

## RETURN TO A SHALOMIC LIFE

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### I. A “Shalomic” Life:

A. What does a “normal,” “returned,” “shalomic” life look like? It is one where we are returned to the Source and to the Order. Do you want to settle for just survival, or do you want “thrival?”

B. Movement toward shalom happens to the extent that we return to the created order. That is an ideological and theological journey.

C. If you find yourself significantly slouching toward burnout, what will it take for you to reverse the process? You need some R&R&R: Recharge, Reflect, and Restructure.

1. Wayne Cordeiro in *Leading On Empty* quotes a counselor who helped him outline his pathway back from burnout: “You need to **recharge, reflect** on what the trigger points were, and finally, **restructure** the way you’re living.”<sup>1</sup>
2. The time needed for recharging from deep burnout will be a lot longer than you think. Remember the years the land of Israel had to lie fallow.
3. This article will give tips that may help you **recharge, reflect** and make plans to **restructure** the way you’re living. I’m not going to move in order through these activities, but I want to get the labels in your minds.

### II. Return to the Source – renouncing independence and moving toward restored relationship with God<sup>2</sup>:

#### A. First Step: Acknowledge your need for Rest

1. “We do not feel how much energy we spend on each activity, because we imagine we will always have more energy at our disposal. This one little conversation, this one extra phone call, this one quick mtg., what can it cost? But it does cost, it drains yet another drop of our life. Then, at the end of days, weeks, months, years, we collapse, we burn out, and cannot see where it happened. It happened in a thousand unconscious events, tasks, and responsibilities. Without rest, we cannot sustain the energy needed to have life. We refuse to rest at our peril – and yet in a world where overwork is seen as a professional virtue, many of us feel we can legitimately be stopped only by physical illness or collapse...”<sup>3</sup>
2. “Some people move fast and busily furious through life because they are afraid of the suffering, loss, sorrow, painful grief, and unspoken fears that they will feel in the

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<sup>1</sup> Cordeiro, Wayne, 2009. Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion. Bloomington: Bethany House Publishers. Pg. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Cloud, Henry and John Townsend. 2001. How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Pg. 28-36.

<sup>3</sup> Muller, Wayne. 1999. Sabbath: Restoring the sacred rhythm of rest . pg. 19.

quiet and rest. While our speed may keep us safe, it also keeps us malnourished. It keeps us from the things/relationships that would really make us safe.”<sup>4</sup>

3. “One measure for whether or not you’re rested enough—besides falling asleep in board meetings—is to ask yourself this: *How much do I care about the things I care about?* When we lose concern for people, both the lost and the found, for the bride of Christ, for friendship, for truth and beauty and goodness; when we cease to laugh when our children laugh (and instead yell at them to quiet down) or weep when our spouses weep (and instead wish they didn’t get so emotional); when we hear news of trouble among our neighbors and our first thought is that we hope it isn’t going to involve us—*when we stop caring about the things we care about*—that’s a signal we’re too busy. We have let ourselves be consumed by the things that feed the ego but starve the soul. Busyness kills the heart. And then the moment of reckoning comes—when we must meet the situation with genuine, heartfelt compassion, wisdom, courage—and nothing’s there, only grim resignation and a dull resentment that we got dragged into this.”<sup>5</sup>
4. God’s answer to all of this – Sabbath: We were made with the need for rest. We were made with the need to be still and be reminded that we are dependent on God. (See our article on *The Gift of Sabbath* found on our RESOURCES webpage.)

B. Second Step: Recognize His presence and sovereign activity.

- a. A Jewish Sabbath prayer: “Days pass, years vanish, and we walk sightless among miracles.”<sup>6</sup>
- b. Look for the “God moments.”
- c. Practicing His Presence...no matter how things go. We give a practical example below.

III. Return to the Order – our submission to God and to His limits – He is God and we are not:

A. Become like Jesus, Whose earthly life was characterized by rhythms of work and rest.

B. Admit and accept your personal limitations:

1. Reframe. (See our *Ministry Values Grid* found on our RESOURCES webpage.) Be as generous and compassionate with yourself as you are with others!
2. Beware the inner critic! Learn to distinguish the voice of the Holy Spirit from that of the accuser.
3. Work smarter instead of harder<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Muller, Wayne. 1999. *Sabbath: Restoring the sacred rhythm of rest* . pg. 56.

<sup>5</sup> Buchanan, Mark. 2006. *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath*. Nashville: W Publishing Group. Pg. 48.

<sup>6</sup> Baab, Lynne M. *Sabbath Keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2005. 74.

<sup>7</sup> These subpoints are from Maslach, C., *Burnout: The Cost of Caring*. Cambridge, MA. Malor Books. 2003. p. 147 ff.

4. Analyze your giftedness and job setting.
5. Set realistic, measurable goals.
  - a. Break the task into smaller, specific, concrete pieces.
  - b. Celebrate the signposts of accomplishment.
  - c. Let others help you!
6. Do the same thing differently.
7. Build in breaks. Recognize silence as energizing.
8. Get a life outside of work! Get a hobby! Laugh!

C. Admit and accept our corporate limitations: Commit to congruence between our resources and our ministry. Let resources enter the equation. This is recognizing God's control over the flow of resources. Give me an example in scripture where God provided less than what was necessary for His people to accomplish His will! God's default is to provide in abundance (Ex: Temple giving).

#### IV. Return to the Roles – practicing dependency, controlling what we are meant to control, and relinquishing all else:

A. We become dependent and give up our independent stance before God and others.

B. We give up the role of playing judge with ourselves and with others...

C. We give up trying to control things we cannot control and yield to and trust God's control. Also, we regain control of what we were created to control in the first place, which is ourselves.

D. Giving up external control and regaining internal control.<sup>8</sup>

1. Give up external control:
  - a. Refine your theology of suffering: "Peace is when you FEEL it ALL, but you KNOW ALL is well."<sup>9</sup>
  - b. Yield to God the things that are in His control. What things are those, by the way?
  - c. Develop grieving rituals. (See our bibliography on our GOOD READS webpage for some excellent reading on grieving.)
  - d. Become hospitable to interruption. "'My whole life I have been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted', Henri Nouwen said near the end of his life, 'until I discovered the interruptions were my work.'"<sup>10</sup>
2. Regain internal control (boundaries):

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<sup>8</sup> Cloud, Henry and John Townsend. 2001. How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Pg. 53 (Points A-D)

<sup>9</sup> Missionary Linda Crouch, Nov. 5, 2008, the day after the death of her husband, Jim Crouch.

<sup>10</sup> Nouwen, Henri J.M., 1986. Reaching Out. New York: Bantam. Quoted in Buchanan, Mark. 2006. The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath. Nashville: W Publishing Group. Pg. 79.

- a. Move toward personal integration.
  - b. Let your “Yes” be “yes” and your “No” be “no.” An internal “no” nullifies an external “yes.”
  - c. Learn to give cheerfully, not reluctantly or under compulsion. Leaving margin in your life helps make this possible.
- E. Develop a Personal Wellness Plan (See a sample plan on our RESOURCES webpage).

## V. Recap – a person who is returning to a “Shalomic” life...

A. Is returning to the Source (Renouncing independence and moving toward restored relationship with God) by:

1. Recognizing his need for rest and actually resting.
2. Practicing God’s presence and recognizing His sovereign activity.

B. Is returning to the Order (Submitting to God and to His limits – recognizing Who is God and who He isn’t) by:

1. Imitating Jesus’ rhythms of work and rest.
2. Admitting and accepting personal and corporate limitations.

C. Is returning to the Roles (Practicing dependency, controlling what he is meant to control and relinquishing all else) by:

1. Giving up the role of playing judge with others and ourselves.
2. Giving up external control and regaining internal control.

## VI. The pathway to joy...the pathway to Shalom!

Do you believe that you can have an impact on your position in the Wellness Spectrum?  
Do you believe that you ought to?

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