

Health and Healing

Rest and Restoration

Lesson #7 for May 15, 2010

Scriptures: Genesis 2:15; Exodus 20:8-11; 23:12; Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 2:27; 6:30-32.

1. This lesson focuses on the rest and restoration which comes from a correct and balanced approach to work and exercise followed by physical, mental, social, and spiritual rest. What do all of those things mean?
2. It has been demonstrated scientifically on many occasions that to work efficiently, human beings need a balance of work/exercise and rest. When we overwork, we lose our efficiency. What is the best kind of exercise? Ellen White suggested that one of the best kinds of exercise is gardening. Is gardening better than walking on a treadmill or walking outside over the hills? Research has shown that exercise should be enjoyable, or not all the benefits of exercise are received.
3. If rest is an essential part of God's plan for our daily and weekly schedules, is it a sin not to rest?
4. Scriptures plainly state that at the end of creation week, God rested. (Genesis 2:2) What does that mean? We know that God was not tired! So, that rest could not have been primarily physical rest. Was it emotional, social, or spiritual rest? What happened on that first Sabbath? The Sabbath celebration which followed creation week apparently constituted His "rest." Try to imagine what the universe looking on thought as they watched.
5. It is apparently God's plan that we engage in useful productive work and exercise followed by periods of refreshing sleep.
6. Jesus has been described as being exhausted on a number of occasions: In the wilderness of temptation (*DA* 131); In the bottom of the boat in the midst of the storm (*10 MR* 349); In Gethsemane (*Present Truth*, December 3, 1885); and on the way to Calvary (*Story of Jesus*, p. 141). But, there were many times when Jesus prayed all night. (*2T* 508; *Review and Herald*, May 19, 1885)

While the city was hushed in silence, and the disciples had returned to their homes to obtain refreshment in sleep, Jesus slept not. His divine pleadings were ascending to His Father from the Mount of Olives that His disciples might be kept from the evil influences which they would daily encounter in the world, and **that His own soul might be strengthened and braced for the duties and trials of the coming day. All night, while His followers were sleeping, was their divine Teacher praying. The dew and frost of night fell upon His head bowed in prayer. His example is left for His followers.** {*2T* 508.1}

7. How do we explain the fact that Jesus could pray all night and be refreshed?

When the cities were hushed in midnight slumber, when every man had gone to his own house, **Christ, our Example, would repair to the Mount of Olives, and there, amid the overshadowing trees, would spend the entire night in prayer.** He who was Himself without the taint of sin,—a treasure house of blessing; whose voice was heard in the fourth watch of the night by the terrified disciples upon the stormy sea, in heavenly benediction; and whose word could summon the dead from their graves,—He it was who made

supplication with strong crying and tears. **He prayed not for Himself, but for those whom He came to save. As He became a suppliant, seeking at the hand of His Father fresh supplies of strength, and coming forth refreshed and invigorated as man's substitute, He identified Himself with suffering humanity and gave them an example of the necessity of prayer.** {4T 528.1} (Compare GW92 p. 28; GW 256; *Signs of the Times*, February 10, 1887)

On those occasions through His communion and association with His Father, did He receive mental and spiritual rest and restoration? While praying all night, did He experience any physical rest? Was that some kind of miraculous "rest"? Was that "spiritual rest"? What kind of example is that for us? If we are thinking about God as we go to sleep and arise praying to Him in the morning, would that count as praying all night? Paul would sometimes work all night at making tents so he could preach the gospel all day! "Neither did we eat any man's bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you." (1 Corinthians 4:11,12; 2 Thessalonians 3:8.)

8. Ellen White also on many occasions prayed most of the night. (*Review and Herald*, February 10, 1885; December 13, 1906) At times, she was carried onto the platform to speak, and God strengthened her so that she could speak. Were those miraculous events? (*LS* 335.2) Would that be possible for us?
9. As we have seen, although Jesus often prayed all night, He recognized the need for rest even for Himself and His disciples. (Mark 6:30-32,45,46) What happened to the three disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane? Did they lack faith? (*DA* 688.1)
10. What is your personal experience with sleep and rest? Do you awaken in the morning restored and refreshed? Do you think of a night's sleep as a reward for a day's work? Or do you think of sleep as a necessary evil taking you away from the many tasks you think you need to accomplish?
11. What signals does your body send you indicating the need for rest? Do you ever doze off while at work? Does your lifestyle impact your rest? Are you able to sleep in a quiet place away from the noise of traffic and the lights of the city?
12. If you listened to your body's signals telling you that you need rest, would you sleep more? How many of us are robbing ourselves of sleep and thus, wearing out our physical resources sooner than we should? When you sleep at night, do you find that: "Sleep, nature's sweet restorer, invigorates the tired body and prepares it for the next day's duties."—Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 342; *Testimonies* vol.1, p. 395,686; *Spiritual Gifts* vol. 4, p. 137; *AH* 289; *CH* 147.
13. Read Exodus 23:12. The word translated *refreshed* is closely related to the Hebrew noun for *soul* suggesting that refreshing as commanded in the Sabbath rest is supposed to "restore our souls"—make us more alive and give us more "breath" and more "soul."
14. What do you think of when you hear the word *rest*? Rest should never be solely a lack of activity. It is not defined by what we do not do. Rest and sleep have a very specific purpose in God's plan. Remember that 90% of diseases probably begin in the mind. Could a significant percentage of those diseases come about because we are not getting enough proper rest or sleep? If you got more rest, would you be less stressed? Many patients today complain of fatigue, fibromyalgia, restlessness, stress, depression, burnout, frustration, loneliness, and a multitude of related problems. Isn't it likely that at least some of those could

be related to inadequate rest? Do some of them arise from a lack of mental, spiritual, and emotional rest as much as a lack of physical rest?

15. Remember that God commands us not just to rest but also to work. (Exodus 20:8-11) The Sabbath commandment tells us not only to rest on the Sabbath but also to work the rest of the week! What was Jesus suggesting when He said, "Take My yoke..."? (Matthew 11:28-30) Would we get less tired if we were doing the work God has called us to do? What about people like John the Baptist in prison? Was he experiencing physical and spiritual "rest"? At the end of time, will God's people be stressed or "rested" as they go through the time of trouble?
16. What are we implying by the term "spiritual" rest? Are some of us spiritually burned out? One so-called think tank expert recently was quoted on CNN (Sunday, 3/28/2010: <http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/03/25/ted.sam.harris/index.html?hpt=Mid>) as saying that religion has become useless, and it is preventing us from doing many things we should be doing! He said that we should stop all this nonsense about religion and focus on global warming, war, feeding the hungry, etc.! Should "spiritual rest" include the idea that we stop believing that we can accomplish our salvation by some set of good works? Can we honestly depend and trust and have faith exclusively in Jesus? Would that lead us to be "so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good"? Do we need to learn how to better practice meditation? Was Jesus able to "shut out the world" during His prayers and focus only on His conversation with His Father? How much time did Jesus spend "listening" during His prayers as opposed to talking? Even as a child, He would go out to the hills and be instructed by the angels.
17. Do we bear any emotional, mental, or spiritual burdens that God does not understand? Are there some burdens that we are bearing that you really believe would be impossible to give up to God? Do you have a quiet place and time when you can commune with God?
18. Read Luke 10:38-42. What does the story of the responses of Mary and Martha to the visit of Jesus teach us about rest? Was Martha trying to "impress" Jesus? Was Mary actually resting? Mary thought that when Jesus was with her, she wanted to focus on Him! Don't you suspect that this family which was apparently fairly wealthy had servants? Probably Martha was busy just getting things ready to serve. Don't forget what we should have learned from Luke 8:1-3. Apparently, Mary was already very close to Jesus.
19. How many of us allow the "urgent" matters in life to crowd out the important matters such as time for prayer, Bible study, and communion with God?
20. To many modern people, rest and relaxation is almost synonymous with entertainment. Think of the kinds of entertainment that you enjoy. Are they truly restful and relaxing? Are there any serious programs on television that are intended to be restful and relaxing? Think of all the effort that people go to at great expense to enhance their leisure and entertainment.
21. The Sabbath is a weekly rest time. It has special significance to Christians who call themselves Seventh-day Adventists. Think of the events in biblical history connected with the Sabbath. First, there was creation. Then, there was the Exodus from Egypt and the experiences at Sinai. Then, there was crucifixion weekend with Jesus resting in the tomb on the Sabbath. And still in the future, there will be a time of conflict over Sabbath versus Sunday associated with the national and international Sunday laws. Ultimately, the Sabbath will be connected with times of celebration in heaven. (Isaiah 66:23)
22. But the Sabbath which was intended to be an enormous blessing to God's people has been

pervverted and twisted and corrupted in almost every way imaginable by the Devil.

23. Why did God tell us to celebrate the Sabbath from “even to even”? If the Sabbath began at midnight or perhaps at dawn, there would be a terrible temptation for Sabbath-keeping women to work late on Friday night in preparation for the Sabbath. This would mean that they could not be rested and refreshed to enjoy the Sabbath. Once again, we see that God has done what He could to make the Sabbath as restful and refreshing as possible.
24. Did God intend for us to spend 1/4 to 1/3 of our lifetimes sleeping?
25. “Sleep is worth far more before than after midnight. Two hours’ good sleep before twelve o’clock is worth more than four hours after twelve o’clock.”—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 224. Does this seem to be true in your own experience?
26. It has been documented that people who are truly sleep-deprived are as bad at driving as people who are intoxicated. Why do you think this is?
27. There are some basic guidelines that we should keep in mind when trying to get good physical rest. 1) Exercise daily. 2) Keep the room in which you are sleeping at a comfortable temperature. 3) Do not eat any solid food in the last three hours before sleeping. 4) Avoid tension or excitement just before sleeping. (Does this rule out television?) 5) Avoid the use of alcohol, sleeping pills, and especially caffeine in the last few hours before sleep.
28. One of the dangers that has befallen our modern world is the danger of being a workaholic or working in a job which does not seem to have any meaning. Some become a sort of human machine. What can we do to give more meaning and purpose to our lives? Would that give more meaning to our work and thus, improve the quality of our rest?
29. Read Mark 2:27,28. Clearly, God intended for the Sabbath to be a very special day for rest, relaxation, and communion with God and with each other.
30. Many Seventh-day Adventists have lost a great deal of meaning in their spiritual experience because they are struggling with the best way to keep the Sabbath. Some even have rebelled against what they considered boring Sabbath observance in their homes when they were children. What can we do as Sabbathkeepers to make this special time of rest more meaningful? Would it be useful to spend time preparing very special activities for the Sabbath to give it special meaning, particularly for our children?
31. For those who believe in and espouse the larger-view, great-controversy, trust-healing model of the plan of salvation, the Sabbath provides a wonderful opportunity to think about the issues in the great controversy. It is a time when we can consider all the things that Satan has done to try to destroy our meaningful keeping of the Sabbath and what God has done to restore the Sabbath to its original meaning. What do you expect to do when ordinary Sabbathkeeping becomes illegal—at the time of a national or international Sunday law? Are we prepared for whatever the Devil may bring against us? How do the meanings of the Sabbath help to answer all of Satan’s accusations against God?

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