

ENTERING GOD's REST

Allow God to restore, replenish
and refocus your heart and mind.

*There remains
therefore a rest to the
people of God.
Hebrews 4:9*

Written By Rev.

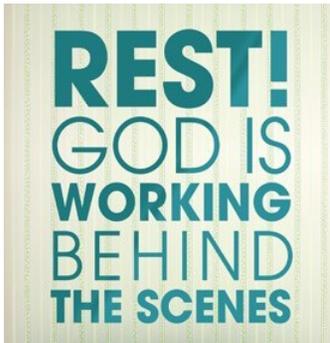
John Marinelli

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Rev. **John Marinelli**
P O Box 831413 Ocala, FL. 34483

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Introduction



There is a rest that God has provided for His children. However, this rest is only for those who walk with the Lord by Faith. If you are a sometimes Christian with very little biblical knowledge, you will most likely miss out on God rest.

One just doesn't stumble into the rest of God. The Lord has to lead you there. That means you have to be tuned into hearing His voice and willing to obey His commands. Otherwise, you will stray off in another direction by yourself. God must above all else, lead you. Now let's look at the scriptural support for such a notion.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restores my soul: he leadeth 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 thou

art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou prepareth a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth 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

Psalm 23 is probably the most well known text in the Holy Scriptures. This is a most beloved psalm and has been quoted in almost every conceivable venue where people need hope. Many a soldier has carried it into battle or placed it next to his heart in a frightening foxhole. Hospitals and funeral homes are also often places of recital. There was a time when every school child would learn it and say it as a daily routine. Sadly, those days are mostly gone because of our government’s hatred of all things godly. However, disdain for the Bible does not diminish the spiritual impact made by its words.

Some folks fear turning their lives over to God because He might lead them somewhere they do not want to go. The 23rd psalm tells us that being led by God is a rewarding experience. We end up in green pastures (Prosperity) and lie down by still waters (Peace-no confusion); Our souls (Mind, Will & Emotions) are restored; The fear of evil fades away; Goodness and mercy follow us through life; We even have a feast right in the midst of our enemies and finally we dwell with the lord forever, that’s a pretty good deal, don’t you think? **However:**

God’s Rest Is Not For Everyone

God does not lead the masses into His rest. He leads His Children. He must be your shepherd. That makes you His sheep. Being a sheep has certain indicators that prove you are really a sheep and not a wolf:

1. Sheep hear their Shepherd’s voice.
2. Sheep come to their Shepherd’s call.
3. Sheep do not question their Shepherd’s commands.
4. Sheep know when the wolf is near and cries for the Shepherd

The atheist, agnostic, pantheist, all others that reject Jesus Christ as well as disobedient Christians do not and will not follow His lead. Thus, they miss the rest of God.

God's Promise of Rest

Hebrews 4:1-11

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word, which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

“So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’”

For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh *day* in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; and again in this *place*: “They shall not enter My rest.”

Since therefore it remains that some *must* enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said:

“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”

For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

We are encouraged to rest from all our works because God rested from all His works. The promise from God is that we can really enter into His rest and because He did, we can rest too from all of our works. However, sometimes we have to labor to enter in. Why? Because they got so caught up in what they were doing that it become really hard to just sit back and leave it up to God.

Someone may be wondering what, “all our works” is. It is not getting up and going to work every day or being a reliable husband or wife.

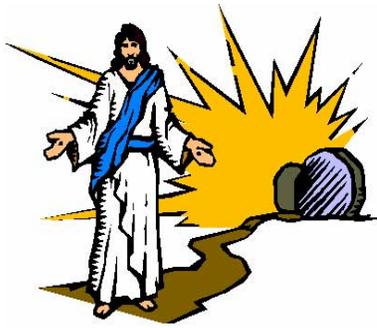
The rest is from trying to attain salvation by our own efforts. God took care of that in His master plan before the foundation of the world. His redemptive plan for man was to sacrifice His only Son as a penalty for sin and offer His salvation to all who would believe. **(John 3:16)**

To rest then is to believe that Jesus was sacrificed for our sin and accept Him as our savior. We are to put our trust in Him and stop trying to buy God's favor with good works. **(Ephesians 2:8-9)**

That which we let go of is the anxiety, fear, confusion, worry and control over our own lives. We are to step off the throne of our life. That seat is now reserved for Jesus. We can trust Him because He said from the cross; **"It Is Finished"** which fulfilled God's rest from all His works on the 7th day of creation. He already made plans for us to rest in Him.

Jesus, Our Sabbath Rest

From Got/Questions.com



The key to understanding how Jesus is our Sabbath rest is the Hebrew word *sabat*, which means "to rest or stop or cease from work." The origin of the Sabbath goes back to Creation. After creating the heavens and the earth in six days, God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" **(Genesis 2:2)**. This doesn't mean that God was tired and needed a rest. We know that God is omnipotent, literally "all-powerful." He has all the power in the universe, He never tires, and His most arduous expenditure of energy does not diminish His power one bit. So, what does it mean that God rested on the seventh day? Simply that He stopped what He was doing. He ceased from His labors. This is important in understanding the establishment of the Sabbath day and the role of Christ as our Sabbath rest.

God used the example of His resting on the seventh day of Creation to establish the principle of the Sabbath day rest for His people. In **Exodus 20:8-11** and **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**, God gave the Israelites the fourth of His Ten Commandments. They were to "remember" the Sabbath day and "keep it holy." One day out of every seven, they were to rest from their

labors and give the same day of rest to their servants and animals. This was not just a physical rest, but a cessation of laboring. Whatever work they were engaged in was to stop for a full day each week. The Sabbath day was established so the people would rest from their labors, only to begin again after a one-day rest.

The various elements of the Sabbath symbolized the coming of the Messiah, who would provide a permanent rest for His people. Once again the example of resting from our labors comes into play. With the establishment of the Old Testament Law, the Jews were constantly "laboring" to make themselves acceptable to God. Their labors included trying to obey a myriad of do's and don'ts of the ceremonial law, the Temple law, the civil law, etc. Of course they couldn't possibly keep all those laws, so God provided an array of sin offerings and sacrifices so they could come to Him for forgiveness and restore fellowship with Him, but only temporarily. Just as they began their physical labors after a one-day rest, so, too, did they have to continue to offer sacrifices. **Hebrews 10:1** tells us that the law "can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship." But these sacrifices were offered in anticipation of the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross, who "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right of God" (**Hebrews 10:12**). Just as He rested after performing the ultimate sacrifice, He sat down and rested—ceased from His labor of atonement because there was nothing more to be done, ever. Because of what He did, we no longer have to "labor" in law-keeping in order to be justified in the sight of God. Jesus was sent so that we might rest in God and in what He has provided.



Another element of the Sabbath day rest, which God instituted as a foreshadowing of our complete rest in Christ is that He blessed it, sanctified it, and made it holy. Here again we see the symbol of Christ as our Sabbath rest—the holy, perfect Son of God who sanctifies and makes holy all who believe in Him. God sanctified Christ, just as He sanctified the Sabbath day, and sent Him into the world (**John 10:36**) to be our sacrifice for sin. In Him we find complete rest from the labors of our self-effort, because He alone is holy and righteous. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that

in him we might become the righteousness of God" (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). We can now cease from our spiritual labors and rest in Him, not just one day a week, but always.

Jesus can be our Sabbath rest in part because He is "Lord of the Sabbath" (**Matthew 12:8**). As God incarnate, He decides the true meaning of the Sabbath because He created it, and He is our Sabbath rest in the flesh. When the Pharisees criticized Him for healing on the Sabbath, Jesus reminded them that even they, sinful as they were, would not hesitate to pull a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath. Because He came to seek and save His sheep who would hear His voice (**John 10:3,27**) and enter into the Sabbath rest He provided by paying for their sins, He could break the Sabbath rules. He told the Pharisees that people are more important than sheep and the salvation He provided was more important than rules. By saying, "The Sabbath was made



for man, not man for the Sabbath" (**Mark 2:27**), Jesus was restating the principle that the Sabbath rest was instituted to relieve man of his labors, just as He came to relieve us of our attempting to achieve salvation by our works. We no longer rest for only one day, but forever cease our laboring to attain God's favor. Jesus is our rest from works now, just as He is the door to heaven, where we will rest in Him forever.

Hebrews 4 is the definitive passage regarding Jesus as our Sabbath rest. The writer to the Hebrews exhorts his readers to "enter in" to the Sabbath rest provided by Christ. After three chapters of telling them that Jesus is superior to the angels and that He is our Apostle and High Priest, he pleads with them to not harden their hearts against Him, as their fathers hardened their hearts against the Lord in the wilderness. Because of their unbelief, God denied that generation access to the holy land, saying, "They shall not enter into My rest" (**Hebrews 3:11**). In the same way, the writer to the Hebrews begs his readers not to make the same mistake by rejecting God's Sabbath rest in Jesus Christ. "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience" (**Hebrews 4:9-11**).

There is no other Sabbath rest besides Jesus. He alone satisfies the requirements of the Law, and He alone provides the sacrifice that atones for

sin. He is God's plan for us to cease from the labor of our own works. We dare not reject this one-and-only Way of salvation (**John 14:6**). God's reaction to those who choose to reject His plan is seen in Numbers 15. A man was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, in spite of God's plain commandment to cease from all labor on the Sabbath. This transgression was a known and willful sin, done with unblushing boldness in broad daylight, in open defiance of the divine authority. "Then the LORD said to Moses, the man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp" (verse 35). So it will be to all who reject God's provision for our Sabbath rest in Christ. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (**Hebrews 2:3**).

Spiritually Speaking

Now that I have shown the scripture in context and explained the meaning is of the text in Hebrews, let's look at the spiritual applications. As Christians, we have made Jesus Lord and seek to walk with Him through this world. However, evil is on every side and it is hard to live out our faith in Christ. We strive to make ends meet. We worry over our children and their future. We hope that sickness or sorrow will not knock on our door. We are anxious, fearful, and when someone says to us, "How are you doing today", we reply with, "I am just hanging in there".

This is a word picture of a Christian without faith. They are doing just what the Old Testament saints did, not believing. Their unbelief kept them from entering into God's rest. We can fall into the same scenario and miss out on the promise.

How We Enter In

Our labor to enter in is believing. What do we believe? We believe that God rested on the 7th day from all His work. That means His master plan was complete. It means that God saw every need, every situation and every prayer in His foreknowledge and scheduled them for action in His master plan.

The Law was seen long before it appeared. In the fullness of time, it came to expose sin and bring death to all that sin. (**Lev.18:20**) Accordingly, in the fullness of time, Christ came with a new law...the law of the Spirit of Life

that brought us liberty and salvation. **(Romans 8:2)** This new law set us free from the old one. However, both were in God's master plan waiting to be releases. Thus it is with our daily lives. We are in God's master plan and He works everything together for our good and His glory. **(Romans 8:28)** All we have to do is trust in Jesus; believe that He is in control; and wait for the manifestation of our deliverance/supply.

We enter in by faith and we remain at rest knowing that the battle is the Lords and He is our shield against evil and lack in this life. He will provide. He will lead us to green pastures and still waters. He will restore our souls.

Unbelieving Christians

The Bible tells us that some of the Old Testament saints did not believe and they perished in the wilderness. They never entered the rest of God that was promised to them. They never entered the Promised Land. However, the amazing thing was that God still took care of them in the wilderness. Their shoes did not wear out. Nor did their clothing. They ate manna from heaven. Not one was feeble in mind or spirit. They still died in the wilderness. Here's what this says to me:

1. Life can be good but you can still miss out on God's very best.
2. It is better to fear (reverence) God than to fear giants and men of power and authority that dwell in your future.
3. God's blessings are always connected with Faith. No faith, no promise, no divine destiny.
4. Fear will hinder faith. They are two sides to the same coin. But faith crushes fear and brings victory.

Rest My Child

Rest my child, says the Lord.
Take thy peace and be restored.
I have provided, thy mouth to feed.
From the beginning, I knew your need.

Do not worry, fret or even fear,
For, my child, I am always near
To bless thy soul with love and grace,
To be with thee, face to face.

Come, my child, near to my throne.
Do not allow your faith to roam.
For those who will not believe
Can never find rest in times of need.

My Word shall see you through.
My grace I freely give to you
That you should rest, thy soul to keep,
Forever delivered from unbelief.

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5. One's destiny rest in their own hands. We choose the path to walk in life and what lies at the end of the road. Life or death is in the power of our own choices.
6. God is looking for a partner to rule the earth and has chosen us, His children...those who are willing to stand with Him.

Living In God's Rest

Joyce Meyer

“When I'm *trying* to believe, I haven't entered God's rest. But when I *do* believe, I have complete rest in Him. Living by faith is not a struggle—it's rest. And you can enter into God's rest in every area of your life. I've discovered that the stress in my life is caused by the way I approach my circumstances and the attitude I have toward them. It was a turning point for me when I realized that the world will probably never change, but I could learn how to change the way I go about handling situations that are challenging.

One key to this is knowing that as believers in Christ, we are partners with God—we have a part and He has a part in everything He calls us to do. When we don't do the part we can do and we try to do His part, that's when we live stressed-out with worry, fear, anxiety, frustration, no peace and no joy.



The reason this happens sometimes is because we think God needs our help. We meditate on the problem—rolling it over and over in our mind, worrying, and trying to figure out how things should work out. It's like we're telling God, “I kind of think you need my help, and I'm not sure you can take care of this situation, Lord.”

We need to realize that worrying is useless! It's like sitting in a rocking chair, rocking all day, wearing yourself out and getting nowhere. Trusting God means we give up worrying, reasoning, and anxiety and we enter into His rest with simple childlike faith—we live by grace through faith!” (Excerpts fro her article, “Living In God's Rest)

God Means What He Says

The greatest kind of relationship with God is the one where He takes care of you in this life and the one to come. That's what God is promising. This is what the scripture calls rest. But many of God's children because they, for some reason or another won't believe that God means what He says.

It's really amazing that God offers all of this to His children and some just won't believe it. These folks find it easier to resist the goodness of God. One day they will face their heavenly Father and give an account for their unbelief. For now, they continue wandering in the wilderness of anxiety, confusion, depression and worry over every life situation having no rest...no peace. And so the warning from the Spirit of God is **“Harden Not Your Hearts”**. Don't be like unbelieving Israel and miss God's perfect rest.

Benefits of Entering Into God's Rest

When we enter into the rest of God, we benefit in these important ways:

1. We have continual access into God's rest where we find peace.

It's God's rest. That means He is at rest knowing that His master plan is activated and being accomplished. If we know this, we can also rest knowing that He is in control. The key is, who is in control of things, God or you? I say, “Continual Access” because we, being of a fallen nature, sometimes freak out and exit God's rest. However, having access all the time is the privilege of returning back to His rest anytime we want. ***(Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.)*** Hebrews 4:16

2. We gain a new perspective on life and eternity.

It's our life and we can live it anyway we so desire. Over the years, we form a perspective that drives our thought process and shapes our destiny. If that perspective is negative, we see life that way. We worry, get anxious, become fearful and generally live a defeated life. Becoming a Christian is just a title.

It does not change you. You change you. How we see things is the motivator for how we act and speak and think. When we see that God is really in control, we start shifting our perspective from a negative to a positive. We begin to trust in Jesus and start saying that everything will work out. This changes our life dramatically. *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”* Romans 8:28

3. We do not beat ourselves up when we fall short.

When we realize that God is not kidding and life is not a video game, we discover His magnificent grace. He has forgiven us our trespasses. We are free to worship Him and have fellowship through His Spirit. (*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*) I John 1:9 Another great scripture proof is II Corinthians 5:21, *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* We can go on in life believing God that He is in control, even of our salvation.

4. We start being who we are in Christ and not what others think we are.

If you are truly saved by the blood of Jesus, you will become a “New Creature” so the Bible says, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* II Corinthian 5:17 What that new creature looks like is mostly a spiritual image and reflection of God. This can be seen by reading Galatians 5:22, which is: Love, Peace, Joy, Longsuffering, Self Control, and all the other fruit of God’s Spirit. The opinions of others, the critical attacks of Satan and all the rest just fall away. We do not dwell in them anymore. Our new man serves the lord with great Joy.

5. We have true fellowship with God and we rest in His grace.

Does God talk to you? I hear His voice all the time. Wouldn’t it be strange for a father to not talk to his children? What kind of father neglects his kids like that? God sees to it that we hear His voice and He always listens for ours. Remember, His Holy Spirit dwells within us and leads us along life’s way. As we read the Bible we learn of Him. As we apply the truths found in

the Bible, we grow in Faith and have fellowship with Him. *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:”* Romans 8:16

6. We see God at work fighting our battles for us. The battle is the Lords.

If we are truly at rest, we do not fight every battle that comes our way. In fact, Paul tells us that we can simply resist the devil steadfast in the faith. *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”* I Peter 5:8-9 We need to allow God to be God in our lives and keep Him in control of things.

7. We become more thankfully towards God as He reveals His will and shows us the way.

As we rest in God, we grow in grace. We see His hand in our life and hear His voice. All of this makes us more thankful than ever before. Our thoughts move to an old expression that is found in **Psalm 124**,

“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: Then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.”

Our praise and adoration for God is because we know that *“If it had not been the LORD”*, we would not have been able to stand.

I am sure you can find more benefits. Mine are just some that I know to be true.

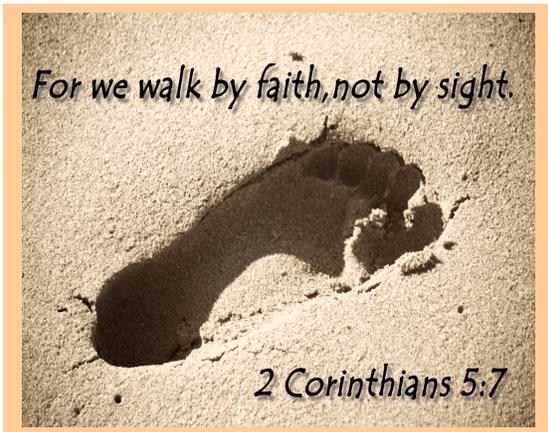
Conclusion

There remains a rest for the children of God. It was born out of God's rest on the 7th day of creation when He rested from all His work. It is a Sabbath Rest that was fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

It was Jesus that completed the Law and opened up the door of grace for those who believed in Him. He was the one that lived the life that God expected man to live, a righteous life.

He was the only one that could die for the sins of mankind, because He was, as it were, the spotless Lamb of God, that was foreshadowed in the Hebrew sacrifices of the Old Testament. It was He that became the Captain of our Salvation and Lord of Heaven and Earth.

To enter into God's rest is to receive Christ as Savior and lord and to rest in His finished work of Grace. This entire concept of Rest is wrapped up in John's record of what Jesus said... ***For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*** **John 3:16**



We know that we are in God's rest when we are not worrying; have no anxiety; have no fear of the future; when we are not striving to do good deeds to be accepted; when we are at peace, full of joy and love; have patients, and can see ourselves in eternity with Jesus.

The only thing we are instructed to fear is unbelief. We always want to believe regardless of what we see or feel. God is always with us and He alone is in control. This is the perspective that should rule our lives and shape our actions. Unbelief has no place in our Spiritual walk with Jesus. We walk by faith and not by sight. **II Corinthians 5:7**

***May the Lord bless you and keep you
in all that you do.***