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Rest, in Peace

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Rest, in Peace

Who does not become tired, and need rest? But do we actually rest after work, after shopping, meeting, driving, walking, speaking and listening all day? Some turn on the TV. But does it provide rest? Often, not. We might occasionally be able to ignore unresolved events and their accompanying feelings, but habitual or frequent avoidance of reflection about our daily experiences makes rest unlikely to occur.

Real rest is connected with peace. The fastest, most efficient means of getting rest is to seek inner peace. If we are pushed and pulled in our thoughts, and our emotions move this way and that, we cannot obtain rest by means of a short nap or a few minutes of silence. We have to deal with agitation by facing it, not ignoring it. If we seek and strive for peace, rest will follow.

Sometimes we are so tired that we desperately want to fall into sleep, but sleep does not come; we are so agitated that we cannot rest. On the other hand, people who carry huge burdens of unresolved hurts may sleep, for many hours, but wake up literally restless. Sleep alone does not provide escape from domineering thoughts, fears, and anger. God created us to be free, not slaves of negative movements in our minds and hearts. If we go to God with the conflicts and concerns that trouble our spirits, we will come to a state of peace, enabling rest.

We all need God to help us work through some of the mental and emotional challenges of every-day life. Compulsions are not the exclusive characteristic of alcoholics. Many of us find that at times our own minds are so disorderly, pushy, and insistent on activity that we cannot rest. On our own, we can confront these situations through deep breathing, stretching exercises, or strong physical exercise. But we do not have to do it all ourselves. We can turn to God who cares about every aspect of our lives, including the hurts and hits, the stresses and concerns about the whole range of our interpersonal relationships of family, work, and friends. God who made us will surely help us.

We children of God can bring anything and everything to God. And, we can remain in the conversation until we achieve a level of resolution that makes it possible for us to rest. Perhaps we come to a decision to seek reconciliation with someone, or we gain a clear understanding of what is taking place in and around us, or an acceptance of what has happened. We are enabled to move from a state of pain and struggle to an awareness of God as our friend, God who understands, accepts,

and loves us, God whose power saves us from the inner and unnamed forces that churn within us, out of our control.

When we have gained some perspective and balance through our honest prayer, and have turned to God away from our focus on being a victim or on gaining revenge, peace ensues, and rest easily and naturally follows. Or, we might go to God with pain and anger, and in the very midst of presenting these feelings, fall asleep. When we wake up, we probably have no "answers," and have received no explanations of why we suffered our negative experiences, but we are rested.

Resting, in peace, is not for the dead, but for the living. Those who have gone before us through death are no longer harried, hurrying, or worrying, nor are they subject to depletion of energy, as we are. We do become tired, and we also experience various forms of stress. As long as we live, we need rest, in peace.