what if

part three

we spent more time resting in God?

> "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Matt 11:28

How often do you feel that you are operating at maximum capacity, and that life simply doesn't afford you any spare time to just stop and rest? Do you ever feel burnt out physically, emotionally or spiritually? Taking time to rest is important for our health and wellbeing.

What Is Rest?

In the Old Testament, God instituted the Sabbath, a day of total rest from all work. God was so serious about it that breaking the sabbath was punishable by death (Ex 31:15).

The purpose of the Sabbath wasn't just to have a day off though, it was also a day that was set apart as sacred and dedicated to God (Ex 20:8). In fact, more sacrifices were offered at the temple on the Sabbath than any other day of the week!

The Bible tells us that rest is given to us by God (Ex 33:14, Ps 23:1-6, Mk 2:27, Is 40:28-31).

We know that, because of Jesus, we are no longer required to keep the Sabbath (Col 2:16-17, Rom 14:5, Acts 15:19-20). The rest that Jesus offers us is not physical, but a rest from the requirements of the law, and all striving, in our own strength, to please God. Jesus is our rest (Heb 4).

How Do We Rest?

Throughout the Gospels, we see times where Jesus took himself (and his disciples) away from the crowds to pray and spend time in the Father's presence (Mat 14:23, Mk 1:35, 6:31-32 & 46, 14:32, Lk 5:16, 6:12).

Rest is not, necessarily, taking a break from physical exertion, it is making time to dwell in the presence of God, to surrender the worries and distractions of life to Him, to cease from striving to achieve "holiness" in our own strength, and to allow Him to restore, refresh and renew us daily.

How you do this is up to you.

When we consider the significance of rest for the Israelites, and the fact that Jesus made a point of removing himself from the crowds to spend time with the Father, what difference would it make to our spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing if we prioritised time away from the noise, distractions, stresses and worries of life to spend in the presence of our Father, focused on Him, fellowshipping with Him and deepening our relationship with Him?

This Month's Challenge... Set aside 15 minutes each day to rest in Him, laying your burdens at His feet and allowing Him to refresh your soul. *At the end of the month, don't stop, try to make rest a daily "habit" in your life.*