your life in ways for the better you cannot begin to imagine.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for loving us so much that you paid the price of our sins through the suffering, death, and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for giving us a brand new life and eternity with you. Thank you for freeing us from sin's grip and destruction. Lord, please help us to put our relationship with you at the center of our lives where you belong and want to be in order to guide and guard us against temptation and sin. In Jesus's name, we pray. Amen.

This post was written by Martha Preckler, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.