



RE▶

DOING LIFE TOGETHER
WELLNESS EDITION '22

Let God RE-Store your health and RE-Plenish your spiritual well-being!

|
Part 5

RE▶ ST

To achieve wellness, take the written Word seriously and allow its truths and light to shine forth, dispelling the darkness of misinterpretations and distortions about God. Do this until the day Christ returns and the Brilliant One is fully reproduced in your hearts.

RE ▶ ST

with

Jack MARTIN

Matthew
28-30
(MSG)

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Me. Get away with Me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me and work with Me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with Me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

This workbook is based on John Marak Comer’s bestselling book: The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry – How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World.

Dallas Willard once called hurry ‘the chief enemy of spiritual life in our day’. We live in one of the most secular, post-Christian times in history, and the more we ponder this, the more we’ll realise that he’s right, *hurry is the issue under a multitude of problems*. The root cause beneath so much of the anger and anxiety of our cultural moment. And followers of Jesus are not immune to culture’s pain. Many of us live with low-grade fatigue and chronic stress that rarely, if ever, fades away. We stagger through our days at breakneck speed and wonder where God is in the fray. Most of us are too busy to live emotionally healthy and spiritually vibrant lives. Hurry is incompatible with the way of Jesus, and the love, joy and peace that form the nucleus of Jesus’ Kingdom are impossible in a life of speed. We must, as Willard continues to assert, ‘*Ruthlessly eliminate hurry!*’

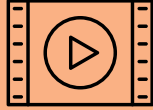
Taking time to rest is a practical way to protect and make room for the Holy Spirit to be evident in how we live our daily lives. Rhythms of rest strengthen our families and home life. Routines prioritising strategic pauses in our days for prayer, reflections, reading and even just togetherness make space for us to share our faith with our children. When we emphasise rest, we model what intentional living should look like for our kids. Much of what our kids learn is *caught, not taught!* Doing what we can to develop habits that make space for slow time spent in God’s presence is a crucial way to share our faith with our children.

Resting in the Lord renews our hearts! **Exodus 23:12** says, “*Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed.*” God takes His example in Genesis and turns it into a command for His people. They would be refreshed by this command; however, God’s commands are not about God setting restrictive rules, but they set boundaries as a part of His way of looking out for us. He knows that tired people become grumpy, unhealthy and unhappy. He wants you to make space for rest so you can live joyfully!

¹Comer, J., 2019. The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World. 1st ed. Colorado Springs: Waterbrook.

If we desire to live in a relationship with Jesus, we must seek God through prayer, praise and time in His Word.

Resting in the Lord helps us focus on Jesus. Resting in the Lord could be like attending a church service, reading the Bible, singing worship songs to God, praying, being in nature, creating, connecting to a community of believers, listening to an insightful sermon, or any other practice that centres our thoughts on God. God speaks in various ways, but we can hear Him best when we commit time to focus our hearts on Him.



Watch '**Part 5: RE-ST Introduction**' with Jack Martin

<https://youtu.be/TZaXb8hMEHU>

So let's begin our 21-Day Journey...

DAY 1-5: HURRY

We must **RE-Evaluate** how we spend our time for a healthier and more peaceful life. We need to know that hurry sabotages our ability to give and receive love from God and our neighbours. It is necessary to feel a desire to slow down in keeping with the rhythm of Jesus' life. So, let us organise our daily activities to devote time to our loving God and others.

1. What is your understanding of the term REST?

2. What do you do to REST?

3. What would you do if you had more time to REST?

The rush mentality has taken over our lives, from workaholism to smartphone addiction. Despite having the opportunity to rest, we prefer scrolling through social media platforms, watching TV or answering millions of notifications.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

It is not easy to relax when we are used to overextending ourselves.

Read Luke 10:38–42.

- What were the differences between Mary's and Martha's behaviour while Jesus was around?
- Do Mary's actions bother you?
- If so, why? Or why not?

We can see how Martha didn't focus on Jesus because of her busy schedule. Despite her hurry, she missed Jesus.

- What would that look like if you left your schedule alone and spent time praying?

Many people struggle to slow down due to the anxiety and guilt of not being productive every moment of the day. However, we must remember that God can replace our anxiousness with peace and rest. Read *Philippians 4:6–7*.

- What is your initial response to hearing '*being anxious for nothing*'?
- What do you typically worry about?
- What does Paul suggest we do instead of being anxious in these verses?
- What does he say the outcome will be?

The peace of God will protect our hearts and minds (*Philippians 4:7*). God's peace is felt despite what is going on around us.

- If your busy schedule causes anxiety, what would it look like for you to ask God for a vacation?
- Have you ever asked God for a holiday? If not, why?

Being busy is normal – we have work, family, friends and hobbies. However, when our time spent with God decreases, our spiritual lives and relationships deteriorate.

Memorise ***Philippians 4:6–7***, "*Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*"

Hurry sickness is a feeling of being chronically short of time and needing to perform every task faster than necessary.

- What are the effects of hurrying on the body?
- How does a hurried lifestyle affect our relationship with God?
- When we become too busy, what happens to our spiritual lives?

An overly busy schedule contributes to a diminishing relationship with Jesus.

- Do you ever feel overwhelmed, unable to complete everything on your to-do list?
- What activity in your life keeps you the busiest?
- What effect does busyness have on your relationship with God?
- What are some examples of how a busy schedule has deprived time for prayer and Bible reading?
- How are they impacting your physical and spiritual well-being?

Busyness can be unhealthy or healthy, and there is a difference between healthy and too much busyness. The harmful kind of busyness is when there is too much and not enough time to do it.

- Can you identify unhealthy busyness in your life?
- Describe where you feel there is too much to do and insufficient time.

Unhealthy busyness can negatively affect our mental health, causing increased irritability, hypersensitivity and stress.

- How else can busyness adversely affect our mental well-being?
- What challenges have you faced in your own life, if any?
- When you are feeling overwhelmed, what escapist behaviours tempt you?
- What activities or demands could you cut out of your schedule?

DAY 6–9: RETREAT

Practising silence and solitude – especially when we are busy, is essential to experiencing a healthy spiritual life. The busier we are, the more we need to withdraw to be with God. May we all feel a desire to spend uninterrupted quiet time with God, no matter how busy we are and incorporate a practice of intentional withdrawal into our weekly routine.

1. Are you comfortable being alone?

2. Why or why not?

3. Imagine being alone without a phone, music, TV, or other background noise. How would you feel?

4. Being unhurried is more than taking a break from physical work and busyness. We are used to constant background noise, so finding silence and solitude can be challenging. Why did Jesus retreat to quiet places?

5. How does our Western world deepen our need for silence and solitude?

Mark shows Jesus being busy while prioritising time alone. Mark 1:19-37 describes Jesus' busy day. His schedule was full, so He worked all day. Furthermore, His disciples added more to His plate the next morning (see Mark 1:37).

- Why did Jesus need quiet time?
- How can we learn from Jesus about taking time off?
- In times of stress, how could withdrawal and prayer help you?
- Could you foster your relationship with Jesus during your time alone?
- How could you schedule more time for this?
- When you spend time alone with God, what needs are you afraid will not be met?

Sometimes we fill our schedules, leaving no room for rest because we are afraid that if we do not do enough, we will not have enough.

- How often do you worry?
- How do you cope with anxious thoughts?
- How would it feel to trust God when you feel unproductive?
- How can you trust God with your rest?

Only God can give us what we need, no matter how hard we work. In addition to addressing our overdependence on productivity, sitting in silence allows us to spend time with God. Like our relationships with friends and family, our relationship with God flourishes with quality time. **Start where you are, not where you think you should be.** Let God use your time this week, even if it is only five minutes when you wake up.

Memorise **Mark 1:35**, "*In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, walked away to a secluded place, and was praying there.*"

In times of hectic activity, whether at work or home, the last thing on our minds is spending time in silence.

- What priorities keep you too busy to be silent?
- What noise in your life makes it difficult to focus?
- How does a lack of focus affect your time with God?

Television, social media and podcasts keep our minds active even when resting.

- What could it look like to limit things like TV and social media when you have downtime?
- What other ways could you turn down the noise in your life?
- What does quality (quiet) time with God typically look like for you?

Solitude can be as simple as spending five minutes in prayer before bed or reading Scripture during a few minutes of quietness.

- What could it look like for you to take a step toward finding solitude with God?

DAY 10–14: SABBATH

Honouring the Sabbath is a blessing from God that allows us to rest and recharge without guilt. Practising Sabbath is part of a *divine rhythm*. So, may we feel peace rather than guilt when we decide to rest for a day and worship God through Sabbath.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How do you typically spend your days off?

2. How do you fill your days when you do not have to work? (Take some time to add detail)

It is common for people to run errands, do personal projects, or work more during a day off. Our culture makes us feel guilty for resting and tells us that staying busy is better than doing nothing. Can you see how harmful this is?

REFLECTION

Sabbath is a gift that God prioritises and has called us to experience.

Read Genesis 2:1–3.

- What are some of the adjectives used to describe the Sabbath in these verses?
- What makes the Sabbath different from all the other days?
- How does God resting from His work help you understand the importance of humankind resting from work?

Finding time to observe the Sabbath is essential, and it should be a regular part of our lifestyle – but we should remember that it is a gift rather than a new way to be legalistic. Read Matthew 12:1 – 14.

The Pharisees believed work was forbidden on the Sabbath, even if it helped needy people. In this passage, they asked Jesus if a life-giving activity on the Sabbath was acceptable to God.

- What reason does Jesus give for righteous deeds being lawful on the Sabbath?

Jesus understood that the Sabbath was meant to bless humanity, not keep them from God’s provision. Therefore, there is no need to feel guilty if an emergency arises on your Sabbath.

- In what ways can being busy on your off-day cause problems and stress?
- What do Jesus’s actions show us about the intent of the Sabbath?

Pharisees had defined the Sabbath so strictly that they allowed someone to suffer instead of seeing them whole and healthy. Rather than protecting the Sabbath, they had become cold and legalistic. Having some boundaries to save the Sabbath is helpful, but we should not become too strict that we or others suffer.

- In what ways could you protect your Sabbath from the demands of life?
- How could you guard yourself against legalism so that you and those around you could enjoy the blessing of the Sabbath?

Jesus reminds us that the Sabbath is made for our benefit and His glory. We should not approach the Sabbath thinking God will be disappointed or angry with us if we practice it wrongly. God loves us and has blessed us with a day of rest, delight and worship.

- What could you do to remind yourself that the Sabbath is a gift?

God wants us to rest after a long week of work and to trust Him with all our time.

Memorise **Mark 2:27**, “*And He said to them, ‘The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.’*”

- What comes to mind when you think of the Sabbath?

We live in a culture that values the grind. Never taking a day off is respected - almost a sign of success. Taking a day off sounds like a foolish idea to many people.

- Have you ever felt guilty for taking days off from work? Why?
- How do you feel when you have unfinished work but try to rest?

The most literal translation of the Sabbath is to “stop”. The Sabbath is a day we stop working, hustling and worrying.

- What makes it difficult to stop, even for a couple of hours?

The second translation of the Sabbath is “rest” – physical, mental and emotional rejuvenation. “When I rest, I’m not wasting time; if I am, I’m wasting time on God and resting in Him.” Proper rest is actively trusting God with your worries and setting aside problems that need solving.

- When was the last time you took a day away from your responsibilities?
- What would it look like for you to actively rest in Jesus?

The third translation of the Sabbath is “delight”. The Sabbath is meant to be a celebration, a party, or a holiday, and it is a day when you can enjoy life to the fullest.

- What could you do for 24 hours to bring you deep, heartfelt joy?

The last translation of the Sabbath is “worship”. For this reason, Sunday may be the most appropriate day for you to practice the Sabbath. Sabbath is a day dedicated to God.

- Besides attending church, what would it look like for you to save the day for God?
- What do you think worship looks like outside your church worship service?

The Sabbath is significant because it removes distractions, allows us to be sensitive to the Spirit, and gives us a day to experience the beauty of life.

DAY 15–19: SLOW DOWN

Physically slowing down trains our souls to resist hurry and makes us more present with others and God. Being physically fit and healthy is hugely beneficial in our relationship with Jesus. We need to learn what it means to slow down while feeling peace in waiting. One way is to focus on practices that help you be present with God and others.

In general, we all move at a fast pace, life is busy, and we rarely do not have someplace we need to be. Furthermore, let us face it, we have all experienced frustration when having to wait for something we want – whether it is for our food, long lines at the grocery store, or being put on hold by the customer service operator.

1. Do you prefer a fast-paced lifestyle or one that's slow?

2. What do you like or dislike about the pace of your life?

There are times when we must slow down and wait. Being patient can be significantly affected by slowing down. See James 5:7–8.

- What is a need in your life beyond your control?
- What would it look like if you spent less energy worrying about the future and more time being present with God? (*Be descriptive*)

Waiting is difficult because we have no idea how long we will be waiting. Nevertheless, just like the farmer knows it will rain at some point, we know God will come through for us in our waiting.

- How have you typically responded to God's timing in the past?
- In what ways does God's timing help us learn to slow down?

- How might our sense of hurry skew our view of God's timing?

Sometimes, we might feel like God is not listening because He is not working fast enough. We wanted our prayers answered quickly and did not like waiting on His timing.

- How do you feel when God makes you wait?
- In what ways is it comforting to know that God sees your waiting?
- How does God, who is all-seeing, impact your ability to be patient?

When we genuinely believe God watches over us, it becomes easier to trust that He will come through for us. He is not a God that chooses to ignore us as we wait for Him to fulfil His promises.

- Is there anything you have been patiently awaiting?
- What can you do to remind yourself that God is not ignoring you but will come through for you at the right time?

When we look at the life of Jesus, we find that He was not in a rush and did not get frustrated with waiting. No matter where He was, He was present. To be more like Jesus, we need to slow down.

- In what ways are our bodies just as critical as our souls?

The Hebrew word for "soul" is *nephesh*, describing the entirety of a person, including their soul and body. This definition differs from our cultural idea that our souls – our "true" essence – have no real connection to our bodies.

- Why do you think it is critical to understand that God cares about our whole person, body and soul?

You are more than a soul with a body. Therefore, we must offer God our physical activity. Slowing down is the key to resisting hurry. "Slowing" means cultivating patience by deliberately waiting.

- What makes slowing down difficult for you?
- Do you think there could be benefits to slowing down?

There are multiple practical ways we can incorporate slowing into our lives. One way to begin the journey of slowing down is to change our relationship with our phones.

- How often do you fill your "empty" time on a typical day with checking notifications, talking and texting on the phone, or watching television?

- What worries you about turning off your notifications?
- What would it look like to “parent” your phone more effectively?

By learning to be present in the moment, we can also increase our soul’s capacity to be present to God in prayer and worship.

- Is it difficult for you to remain present during worship?
- What distractions grab your attention the most?
- Which practices could improve prayer in your daily life?
- What would it look like to implement those practices into your daily life?

DAY 20–21: PREPARE

Let’s take a step back and review what has been shared and discussed. Review your answers in all your journaling and other sections, and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into the truth that He, specifically has for you.

Use the area below to note what the Lord is telling you about the concept of rest and eliminating hurry from your life.

POST-SESSION PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Find a copy of, *'The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World'*. Spend some time reading and reflecting and adjust your life accordingly.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional resources to help you explore more ways of resting:

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World by John Mark Comer – <https://johnmarkcomer.com/#home>

TEDx Sleep vs. Rest – <https://youtu.be/ZGNN4EPJzGk>

TEDx Slowing Down to Speed Up – https://youtu.be/SFU_n1bSyyU

Brandon Smith Show: 7 Types of Rest – <https://youtu.be/hypNfi10JZo>

Let's worship our loving Father God!

Kari Jobe: Rest – <https://youtu.be/WhoEktYO5w8>

LORD, TODAY WE PRAY...

Father, I thank You that Your Word reminds me that You have given me the power to be brave and to control my thoughts. When my thoughts are out of control, I ask for a sound mind to guide me. Let me capture every thought that would cause me to have a fearful spirit. Please remind me to think about what is right, true, noble, proper, lovely and admirable (**Philippians 4:8**). Empower me to cast down all thoughts that would cause me stress, anxiety, or fear. I thank You for all the good gifts You have given me in my life. Please help me to remember them rather than fixate on the things that trouble my mind. I thank You that I can trust in You with all my heart and that You promise to lead me on Your straight path (**Proverbs 3:5-6**).

1 Peter 5:7, "Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you." I feel the world's weight on my shoulders now. Things in my life feel like more than I can handle alone. I come to You as my place of refuge and lay all my cares at Your feet. I thank You that Your Word reminds me to come to You when I am feeling weary and that You promise to bring rest to my soul (**Matthew 11:28-30**). Help me to walk in Your rest, to be able to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living (**Psalms 27:13**). Remind me of all the ways You have been faithful to me in the past so I can look forward with confidence, knowing You will take care of me! I declare that I trust You with every detail of my life and give all my respect to You. Your Word says that You know every hair on my head (**Luke 12:7**). You care about the big things in my life, the little things in my life, and everything in between.

Lord, my mind, body and Spirit are worn down. Please give me the strength not to give up. Things in my life feel impossible, but Your Word says that all things are possible with You (**Matthew 19:26**). By Your grace, allow me to find rest in Your shadow (**Psalms 91:1**). Shelter me from the storms of life. Please give me wisdom so I can take the right next steps. Strengthen my weary mind, body and Spirit. Help me to run and not grow weary, to walk and not grow faint (**Isaiah 40:31**). I thank You, God, for being my ever-present help whenever I face troubles (**Psalms 46:1**). I couldn't do it without You. Thank You for carrying my load so I can continue to do the good You have called me to. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Resource Credit: Gossom, A. (2022) The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry STUDY GUIDE, <https://reader.rightnowmedia.org/1790/729102>. RightNow Media. Available at: <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/za> (Accessed: October 24, 2022).



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Jack has worked in the health care and religious institutions industries and is skilled in Pastoral Counselling, Management, life skills, and organisational development. He is a South African Registered Specialist Wellness Counsellor with qualifications in health sciences, theological studies, and training and development. At present, he serves as the ministry leader of MyFiladelfia Skills Development Provider and lives in the picturesque town of Paarl. He believes that in this chaotic world, we often seek guidance and answers. Yet, peace, silence and calm are the most reliable answers, and trust and confidence will lead to success. To serve others from a place of REST, we must hone our abilities and discover our unique identity in Jesus. Jack invites you to learn how we can serve each other without compromise.

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