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The Cost of Rest

For use: July 18 - 24

Texts: 2 Samuel 11:1-27; 2 Samuel 12:1-23; Genesis 3:1-8; 1 John 1:9

Uptin Saiidi, multimedia journalist for CNBC International, recently checked into the Bali Silent Retreat where there are two rules: no technology, and no talking. Although it seems easy enough (on the surface) to follow those two simple rules, Saiidi reflects that, “I cringed at the idea of attempting 72 hours of total silence where I’d be able to do nothing more than eat, sleep, read or just sit and stare into nearby rice fields.” [1]

He reports, “The lack of constant sound and stimulation was hard to manage. The final day was certainly the most challenging. Overall, I didn’t miss the phone as a calling device, but I did find myself missing the things it provided: music, information and connecting with people.”

Afterwards, though he felt more relaxed, it wasn’t long until he was back to his pre-retreat technological habits. Saiidi equates the experience to a nutritional detox, and concludes that it’s equally beneficial to engage in a technological detox from time to time.

Just as Uptin Saiidi needed to set aside his smart phone so he could fully experience the beauty of a sunset over a rice field, so true rest for us requires that we set aside the tyranny of the mundane and focus on our source of rest—Jesus Christ, who frees us from that slavery. Once we experience true rest in Christ, we’ll wonder why it took us so long.

In our current technology-infused rat race, we need to acknowledge that Sabbath rest alone may not be enough. We may need to experience other occasional rest periods where we disengage from the world to center on Jesus—even for a few minutes each day—and reflect on what’s really important in life.

There may be a cost to experiencing this divine rest, but once we are fully immersed in it, we'll discover that the price is cheap enough for the rewards we receive.

~Chuck Burkeen

[1] <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/05/23/silent-retreat-what-a-3-day-digital-detox-did-for-me.html>

For Reflection

Connecting: How do you disengage from the rat race of life? Is this an easy thing for you to do? What is there in your current life situation that hinders your ability to truly experience rest?

Sharing: King David got himself (and others) into big trouble by committing adultery and murder during his down time away from his army. What was his biggest problem?

1. His arrogance
2. He didn't spend that time focusing on God
3. In vulnerable moments, David gave in to temptations
4. He had a strong relationship with God, but that led him into the presumption that he could sin with impunity and God would look the other way
5. For David, his rest time developed into restlessness; he was so used to the distractions of leadership that he didn't know what to do with himself
6. Other:

Applying: What are some disciplines that you see are necessary to experience a truly restful spiritual retreat? What would it cost you in time and resources to engage in such a retreat?

Valuing: On a scale of one (totally chilled out) to ten (about ready to explode), what is your current stress level? What can you do in the next day or two to lower the effects of that stress in your life? Commit to practicing one daily discipline to combat the stress you are experiencing.

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Paul Richardson
Executive Director

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