

LIVING  
IT OUT



**DAILY  
BIBLE  
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Be Your Best

July 27, 2020

This past February, my wife asked me if I thought we should enroll our oldest daughter in another activity. As I began to contemplate her questions, I felt tension about how to answer her. On the one hand, I want to give my daughter great opportunities to learn new things and possibly discover something that will become her passion. On the other hand, I felt the pull to slow down and create space for us to be home as a family. And to be honest, I was exhausted from always having to be somewhere. I needed rest!!!

In the end, my wife and I never really had to decide whether or not to sign her up for that next activity. We didn't have to choose because COVID-19 arrived, and along with it came plenty of opportunities to be home.

Through this season of being home, many have found blessings in our new routines. Families have been forced to slow down, allowing them to be together. For the first time in a long time, many families share meals, take walks, and have meaningful conversations. Individually, we have had time to do the things that we have been putting off. Garages are being organized, home repairs are being completed, Bibles are being read, people are getting in shape, and many are trying to better themselves in one way or another.

Probably the biggest blessing has been that all of the activity and busyness has been stripped away. We have reconnected with what matters. This slowdown in our schedules, and new understanding about what is important, has been a great step toward gaining the rest many of us need. But to truly experience rest, it takes more than slowing down our lives.

This weekend, Whitehouse Campus Pastor Shawn Bellner shared that if we want to find rest, we need to “let go.” We need to surrender our schedules, our work, our families, and our lives to God. It is only then that we will truly find rest.

Over the next four days, the LivingItOut will focus on what it means to let go and trust God. Having rest in your life is possible. And it is important because **when you find rest, you will be at your best.** You will be able to show up at your work, in your homes, and in your communities ready to make a difference in the lives of those closest to you.

## **Matthew 11:28**

*Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."*

### **Questions:**

On a scale of 1 to 10, how rested do you feel? Why?

How does your schedule this summer compare to last summer?

What has slowing down, revealed or taught you about life?

### **Next Steps:**

Commit to reading the next four days of the LivingItOut.

Begin praying about the areas in your life that you need to surrender to God.

Memorize [Matthew 11:28](#) and [Psalm 46:10](#).

### **Prayer:**

*Dear Heavenly Father, you are all that I need. When I am tired, I can find rest in you. Help me this week to identify areas that I am holding onto and need to surrender. You are trustworthy and able to carry anything that I lay at your feet. I praise your powerful and holy name. Amen.*

*This post was written by Ben Bockert, the Director of the LivingItOut.*

# Peace During the Storm

July 28, 2020

The dictionary has more than 14 definitions for “rest,” ranging from the rest of sleep, which can be a noun or a verb, to a break in musical notation. While there are many definitions of rest, they all have one thing in common—cessation from something.

We as Americans hate the idea of rest. We fill our days with as much as we can and then work into the nights. Weekends are for catching up on everything we couldn't cram into the previous five days. We cannot step away from our digital devices because something might happen that needs our attention. We go to sleep with our phones by our beds because “they are our alarm clocks,” but in reality, we need the security that they provide us. Busy is comfortable, rest is not. I'm not sure if Jesus would have a smartphone today if he were walking among us, but I do know that it would not be parked beside his head at night.

During the weekend message, Whitehouse Campus Pastor Shawn Bellner gave us a picture of true rest. Jesus was not afraid of work. He spent much of his life traveling the countryside teaching and ministering to the needs of the masses. Every time he tried to get away, people found him and wanted something from him, and he helped them. So when Jesus and his disciples finally escaped into the solitude of the Sea of Galilee, he fell fast asleep. While Jesus slept, a fierce storm arose and his disciples feared for their lives.

## [Mark 4:37-38](#)

*<sup>37</sup> But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water. <sup>38</sup> Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, “Teacher, don't you care that we're going to drown?”*

Jesus had such peace and trust in God that he was able to fully rest in the midst of a raging storm. When the disciples finally woke him, he commanded the storm to quiet and also quieted their hearts.

## [Mark 4:39-40](#)

*<sup>39</sup> When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Silence! Be still!” Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> Then he asked them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”*

Jesus asks us the same thing. “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” When the storms rage in our lives, where do we turn? Do we turn to Christ in faith and rest, or do we scramble to the nearest screen to see what the Google gods have for us today? Do you allow the chaos of our hyperconnected world to set the pace for your life, or can you step back and unplug? Can you make it through a whole day without checking your email or social media? The term Sabbath has connotations of strict absence from all things fun, but it still holds value for us today. God commanded his people to take a literal Sabbath. It wasn’t because he wanted to burden them with more rules, it was so that they, and we, could learn to rest and trust. When we set aside time to rest, we are telling God that we trust him to meet our every need. Our time is precious, and by resting we demonstrate our complete dependence on God.

**Questions:**

How do you find rest? How much time do you allow yourself to unplug from the world around you and trust that God will take care of you? When you feel anxious, where do you turn first? Technology or prayer?

**Next Steps:**

Take a technology Sabbath. Choose a day and don’t check your email or social media. Make it a habit. If you find yourself mindlessly scrolling, turn off your screen and go outside. Breathe. Look around, and listen to the signs of life God has placed in your world.

**Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, thank you for inviting us into your rest. Thank you for the example of Jesus resting in perfect peace while the storm raged around him. Help us set aside our distractions and find true rest in you. Give us the strength and courage to step back from the frenzied pace of culture and find our peace in you. Amen.*

# Acknowledge Who God is and What He Can Do

July 29, 2020

This past weekend, Whitehouse Campus Pastor Shawn Bellner discussed that “To Be Your Best, You Need To Rest.” Rest is found in the presence of God, not the absence of the storm.

Life can feel like the moving steps of an escalator going down when you are trying to achieve an upward step in your life. Always striving to reach your goal but never getting anywhere, running ourselves down physically and mentally.

In Psalm 46:10, we are called to be still and know that he is God. God calls us to cease our panic and know him intimately. When we are still, we begin to know and experience the power of God.

It’s easy to be fearful when things aren’t going well or when we are faced with challenges and conflict in our lives.

## [Matthew 11:28](#)

*Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”*

Sometimes we just need to open our eyes, step back, stop what we’re doing, and acknowledge who God is and what he can do. This helps to provide comfort and peace in the middle of our struggles.

## [Psalm 46:1 \(NIV\)](#)

*“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”*

He is our refuge from the storms of life and our shelter in the midst of our suffering. His purpose will never fail, and he will be glorified throughout the whole earth.

We are to rest in the knowledge that he is our faithful God and supreme creator of all. Our LORD is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounds in loving kindness. He is omniscient (all-knowing), omnipresent (present everywhere), omnipotent (all-powerful), holy, sovereign, faithful, infinite, and good.

The more we understand God who God is and his character, the more we will grow in the area of trusting him. When we surrender ourselves to God, we will find peace even when our life seems overwhelming and out of control. Hope will always sustain us in our darkest hour.

### **Romans 15:13**

*"I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."*

### **Questions:**

What does it look like to be still? Are we capable of being still? Has COVID-19 helped us relearn how to slow down? At what times do you feel most separated from God? How does acknowledging God impact our stillness?

### **Next Steps:**

Today if you are feeling the stress bearing down on you, it is time for you to find your rest in Christ. Ask God to help you stand on his strength. Pray and ask him to come into your life today.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we praise you that your word stands fast forever and that your precious promises encourage us to rest in your love. We pray that your name be exalted throughout the earth and that all the nations will KNOW that you are God. This we ask in the name of Jesus, amen.

# Be Still

July 30, 2020

During the weekend message Whitehouse Campus Pastor Shawn Bellner said that our stress may be an indication of where we trust God the least. Nowhere is that more evident, I believe, than in our refusal to rest. The statistics Shawn presented were pretty shocking! Americans take less vacation time than at any point over the last 40 yrs, and according to Glassdoor, 61% of employees work during vacation.

Those of us as old as I may remember a real concern some 50 years ago when we were told all the “time-saving inventions” were going to reduce our work week to 15-20 hours—what were we going to do with all our leisure time? Pretty funny, right? All that our modern conveniences have provided us with is the opportunity to work and/or be available 24/7. Addicted to stress, we cannot stop checking our phones, our emails, our social media pages for the next crisis, whether it has anything to do with us or not!

This is not now, nor was it ever, the will of our Father in heaven! He who spoke the universe into existence, set aside a day following his creations to rest and enjoy what he had made. But we refuse that opportunity, and if we drill down into why we just won't rest, I believe the reasons make us uncomfortable.

Maybe one of the top reasons is, “If I don't seem as frantically busy as everyone else, that might mean I am less valuable or less needed than they are.” Another might be, “Well if I don't do it, no one will!” (One of my personal faves!) An addendum to that one is, “Well, they might do it, but it won't be done the way I would do it.” (Which of course is the better, if not the absolute right way!) And another might be, “I'm going so fast, I don't know what I could possibly let go of, even though I'm not sure what I'm doing with any of them!”

Jesus says:

## [Matthew 11:28-29](#)

*<sup>28</sup> ... “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> 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. For my yoke is easy to bear and my burden is light.”*

He asks us to trust him with the weight that we carry. He wants to walk beside us and share in our burdens. We matter to him because we are created individually as God's children in his image.

We must not derive our personal value from what the world says about us, or about what we spend our time doing in obedience to God's call on our lives. He asks us to *be still, and know that he is God* (Psalm 46:10). He tells us to give all our worries and cares to him—*because he cares for us* ([1 Peter 5:7](#)). Let us turn to him, be still, and trust him.

*Remember, to be at your best, you need to rest!*

### **Questions:**

Can you identify areas of your life in which you are not trusting God? How can you make time to be still and hand those areas over to the God of the universe?

### **Next Steps:**

Write down the three things that stress you the most. Spend some time thinking about what you can do about them. Write down the steps you can take to resolve them. Pray and ask God to help you create a plan and put it into action. Share with friends or family how you will implement your plan and ask them to help you. Trust that Jesus will share your burden and give you rest.

### **Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, I know it is not your plan for me to be stressed out and anxious. You say I should be anxious for nothing, but some days, maybe most days, I am. Teach me to be still in your presence. Help me to feel your peace wash over me. Show me how to trust that you love me and you have my back. Let me rest in the confidence that you work all things together for the good of those who love you and are called according to your purpose, even though I cannot see how that could possibly ever happen. I choose to trust you. In Jesus' name, amen.*

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

# Large and in Charge

July 31, 2020

In 1992, a friend told me, “I look at it this way ... someone has to be in charge, so why not me?”

My internal response was, “Great thought, I should do that. I’m smart and motivated.” Add that to my people-pleaser habit, and you have a controlling adult. I will gleefully take charge in any situation then constantly worry that if something doesn’t turn out right under my watch, people will dislike or judge me. Their negativity becomes my fault. My failure.

I have learned that is a lie. There are things I cannot influence, manipulate, or change to save myself or others from pain, fear, and failure. It is actually a good thing when we come to the end of ourselves. At that moment, great weight can be lifted from us if we give our troubles to *the one* whose pure motives and power surpass all others. His name is Jesus Christ, *our Savior*.

Referencing [Mark 4:35-41](#), Whitehouse Campus Pastor Shawn Bellner explained we aren’t alone with this need for control to prevent fear. Even the disciples who were in the presence of Jesus for three years struggled. When a fierce storm battered their boat in the Sea of Galilee while Jesus slept in the stern, they were terrified! It was out of their control, and they were sure they would die.

Had Jesus not taught and demonstrated to them, repeatedly, that nothing was above his authority? Yet there they were, yelling at the Son of God to wake up and save them. Did he lecture them about how faithless they were? No. In one sentence, he calmed them *and* the storm, “Silence! Be still!” ([Mark 4:39](#)). Then as a means of clarification for his little band of believers he asked them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” ([Mark 4:40](#)).

What a wakeup call! Do you need a wakeup call?

Don’t let your need to control circumstances and people place you in a mindset of fear. The Creator of the Universe holds your life, now and forever, in his hands. Stop leaning on your own understanding. Instead, “Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world.’ The Lord of Heaven’s Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress” ([Psalm 46:10-11](#)).

To be our best, we need rest and peace, *not control*. Jesus put it this way:

### **Matthew 11:28-30**

<sup>28</sup> ... *“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRetFyXS5dc>

### **Questions:**

Look at your behavior honestly and ask, “Am I playing God in my life and/or the lives of others?”

How is that working for you?

### **Next Steps:**

Ask God to forgive you for trying to take his place of authority in your life and the lives of others.

Grow your faith by putting time with God first every day. The discipline is life changing.

Go to the CedarCreek.tv/groups page and join a Bible study group or a service group and grow your understanding that our true work is to serve. God’s work is to love, guide, and go with us through it all.

### **Prayer:**

*Dear Lord, thank you for forgiving and saving me from the wages of sin. Please help me to draw nearer to you and to stop trying to be the master of my destiny. Teach me that you are the way, the truth, and the life, and the one who calls me to be together forever with you through the work of my savior, Jesus Christ. In his name, I bring this prayer to you. Amen.*

*This post was written by Martha Smith, a regular contributor and editor of the LivingItOut.*