

The Rest Principles
Part Four
Rest for those who are Spiritually Dry

- *In the first rest principle we addressed those who want to serve God, but struggle with guilt, shame, and condemnation because of their past sins or present failures.*
- *The symptoms of this first type of unrest include a sense of being under a cloud of shame, guilt, or condemnation resulting in a general sense of unworthiness. Their shame hinders them from praying and reading the Bible, and prevents them from being able to rejoice in the salvation they received through Jesus Christ.*
- *The solution to being set free from this sense of condemnation is faith in God's Word.*
- *As believers, we must develop the discipline that every time we fail, fall short of God's standard, or simply sin, we need to immediately repent by turning to God, confessing our sins, and by faith accepting His forgiveness and cleansing. (1 John 1:9).*
- *Once we have repented and confessed our sins our hearts should be filled with thanksgiving and joy because our heavenly Father has completely forgiven us. Any impediment to our fellowship with God has been removed*
- *The second rest principle builds on the first, so we can more fully enter into God's rest. As we build a solid foundation, we can learn to be led by the Spirit and live fruitful lives.*
- *The second rest principle deals with Christians who are troubled by fear and anxiety because of the problems and struggles of life.*
- *The problems that cause anxiety and fear may take the form of work, family, health, relationships, finances, or any number of problems that confront us each day.*
- *These people become weary with the responsibilities of family, work, church, and life in general. At times they may feel overwhelmed just trying to put one foot in front of the other. Life may seem fruitless and unsatisfying. Every effort to make headway feels laborious and hopeless. The joy and peace of the Lord may seem like a concept that is totally unattainable.*
- *The solution to this type of unrest and anxiety is to learn to cease from self-effort. We must learn to put our problems into God's hands.*

1 Peter 5:7 NASB

⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

- *When we learn to cease from self-effort we can stop doing our own works and begin to be engaged in doing what God wants us to do.*
- *The third rest principle deals with Christians who are spiritually dry.*
- *These Christians may feel spiritually frustrated. They desire to experience a touch from the Lord. However, no matter what they try to do, they still feel dry.*
- *These people may be very active in the church and may be involved in various church functions. Outwardly, they may appear to others as though they are moving in the Spirit. However, inwardly they feel dry and lack the vitality that comes from an intimate relationship with Christ. They know something is missing, but are unable to define what that "something" is.*
- *The solution to those who are spiritually dry is "Life in the Spirit."*

- *What does “Life in the Spirit” look like?*
- *Simply put “Life in the Spirit” is doing those things that please God.*

John 8:29 NKJV

²⁹ **And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."**

- *Jesus had unbroken fellowship with His Father because He always did those things that pleased His Father. — “for I always do those things that please Him.”*
- *What a wonderful picture of fellowshiping with God—always being aware of God’s presence. — “The Father has not left Me alone.”*
- *Many people have a wrong concept of the Gospel and think it is a list of “don’ts.” However, if we simply seek to do those things that please God we will never even think about those things we shouldn’t do.*

Galatians 5:16

¹⁶ **I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.**

- *When we are walking in the Spirit and our hearts are focused on pleasing God, then it will not even enter our minds to fulfil the lusts of the flesh—to engage in sinful and destructive behaviours.*
- *When we are walking in the flesh—trying to please ourselves or others instead of God, we will see God’s commandments as restrictive. However, when we are walking in the Spirit we will see God’s commandments as they truly are—protective.*

Galatians 5:17

¹⁷ **For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**

- *Christians experience the inner turmoil of temptation when they are double-minded and have not fully committed themselves to pleasing God. — “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another.”*
- *When Christians are double-minded they find themselves doing things contrary to their new nature in Christ. — “so that you do not do the things that you wish.”*

Galatians 5:18

¹⁸ **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

- *When we are led by the Spirit and seek to do those things that please God then we are not under the Law that tells us what we shouldn’t do. When we are submitted to the Spirit we seek to do those things that please God’s heart.*
- *Man-made religion focuses on a list of “do’s” and “don’ts” resulting in us becoming sin-conscious instead of Christ-conscious. We focus on our works and continue to measure our lives by how closely we perceive we have met “the religious standard” or the “list of do’s and don’ts.”*
- *When we feel we have checked off some of the boxes on the “do list” we may feel better about ourselves.*
- *When we have succeeded by not failing in an area on the “don’t do list” we may feel good about ourselves and begin to feel self-righteous.*

- *When we perceive others have failed to do things they should be doing or are guilty of doing things they shouldn't be doing, we may look down on them and feel superior. Instead of being moved by their plight we may feel a sense of satisfaction thinking that we are doing better.*
- *However, when we realize we have fallen short of doing things we perceive we should be doing, or giving into things we shouldn't be doing, we feel shame and condemnation.*
- *All these lists of "do's" and "don'ts" can be summarized under the category of religion.*
- *Religion tries to imitate a true relationship with God using rituals, man-made standards, and rules.*
- *However, in all our activities and our "do" and "don't" lists, there is one thing that is apparent—they do not produce a vibrant, intimate, or joyful relationship with Christ. Focusing more on our activities than our relationship with Christ will lead to shame and condemnation because of our failures, or pride because of our perceived self-righteousness. We may deceive ourselves into believing we have met God's standards.*
- *In the story of Mary and Martha, we saw that Jesus prefers relationship over works.*
- *Striving to please God causes one to become more self-focused and less God-conscious.*
- *One of the most deceptive things about self-righteousness is that one may fail to recognize that one is spiritually dry and lacks a vibrant spiritual relationship with Christ.*
- *Even born again Christians can easily fall into the trap of religion and turn their relationship with God into a list of 'do's' and "don'ts" without even being aware of it. Religiosity is very subtle and can easily deceive us.*
- *The key to identifying if we are operating in a religious mode or by "Life in the Spirit" is to be conscious of our motivation.
When we go to church do we think, "I should go to church because it's the right thing to do," or are we motivated to go to church because we anticipate fellowshiping corporately with God and with our brothers and sisters in Christ?*
- *Do we see church attendance as an obligation or an exciting opportunity to grow in Christ and experience and learn more of Him? We should see a church service as a place where we can corporately worship Jesus and experience the Holy Spirit through Body ministry.*
- *When we think of spending time each day in our personal devotional time with God in prayer and reading the Bible, do we think of it as something we ought to do, or are we eagerly looking forward to spending time sharing our hearts with God and telling Him how much we love Him?*
- *Do we think of reading the Bible as a task that needs to be done or is there an excitement of having the Holy Spirit speak to us and make His Word come alive to us as He reveals hidden gems?*

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- *In the Epistle to the Galatians, Apostle Paul listed the works of the flesh. When a person is carnally minded, then some of the works of the flesh will appear tempting and even attractive. However, a Christian who is seeking to please God will not be attracted to them and find them repulsive.*
- *A spiritually minded Christian will immediately recognize the painful and destructive consequences of engaging in the works of the flesh and will not even be attracted to them.*
- *The works of the flesh rob believers of the inheritance and blessings that God wants to bestow upon them. — “those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*
- *Christians who experience “Life in the Spirit” will not be drawn to the works of the flesh because they are so satisfied and filled with joy and peace because of their vibrant and intimate relationship with Christ.*
- *However, there are examples of Christian leaders who lived a double life and were later exposed in all sorts of destructive and sinful behaviours.*
- *The reason they fell into the bondage of sin and the works of the flesh is because they had not developed a deep life in the Spirit or failed to maintain, cultivate, and deepen their relationship with Christ on a daily basis.*

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- *When we are filled with the fruit of the Spirit there will not be any room for the works of the flesh.*
- *Each fruit of the Spirit overcomes and eliminates the works of the flesh. The works of the flesh are a counterfeit to the fruit of the Spirit.*
- *Love — adultery and fornication*
- *Joy — uncleanness and lewdness*
- *Peace — idolatry and sorcery*
- *Longsuffering — hatred and contentions*
- *Kindness — jealousies and outbursts of wrath*
- *Goodness — selfish ambitions and dissensions*
- *Faithfulness — heresies*
- *Gentleness — envy and murders*
- *Self-Control — drunkenness and revelries*
- *Those who please themselves will suffer the consequences of their destructive choices, while those who are led by the Spirit will be filled with goodness and righteousness. When we’re led by the Spirit, the law is written on our hearts, leading us to fullness of life.*

Romans 8:6 NKJV

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

- *The desire for every Christian should be to have a vibrant relationship with Christ.*
- *Therefore, it is essential that we learn how to develop our “Life in the Spirit.”*

Matthew 5:6 NKJV

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

- *God promises to satisfy His people and fill them when they hunger and thirst for righteousness, doing those things that please God.*

Psalms 68:9 (NKJV)

9 You, O God, sent a plentiful rain, Whereby You confirmed Your inheritance, When it was weary.

- *God does not leave us weary or spiritually dry. He has promised to send a plentiful rain of His Holy Spirit to refresh us with His presence.*
- *Clearly, God desires that all His children are filled with His presence, love, joy, and peace. Then why is it that many Christians are spiritually dry and lack a vibrant relationship with Jesus on a daily basis?*

Psalms 63:1-8 NKJV

1 O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.

2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.

3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.

- *King David penned Psalm 63 reflecting a life that is captivated by God’s love and glory and exemplifies life in the Spirit.*
- *David described his longing to know God in a more intimate way using the metaphorical picture of thirst — “My soul thirsts for You”*
- *David did not speak simply of being thirsty for God but of the deep thirst that one can only develop when wandering through a scorching, barren, arid desert. — “My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.” In the desert, water brings life, lack of water brings death.*
- *Such a deep thirst is so intense the person’s only goal is to quench their thirst.*
- *David went into the sanctuary of God looking for Him and longing to see His power and glory. — “So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.”*
- *As followers of Christ our hearts should be filled with a deep desire to encounter God and a longing to experience Him every time we go to church, or to a corporate prayer meeting, or in our private devotional time.*
- *David’s longing for God and the value he placed on God’s unfailing love and goodness was more precious to him than his own life. — “Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.”*
- *Jesus echoed a similar thought when He addressed His disciples and encouraged them to put their desire for God before their very lives. — “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 16:25).*

Psalm 63

⁴ Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.

⁵ My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

⁶ When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches.

⁷ Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.

⁸ My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.

- *David was so overwhelmed by God's goodness that he could not restrain himself from worshipping God extravagantly. — "Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name."*
- *All of David's needs, desires, and wants were fulfilled in his relationship with God. — "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness."*
- *David was overwhelmed with joy as he spoke words of adoration to God. — "And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips."*
- *David's every waking thought was permeated by the wonder of God. He was constantly thinking about the Lord. — "When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches." David's single priority was God.*
- *David felt completely secure and at peace because the very abiding presence of God was with him. — "Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me."*

Isaiah 55:1-2 NKJV

¹ "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.

² Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.

- *As God addresses everyone who is thirsty He begins with the word "Ho." The Hebrew word "Ho" is an interjection and it is pronounced "hohee" and it means, "ah, ha, alas," in other words it is meant to grab our attention.*
- *If someone across the street was trying to grab your attention, they might say, "Yoo-hoo, over here, look this way."*
- *In the Gospels when Jesus taught and instructed His disciples, He often exhorted them to be attentive to His words and apply them to their lives. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Matthew 13:9).*
- *Are we attentive to the Holy Spirit as He tries to get our attention to deepen our relationship with Him or warn us that we are headed in a wrong direction?*
- *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts" — God is trying to get our attention by saying something like, "Hey, you over there, yes, you—the one who is thirsty. I have something to tell you."*
- *In Isaiah 55, God provides the most amazing invitation—"Come to the waters." He invites anyone who is willing to hear Him calling to come to Him and have their thirst quenched.*
- *But many may think, "He must not be inviting me. I have nothing to bring to God. I am lost and impoverished. I am not worthy." This is the religious mind set, but God's*

response is, “Yes I mean you, the one who is thirsty and impoverished.” — “And you who have no money.”

- *Then God extends His invitation to those who are thirsty. “Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”*
- *God is saying He has paid the price so we can partake—“Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”*
- *When God says “Without money and without price,” He is not saying that what He is freely offering us has no value. He is saying exactly the opposite! It so valuable and priceless no man is able to pay the price to acquire it. It has been purchased “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter 1:19). In Isaiah 53, just two chapters before, Isaiah described in detail Jesus Christ’s suffering and death so we could be redeemed and partake in all the blessings of salvation.*
- *Even though what God is offering us is freely given because of what Jesus has done for us, it does not mean that we play no part in receiving. We still need to hear His invitation and respond to Him in order to drink freely from His provisions. We need to come and we need to buy—“Yes, come, buy wine and milk.”*
- *What do we have to do in order to come and buy? Simply lay our lives down and allow Him to do with us as He wishes. — “Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”” (Matthew 16:24-25).*
- *There is a cost to receiving from the Lord. It is not as if we are purchasing something, but we are positioning ourselves so we can receive. When we are holding on to our lives and our desires we not able to receive what God wants to impart. It is only when we open our hands and let go of what we are holding on to that we can receive and take hold of what God wants to give us.*
- *Then God asks a question to those who are thirsty but have failed to find relief and satisfaction for their souls: “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy?”*
- *God is asking, “Why are you continuing to seek satisfaction in your self-effort and religious endeavours that do not satisfy instead of turning to Me, the source of Life?”*
- *God reinforces the point that they should turn away from all the distractions and activities that have resulted in weariness and frustration and turn to God and heed His words. — “Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.”*
- *There are often stark contrasts between the spiritual condition of churches that are under persecution and churches in the West that function in relative freedom and prosperity.*
- *The most profound difference between the churches in persecuted countries and the churches in the West is that Christians under persecution see their need for Jesus Christ every moment of every day and have a deep hunger and thirst to know Him more intimately. They have nowhere else to turn and God becomes everything to them.*
- *However, Christians living in relative freedom and prosperity may fail to recognize their deep need and dependence on God and in many ways are quite satisfied with their*

lives and spiritual condition. They have many other places to turn and God becomes less important to them.

- *Living in countries where freedom and security exist does not mean Christians cannot have a deep hunger and thirst for Christ, but it requires diligence and great effort to cultivate and maintain a vibrant relationship with Jesus.*

Revelation 3:14-21 NKJV

¹⁴ "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

¹⁵ "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

¹⁷ Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'-and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-

¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

- *The last of the seven churches Jesus addressed in the Book of Revelation could easily be seen as describing the condition of the churches in Western countries.*
- *The Greek word "Laodiceans" comes from two Greek words; λαός (laos) meaning "people" and δίκη (dikē) meaning "opinion, decision, custom, rule, justice." So Laodicea can mean, "the opinion of the people, the decision of the people, the rule of the people, the rights of the people."*
- *The Laodicean church centered on the desires and opinions of the people.*
- *The Laodicean church focused on what the people wanted which is exactly the opposite of what the Gospel teaches which is to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus.*
- *The word to the Laodicean Church contains a rebuke spoken from Jesus' heart of love. — "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent." (Verse 19).*
- *However, Jesus ended His message to the Laodicean Church with the most wonderful word of encouragement and a promise to those who responded to His rebuke. — "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." (Verse 21).*
- *Jesus described the condition of the Laodicean church as "lukewarm" — "because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot." (Verse 16a).*
- *Lukewarm could be another way of saying they were spiritually dry and they not only failed to recognize their poor spiritual condition but were content with remaining that way. — "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'" (Verse 17a).*

- *However, in reality their spiritual condition was quite the opposite of what they thought. — “and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” (Verse 17b).*
- *When we are spiritually lukewarm our fellowship with Jesus is neither satisfying to us nor acceptable to Jesus. — “because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.” (Verse 16).*
- *The first step to developing a vibrant and intimate relationship with Jesus is to recognize that we are spiritually dry.*
- *The second step is to put forth effort and diligence to stir up a spiritual hunger and thirst for Jesus.*
- *We stir up our thirst for Jesus by rekindling our heart of love for God. Daily we need to deliberately do things that remind us of how wonderful God is and all that Jesus has done for us through His suffering, death, and resurrection.*

Psalm 51:12 NKJV

¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

- *We need to consciously seek God to restore to us the joy of our salvation.*

Psalm 95:6 NKJV

⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

- *We need to overcome the inertia of the flesh and begin to actively choose to become worshippers and permeate our prayer time with worship and praise to God.*

Psalm 34:1 NKJV

¹ I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

- *We need our praise and worship of God to invade every aspect of our hearts and daily lives.*

Ephesians 5:20 NKJV

²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

- *We need to develop a heart of thanksgiving to God independent of our circumstances.*

Galatians 6:9 NKJV

⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

- *We need to consistently seek God to give us a deeper hunger and thirst for Him and not to grow weary but persist until we receive our breakthrough.*
- *When we experience times of visitation we are not to settle for the experience but use that experience as a stepping stone to further deepen our walk with Jesus and our hunger and thirst to see His will done.*
- *The visitation is not the destination but the invitation. God visits us to encourage us to go deeper.*
- *We will not have a profound visitation from the Holy Spirit every day but we can have a vibrant relationship with Him every day as we spend time in prayer, in the Word, and in fellowship with other believers.*

- *If you are not sure how to develop a vibrant prayer life, then spend time with Christians who do and learn from them.*
- *It's just as important to refrain from things that stifle and choke our desire for God as it is to stir up our hunger and thirst for God.*
- *It is like when we were children and wanted to eat chips or gummy bears just before supper—our mother's response was "It will spoil your appetite!"*
- *What are those gummy bears and junk food that will spoil our hunger for God?*

1 John 2:15-17 NKJV

¹⁵ **Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

¹⁶ **For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.**

¹⁷ **And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.**

- *The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life are enemies that choke out our desire for God.*
- *God has given us many blessings in this life to enjoy but once we begin to put those things first in our hearts, they develop into lusts and will steal our love and desire for the things of God.*
- *The world and its lusts will pass away but what we do for God will abide forever.*

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20).

- *In this verse in Revelation, Jesus was not calling people to salvation. He was calling Christians in the Laodicean church to repent of their lukewarmness. Jesus wanted them to respond to Him knocking at the door of their hearts. He wanted them to open their hearts to Him so they could have dinner together and enjoy sweet fellowship.*
- *Every day Jesus is knocking at the door of our hearts wanting us to invite Him in. He wants to spend time with us so He can share His heart with us and we can share our hearts with Him in prayer, by reading His Word, and meditating on all His wonderful attributes. Even as King David penned, “Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.” (Psalm 119:18).*