



## Yokes and Burdens: Finding Rest and Peace

### Life Reflection:

What does rest mean to you?

What things in your life can steal your peace?

### 1. God's Design for Rest:

The first time God modeled rest for us was in Genesis 2:2. After creating the heavens and the earth, He rested on the seventh day. That was His example to us—showing the importance of setting aside time to worship, be thankful and renew ourselves after the daily grind of the week.

But rest is more than physical. God also offers us spiritual rest—peace in our spirits and rest for our souls, which can only be found in the Holy Ghost.

*“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.”*

([Hebrews 4:9-10](#), NIV)

**Discussion Point:** What is the difference between physical rest and soul rest?

### 2. The Source of Rest

When anxiety, fear, or unrest overwhelm us, the book of Psalms offers incredible comfort.

#### Psalm 23 (NKJV)

*“The LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.*

*He makes me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside the still waters.*

*He restores my soul;  
He leads me in the paths of righteousness  
For His name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil;  
For You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil;  
My cup runs over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
All the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD FOREVER.”*

Psalm 23 paints a beautiful picture of God's care: green pastures, still waters, the restoration of the soul, and His presence even in life's darkest valleys. Can you feel the peace and calm that comes to you when you read it?

David faced death and enemies, yet he still declared, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me.” God is there. God is good. Even in turmoil, God's goodness and mercy are constant. Don't let life's struggles steal the peace and rest God has promised you.

Another powerful passage to read when we are walking through fear and uncertainty is Psalm 91:1-4. Make it personal: “He will rescue me... He will cover me... His promises are my armor.”

### **Psalm 91:1-4 (NLT)**

*“Those who live in the shelter of the Most High  
will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.  
This I declare about the LORD:  
He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;  
he is my God, and I trust him.  
For he will rescue [me] from every trap  
and protect [me] from deadly disease.  
He will cover [me] with his feathers.  
He will shelter [me] with his wings.  
His faithful promises are [my] armor and protection.”*



Isn't that a beautiful picture of God's love and care? For every trap, every disease, He is my protector and my safety. Look around and decide in your situation, what does it look like to rest in His shadow and be sheltered under His wings? Sometimes, fear and worry can be so

loud in our lives, but we must declare that He is our refuge and protection. We can trust Him no matter what the circumstance. That's what faith is all about.

This is what it means to rest under His wings—to trust Him when fear is loud.

*You will keep [me] in perfect peace,  
Because [my] mind is stayed on You,  
Because I trust in You.*  
([Isaiah 26:3](#), NKJV)



Trust and faith in God are the keys. Guard your peace, because if we don't, fear and anxiety will creep in and overwhelm us. We can start to feel overwhelmed by life in general and all the things happening around us, in our lives, and in the lives of others. We are bombarded with constant bad news filling our minds. We're not meant to carry it, we must lay our burdens at His feet.

**Discussion Point:** What role does trust play in experiencing peace?

### 3. Trading Suffering for Joy

I Peter 5:6-10 (NIV):

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”*

God invites us to cast every care on Him. He is big enough to handle it all—our pain, our worries, our struggles. Too often we cling to anxiety instead of trading it for the joy He offers. We have to be willing to make the trade!

Isaiah 61:3 tells that God wants gives us *“beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”* That's the trade He wants to make!

Sometimes we carry around the weight of the shattered pieces of our life. Those slivers of brokenness and hurt have cut us into pieces. It's time to gather the pieces and give them to Jesus. Only God can put those pieces back together and bring true healing. That happens through prayer and surrendering to His will.

**Discussion Point:** How do anxiety and fear rob us of God's peace? Are you ready to make the trade?

#### 4. Practical Ways to Enter God's Rest

Philippians 4:6-9 (NLT):

*"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*

*And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you."*

The peace of God comes from surrendering everything to Him in prayer and thanking Him for what He's done. Instead of dwelling on what's wrong, fix your thoughts on good things—what is true, pure, lovely, and praiseworthy. That's how we walk in faith—praying focusing on God's goodness, and continuing to obey even when circumstances look difficult.

Jesus Himself gives this invitation:

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

[\(Matthew 11:28-30, KJV\)](#)



In verse 28, Jesus invites us to come to Him and He will give us rest. But in verse 29, we are asked to do something. We are to take His yoke and put it on.

A yoke pairs two oxen together so they can pull in the same direction— usually an experienced ox teaching a younger one. Who do you think is doing most of the work? Imagine being yoked with Jesus! He invites us, "Come unto me," put down your heavy burdens and be in partnership with Me instead of going your own way. He carries the greater weight and teaches us how to walk.

Sometimes, when we think about casting our care on Him and getting rest, we think we can simply put our feet up and sit back in our recliner, letting Him take care of everything. However, we are told to take up our cross and join ourselves in the yoke with Christ.

Rest doesn't mean doing nothing. It means joining Jesus in His work.

Are you being the hands and feet of Jesus to your neighbor next door? “Wait on the Lord” doesn’t mean sitting down and doing nothing. It is actively serving God by reaching out to others. Witnessing, helping your neighbor, serving at your local church. Your effort is required. Find something to do! Take on his yoke and focus on others, not only your own needs and problems. As we focus outward and walk in step with Him, we find true rest and peace.

Even when storms rage around us, His peace remains. Jesus often spoke peace in the midst of storms: “Peace be still” or “Peace be with you.” We have to guard our peace and realize He speaks to our storms and brings peace and rest. He may not always calm the storm immediately, but He can calm us as we walk through it.

### Ways to Enter God’s Rest:

- Spend time in the Word and prayer
- Practice stillness and set aside rest days
- Say “no” to the hustle-and-hurry culture
- Limit media consumption
- Actively serve God and others



### Life Reflection:

When my mom passed away, we used John 14:27 on her funeral program:

*“Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid.” (GNT)*

As my family came together at the funeral home to make the arrangements, several people commented that they had never seen a family come together with such peace and joy to plan a funeral. Even in that season of grief, we were able to walk in the joy of the Lord. My mother’s life of faith modeled what it meant to trust God, and in that moment, we walked in the peace only He can give.

**Discussion Point:** How is God’s peace different from the world’s peace? Where do you most need rest-physically, emotionally, or spiritually?

### 5. A Spiritual Rest:

Just before John 14:27, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit: **John 14:26 (GNT)**,

“The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you” (John 14:26, GNT).

The Spirit is our guide, comfort, source of peace, and place of rest.

**Isaiah 28:11-12** speaks of the Spirit as “the rest” and “the refreshing.”

*“For with stammering lips and another tongue  
He will speak to this people, to whom He said, “This is the rest with which  
You may cause the weary to rest, And This is the refreshing”*

We don't have to live in fear and anxiety. Don't carry your burdens alone, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Take His yoke, it's easy, and the burden is light.

**Prayer:**

Ask God for:

- A deeper awareness and understanding of His peace and rest
- Freedom from anxiety and weariness
- The infilling (or refilling) of the Holy Ghost with peace and power

*Bible study by Shelly Stringfellow*

