

Week 4 Study: Waist-Deep in the Waters of Life Fearless: Finding Strength in the Spirit - Part 1

Washing in the water.

The spiritual discipline we're washing in this week is **Rest**. Finding strength in the Spirit begins with learning to **rest**.

Rest in who He says He is.

Rest in who He says we are.

Rest in His promises.

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines **rest** as:

- to get rest by lying down *especially*: sleep
- to cease from action or motion: refrain from labor or exertion
- to be free from anxiety or disturbance
- to sit or lie fixed or supported
- to remain confident: trust

We see there are many different aspects of rest and many different approaches we can take to this spiritual discipline. Let's begin with the first definition: **sleep**.

In our busy world filled with busy days, we generally have a list of to-do's far exceeding our abilities and resources. Find time this week to **rest** by sleeping.

Choose **one morning** to turn off the alarm. **Sleep as late as you can**. If your body wakes from habit, roll over and ask God to help you rest even longer. Or **choose one afternoon** and **take a nap**. Turn off your phone, close the blinds, turn off the lights, and sleep.

Do not fear wasting time or missing out. Sleep is a way of owning our weakness and trusting God. It is also vital to our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health.

In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.
Psalm 4:8 ESV

Ask God to show you other ways He is calling you to **rest**. Restful practices to help you trust in God's work, Word, and promises.



Wading in the Word.

Scripture reveals the truth of who God is, who we are, and His response to our sickly condition. His truth sets us free from fear and helps us rest in His promises.

Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

Where are we to find our strength?

How do we access God's strength?

Why do we need God's strength?

God calls His people to put on His full armor. Every piece reveals a weakness in need of fortification. We confess our weakness when we cover it with His strength.

Below is a list of the parts of armor, next to each one, write down the weakness we must take ownership of in order to receive His strength. Then name the strength He provides with every part of His armor.

Belt:

Breastplate:

Shoes:

Shield:

Helmet:

Sword:

There is only one weapon listed. What is it?

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There is only one faith action called for in this passage. What is it?

Consider how the weapon can be wielded or used with the faith action.

What might this look like in the battle against the enemy?

How might it give you strength in the Spirit?



Rest.

Rest in the truth of His Word.

Scripture is our source of truth when it comes to knowing God, His promises, and who we are before Him.

Being weak in a world where the fittest and strongest end up on top can cause us much anxiety and fear. The weakest often get bullied by the worldly, but God loves us in our weakness.

Consider the promises of God.

Use a concordance to find His promises for rest and peace.

Take His promise to heart, pray in the Spirit, to build up your most holy faith.

He promises to turn the table on the world, rest in His Word. Let it free you from worry and anxiety.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret...

Psalm 37:7 MEV



Remember your story.

Look back on your life of faith in relation to what we waded through in Ephesians. Read the passage slowly. Read it in light of your past experiences with God. Reference your strips of grave clothes to remember what you need to be freed from.

Reread Ephesians 6:10-18

Think back on your journey of faith to this point.
Consider the following questions.

Where have you failed to **stand** against the schemes of the devil? Or failed to **stand** in this current day of evil?

Where have you allowed the enemy to set you against a flesh and blood person to distract you from the spiritual forces of evil at work? What were the circumstances?

What weaknesses are revealed that you need to own?

What pieces of armor do you need to strap on tight?



Rest.

After reflecting on your story, rest in the work He is doing in your life.

Some synonyms for **rest** are: relax, rest up, unbend (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus).

What in your life keeps you "bent out of shape"? uptight?

How might you lay these to rest? entrust them to God?

Consider what aspects of God's character speak to these areas in your life.
Use the spiritual discipline of praising Him to find rest from what keeps you in knots.

Rest in His power to right every aspect of your past, present, and future.



Discover God's story.

God, who is Almighty and Most High, stoops low to reveal our weaknesses and sin so we might come to know His healing, forgiveness, and strength.

Read Acts 22:1-14

Paul gives this account of his conversion experience in Jerusalem to a large group of Jews who were trying to kill him. The trouble started after Paul was unjustly accused of defiling the temple. When the authorities stepped in to arrest Paul, he saw it as an opportunity to share his story.

At the beginning of his testimony, how did Paul describe himself and his attitude toward God?

Before meeting Jesus, how did he serve God?

What happened to him on the way to Damascus?

What was the first question Jesus asked Paul? What does it reveal about Jesus?

How did Jesus use His strength to reveal Paul's weakness?

How did the revelation of Paul's weakness transform his life? How did he receive God's strength?

Where do you see God's love for Paul? For His people?

As if it were a transparency, lay Paul's experience with God on top of your story.

Where do you see God using His power to reveal your weakness?

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Where do you see Him stooping low to strengthen you?

Where do you see God's love for you?

Paul, after suffering many years and in many ways as a servant of God, received this message from the One who loves him.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."
2Corinthians 12:9 MEV

Can you receive this as a message of love from God to you? How?



Rest.

Rest in God's awesome love for you.

Some antonyms or contrast words for **rest** are: action, work, restlessness, strain.

Where in your life do you feel overworked? overwhelmed? burned out? strained?

Consider if these are areas where God has called you to serve or show up.

If so, are you doing them God's way? Or your way?

If not, ask God for guidance in coming out from under the endeavor, relationship, or circumstance.

Remember, like Paul and Jesus, we will suffer in some ways as we serve and go where God calls us to. Trials and temptations are means of sanctification, but they will never undo us as we face them with God's grace and strength.

Embrace the weaknesses of character God reveals in your life.

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Rest in them as a grace from a God who loves you and seeks to grow you up in Christ.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30 MEV