**REST**

*“God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you.”*

- St. Augustine

*“God does not write the music of our lives without a plan. Our part is to learn the tune and not be discouraged during the rests. They are not to be slurred over or omitted, nor used to destroy the melody or to change the key. If we will only look up, God Himself will count the time for us. With our eyes on Him, our next note will be full and clear. If we sorrowfully say to ourselves, “there is no music in a rest,” let us not forget that the rest is part of the making of the music.”* -John Ruskin

Rest is probably the last thing we associate with a big, driven metropolis like New York. However, it’s so important, that God created a whole day to rest from His work, a day that He Himself rested (Genesis 2:2-3). Taking a Sabbath rest is not only a necessity, but a command (Exodus 20:8-10). So if rest is healthy and good, why is it so difficult to give in to it? (see Psalm 127:1-2.)

While in school studying the arts, you are often free to set your own pace in how much you work. There are always things to be doing to advance your work, career, people to meet, and shows to attend. It is so easy to look around at everyone else and see all of the steps they’re taking to get ahead and feel like *stillness = apathy*. As soon as you stop and take time to rest, a flood of ‘to do’s’ may come rushing into your head, which can produce anxiety leading to a sense of failure. You end up running yourself into the ground trying to do things on your own strength. But for the Christian, rest is a priority that is tied to being in the Lord’s presence and full trust in Him (read Matthew 11:28-30, Luke 10:38-42.)

**THINK:** We can go against the grain of our culture in the way we work and rest. How would this display Christ to others? What if we as believers were known as people who put God before our work and took time to rest? How would that affect those around us?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. When do you struggle with the concept of ‘rest’? At what pace are you going through life?

2. When is the last time you took time to really rest and be still before the Lord?

3. It can be hard to actually make ourselves stop and rest. How might you make yourself accountable to others so that you don’t neglect your rest? What are some consequences if we don’t do this?

4. What does the Bible have to say about rest? Which passages of Scripture provide rest for your soul?

5. Who are people in your life that bring you rest? What are some places or activities where you experience peace and rest (i.e. running, keeping a journal, parks, museum, etc)?

6. What are some of the pitfalls of your chosen discipline? How do they trigger your anxiety or prohibit your rest?

**ENGAGING WITH OTHERS:** Seek out others and ask them about their perspective on rest and having a balanced life. Actively listen to them by asking thoughtful questions and resisting the urge to share your perspective or opinion. Ask clarifying questions when they pause or stop – but don’t interrupt while they are sharing. Sincerely thank them for sharing with you. If it is appropriate or they are interested offer to tell your story as it relates to your understanding of rest.

**REFLECTION (in a group or pairs):** What emotions, actions or thoughts does this concept of ‘rest’ bring into focus for you? Develop a thoughtful, creative response to what God is teaching you about where you need to rest. What could you create out of a place of true rest?

**PRAYER:**

*“My Dear Lord,*

*I depend wholly upon thee, wean me from all other dependences. Thou art my all, thou dost overrule all and delight in me.*

*Thou art the foundation of goodness, how can I distrust thee? How be anxious about what happens to me? In the light of thy preciousness the world and all its enjoyments are infinitely poor:*

*I value the favour of men no more than pebbles. Amid the blessings I receive from thee may I never lose the heart of a stranger.*

*May I love thee, my Benefactor, in all my benefits, not forgetting that my greatest danger arises from my advantages. Produce in me self- despair that will make Jesus precious to me, delightful in all his offices, pleasurable in all his ways, and may I love his commands as well as his promises.*

*Help me to discern between true and false love, the one consisting of supreme love to thee, the other not, the former uniting thy glory and man’s happiness that they may become one common interest, the latter disjointing and separating them both, seeking the latter with neglect of the former.*

*Teach me that genuine love is different in kind from that wrought by rational arguments or the motive of self-interest, that such love is a pleasing passion affording joy to the mind where it is.*

*Grant me grace to distinguish between the genuine and the false, and to rest in thee who art all love.”*

**Resting in God, from The Valley of Vision**

**OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL READING:**

Mark 6:31, Isaiah 40, Psalm 23, Psalm 61, Psalm 63

Psalm 116, Psalm 84, Psalm 40, Psalm 37