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- Part: 42 [Look for the Returning Jesus](#)
- Part: 41 [Living Contentedly for Christ: Stewardship](#)
- Part: 40 [Giving God What Is His: Stewardship](#)
- Part: 39 [Give All to God: Stewardship](#)
- Part: 38 [Live for What Is Eternal-I](#)
- Part: 38 [Live for What Is Eternal-II](#)
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## Living Contentedly for Christ: Stewardship



Part 41 (050703PM)

[Return to previous Page](#) | [Print](#)

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### Week 41

## Living Contentedly for Christ (Stewardship—[Matthew 11:28-30](#))

As the end of days approaches, you can find hope as you learn to live contentedly for Christ!

### SUNDAY: A Lifelong Refuge for the Weary

*"... I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. ... I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:11-13, Emphasis added).*

This is the last of my three-part "Life Stewardship Series." The first week of the series (Week 39) we learned how to give our all to God. Last week, we focused on how to give God what is His in this life. Now we will learn how to live contentedly and victoriously for Christ—our Great Physician's antidote for worldliness.

Worldliness itself can be a symptom of being totally stressed out, weary with the continual "drip, drip, drip" of the demands of living in a fast-paced society that is spinning out of control. As a result, many Christians look to distractions that will give even a moment's reprieve from their problems. But that is not a long term solution, and it certainly does not contribute to building a fireproof life.

If anyone should have been stressed out and weary, it was Jesus. He lived the perfect human life, yet He lived in a whirlwind of activity. He was constantly eating, walking, talking, and sleeping with twelve men who never seemed to leave Him alone. His life was so full of people and ministry that He often didn't have a chance to stop to eat because vast crowds and desperate individuals sought him out. He was even chided, rebuked, and scoffed at by His own family.

Jesus was also the personal target of Satan, who tempted Him, tried to derail Him, and entered people to drive them to destroy Him. He was thus attacked by every demon that could be rounded up to scream at Him, thrash around in front of Him, and seek to bother Him. And through Satan's influence, civil and religious authorities hounded him, always plotting to catch Him and take Him off for punishment and execution.

Yet, in the midst of all that, Jesus was peaceful, calm, focused, and confidently following God's will.

**How did He do that?** If we follow Christ, we can find His secret. Though we can never be sinless, we can learn to let the Holy Spirit empower us to imitate Jesus' pattern for the perfect life in step with God's will. Although He lived an extremely full, busy, and demanding life, every time Jesus is seen in the Scriptures He is composed, and led by the Spirit.

Jesus was God, yet He lived the perfect human life as a man. What kept that perfect life on earth so strong? It was time alone with God that rested His soul. He had cultivated the discipline of resting in His Father by being alone with Him. Jesus had learned the secret of waiting on God. His whole life reveals that intimate communion with God is needed to live a godly life full of power, under the control of God's Spirit. And He calls each of us to do the same. So you must learn to seek and find a solitary place in your life to be alone with God regularly. If you do, this is what you will find in Christ:

- Christ is your "holy place" and your "righteousness." He is the only Refuge when you feel unclean, defiled, or guilty.

Part: 35 Meditate on the Beauty of Jesus-I  
 Part: 35 Meditate on the Beauty of Jesus-II  
 Part: 34 Feel the Compassion of Jesus  
 Part: 33 Marvel at the Genuine Jesus-II  
 Part: 33 Marvel at the Genuine Jesus-I  
 Part: 32 Keep Christ's Perspective  
 Part: 31 Remember God's Plan of the Ages  
 Part: 30 Behold the Mystery of Jesus  
 Part: 29 Watch Christ's Judgment-I  
 Part: 29 Watch Christ's Judgment-II  
 Part: 28 See Christ's Patience-I  
 Part: 28 See Christ's Patience-II  
 Part: 27 Remember Christ's Love  
 Part: 26 Understand Christ's Wrath-I  
 Part: 26 Understand Christ's Wrath-II  
 Part: 25 Admire Christ's Perfect Sacrifice  
 Part: 24 See Christ in the Old Testament: From Nahum to Malachi  
 Part: 23 See Christ in the Old Testament: From Hosea to Micah  
 Part: 22 See Christ in the Old Testament: From Genesis to Daniel  
 Part: 21 Adore Christ's Loveliness  
 Part: 20 Heed Christ's Request: The Church at Laodicea  
 Part: 19 Enjoy Christ's Approval: The Church at Philadelphia  
 Part: 18 Know Christ Personally: The Church at Sardis  
 Part: 17 Honor Christ's Holiness: The Church at Thyatira  
 Part: 16 Cling to Christ: The Church at Pergamos-I  
 Part: 16 Cling to Christ: The Church at Pergamos-II  
 Part: 15 Experience Christ's Comfort: The Church at Smyrna  
 Part: 14 Remember Christ's Jealousy: The Church at Ephesus  
 Part: 13 Hear Christ's Message  
 Part: 12 See the Risen Christ at Work-I  
 Part: 12 See the Risen Christ at Work-II  
 Part: 11 Fear Not! For I Am With You!  
 Part: 10 See Christ's Face and Feel His Touch-I  
 Part: 10 See Christ's Face and Feel His Touch-II  
 Part: 9 Listen to Christ's Voice  
 Part: 8 Look Into Christ's Eyes  
 Part: 7 Find Hope in Christ's Majesty-II  
 Part: 7 Find Hope in Christ's Majesty-I  
 Part: 6 Remember Christ's Blood-II  
 Part: 6 Remember Christ's Blood-I  
 Part: 5 Christ Is Our Refuge  
 Part: 4 Get Ready to Meet Jesus  
 Part: 3 Signs the End of Days Is Near  
 Part: 2 Knowing Christ's Presence Today  
 Part: 1 Worship the Christ of Revelation

- Christ is your safe and strong "shoulder." He is the only Refuge when you feel weary, exhausted, or stressed.
- Christ is your "fellowship." He is the only Refuge when you are lonely, and feel left out, left behind, homeless, or forsaken.
- Christ is your "stronghold" or "fortress." He is the only Refuge when you feel helpless, fearful, and powerless.
- Christ is "exalted" and He is in the "heights." He is the only Refuge when your heart darkens and you feel hopeless.
- Christ is "separated" and holy, made higher than the heavens. He is the only Refuge when you struggle and feel so weak when you are tempted.

You will find so much more in Christ if you spend time alone with Him regularly. Instead of fleeing to the world and its enticements, flee to Jesus as your Refuge from weariness!

**My Prayer for You This Week:** Father, our hope is in You. You are our Refuge. Although You do not remove the difficulties of life, You just make it so much sweeter in those times when we flee to You. For there in Your embrace we find hope and joy and peace and strength to go on—and to go back and to endure until You come or call. May we do that in Your glorious name, that name that is above every name. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

## MONDAY: Finding Christ

*"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28, Emphasis added).*

Jesus promises that if we to come to Him, we will find a resting place in a Friend on whom we can lay our burdens. A new believer typically asks, "Can I hold out?" God compassionately replies, "I will hold you, My child!" The Lord Jesus is our strong and loving Savior.

Because most Christians can find no rest trying to live life their way instead of God's, they become weary of the daily grind. What are some common roots for weariness?

First, we are weary because of the **change and stress** which derail us from seeking God's promised rest: "... 'In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength ...'" (Isaiah 30:15).

Consider these comments on the subject of change and stress: "Here's the problem: While choices multiply, we stay pretty much the same. Our bodies and minds remain the bottleneck through which choice must pass. We still have the same brains our forebearers did, still only twenty-four hours a day to use them. We still need time and energy to listen, look, absorb, distinguish, and decide. The opportunity to choose among many options is, of course, a good thing. But maybe you can have too much of a good thing? Even of choice itself? Each choice saps energy, takes time, makes a big deal out of what isn't." [1] [1]

Secondly, we are weary because of the **ceaseless pressures of debt** that rob our taking advantage of God's promised rest. [2] [2] God says, "Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18).

Today, our lives are addictively intertwined in the economic system, and the credit-debt mentality has been fully normalized. Someone has described a modern American as a person "who drives a credit union-financed car over a bond-financed highway on credit card gas to open a charge account at a department store so he can fill his bank-financed home with installment-purchased furniture." [3] [3]

Thirdly, we are weary because the **hurry and rush** surrounding us always displaces God's time for us to rest. Even our sentences are peppered with such words as *time crunch, fast food, rush hour, frequent flyer, expressway, overnight delivery, and rapid transit*. The products and services we use further attest to our hurry: We pull in our speeding cars for gas and snacks at **QuikTrip**, send packages overnight by **Federal Express**, talk while we do other things on a cell phone service called **Sprint**, manage our personal finances on **Quicken**, schedule our appointments on a **DayRunner**, diet with **SlimFast**, and even buy swimming gear made by **Speedo**.

"Yes, the world is going faster. And yes, we in turn are also going faster. But the important question no one asks is this: When does faster become too fast? Is there a speed limit to life? What happens when we exceed it? Does God give us a ticket? I have thought long and hard about the issue of speed and have come to believe that it is as much responsible for the problem of personal and societal dysfunction as any other single factor. Virtually all of our relationships are damaged by hurry. Many families are being starved to death by velocity. Our children lie wounded on the ground, run over by our high-speed good intentions." [4] [4]

Rest for our souls is the great necessity of our spiritual lives! We need to be alone with God daily. We need to find times to get away alone. We need to get up early if necessary. Few of us are called to spend many hours in daily prayer, but *all* of us must spend *some* time. If it is impossible when the family is awake, pray before they get up. If you have no place you can do this at home, find a place to park your car on the way to work and pray in the anonymity of the passing traffic. However you do this is up to you, but you need to make time to find Christ who is the Refuge for the weary!

## TUESDAY: Respond to Christ

*"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29), Emphasis added).*

From these verses, we can easily see how Jesus is the Refuge for the weary. Note the three imperatives: come, take, and learn. There is no sheep of Jesus' pasture that He doesn't invite to find rest in Him. He seeks us, finds us, and offers His perfect rest to us. Jesus said, "I am the answer. Come to Me!" This is salvation. Rest for the weary starts with salvation because the lost (and disobedient believers) have no rest in their sin. Restlessness is their lifestyle: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest .... 'There is no peace,' Says my God, 'for the wicked'" (Isaiah 57:20-21).

In God's Word, listening to Christ is listening to the Holy Spirit and that means obeying the Word of God. Jesus called for us to completely turn unto Him as the way to live life. Now look at the bold second half of verse 28: "**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**" (Emphasis added). This sounds so beautiful in the word-for-word rendering of the Greek. Here is each word in order of the text: **Come toward Me all the ones laboring and the ones having been packed, and I will rest you.** This calls for us to admit that something is wrong. We have to acknowledge our need. Therefore, Jesus calls for those who are overloaded—"all the ones laboring and the ones having been packed"—to come to Him.

Is life itself a laborious effort for you? Do you feel packed in, and piled so high, that you can't take another step? Then Jesus says, "You need to listen to Me." How can you best do that? By getting to the root of the problem.

Dr. Robert Swenson has expressed modern society's problem as OVERLOAD. Today, we will cover the first part of a diagnostic test that can help you discern whether you are suffering from this deadly condition called "overload." As you read, carefully think about whether or not you have any of these symptoms (most people do!). [5] [5]

**We allow our lives to have activity overload.** We book our lives weeks into the future, and often in the desire to be more efficient, we book several things into the same time period. "Activity overload takes away the pleasure of anticipation and the delight of reminiscence." God says: "Stop! Hold still so that you can know Me." (See [Psalm 46:10](#).)

**We allow our lives to have change overload.** "Nothing defines our age more than the furious and relentless increase in the rate of change," summarizes historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. For thousands of years of recorded history change came in a slow, controlled, and understandable rate, but now we are brutally jerked forward at warp speed—whether we like it or not. God says, "Seek out the old paths where you can find rest for your soul!" (See [Jeremiah 6:16](#).)

**We allow our lives to have commitment overload.** Most of us make more commitments than we have time to give them. In his great book, *Balancing Life's Demands*, Dr. J. Grant Howard says, "Some people can't say no. They take on too many relationships and too many responsibilities. They enroll in too many courses, hold down too many jobs, volunteer for too many tasks, make too many appointments, serve on too many committees, have too many friends. They are trying to be all things to all men all at once all by themselves!" [6] [6] God says, "Seek Me most—seek me with all your heart." (See [Psalm 27:4](#).)

**We allow our lives to have choice overload.** In the 1970s there were 11,767 items in the average supermarket; in 2004 the number passed 30,000. In the early twenty-first century, that number has risen to near 30,000. This includes over 186 different choices of breakfast cereal alone! And for entertainment, you can get a satellite dish that offers 1,500 movie choices per month! Futurist Allan Toffler warns, "We are in fact, racing toward 'over-choice.'" [7] [7] God says, "Choose whom and what you will serve with all your heart." (See [Joshua 24:15](#); [James 1:8](#).)

**We allow our lives to have competition overload.** It is part of the American dream. To compete is American and it is therefore constantly emphasized in school, business, and athletics—but is it spiritually healthy? God says, "Jesus taught a non-aggressive, non-self-asserting, non-self-promoting lifestyle for His children in the Sermon on the Mount." (Read His Beatitudes in [Matthew 5:1-8](#).)

What different counsel we get from man! J. B. Phillips (1906-1982) illustrates this when he alters the Beatitudes to read as follows:

1. Happy are the "pushers": for they get on in the world.
  2. Happy are the hard-boiled: for they never let life hurt them.
  3. Happy are they who complain: for they get their own way in the end.
  4. **Happy are the blasé: for they never worry over their sins.**
  5. Happy are the slave drivers: for they get results.
  6. Happy are the knowledgeable men of the world: for they know their way around.
  7. Happy are the troublemakers: for they make people take notice of them.
- [8] [8]

**We allow our lives to have debt overload.** From the White House to the bungalow on your street, most of America is awash in red ink. It is debilitating and unbiblical! God says, "Do not steal, nor hold on to another's possessions more than love would allow." Look at [Romans 13:8](#): "*Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law*" ([Romans 13:8](#)). Does "*Owe no one anything*" refer primarily to the Christian's financial practices? Some people believe that it does, and that it is a sin to have a debt.

J. Hudson Taylor, the godly missionary to China, would never incur a debt, basing his conviction on this verse. Charles Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher, had the same conviction. However, the Bible does not forbid borrowing or legal financial transactions that involve interest. What the Bible does forbid is the charging of high interest, robbing the brethren, and failing to pay honest debts (see [Ex. 22:25-27](#); [Neh. 5:1-11](#)). [Matthew 25:27](#) and [Luke 19:23](#) indicate that banking and investing for gain are not wrong. Certainly no one should get into unnecessary debt, or sign contracts he cannot maintain. "Thou shalt not steal." But to make [Romans 13:8](#) apply to all kinds of legal obligations involving money is, to me, stretching a point. [9] [9]

**We allow our lives to have decision overload.** "Every day we have more tough decisions to make and less time to do it in. The trivial ones are objectionable just because of how many there are [what flavor, which topping, mint or tartar control, low fat, low sodium, diet or regular ...] But we also are facing new choices generations past never dreamed of: whether or not to wait to have children; whether to move and change jobs; whether both dad *and* mom should work outside the home; whether we should put grandma in the home or not. Too many decisions trivial or not in too short a time is vintage overload." [10] [10]

God says, "Bring each decision in life to Me. Wait for Me to lead, and don't be in a hurry to just go on through life your own way—and thus miss My blessing and My leading." (See [Proverbs 3:5-6](#).)

**We allow our lives to have hurry overload.** "Haste is a modern ailment. It is also fashionably American. Our lives are nonstop, lived at a breathless pace. We walk fast, talk fast, eat fast and then excuse our selves by saying, 'I must run.'" [11] [11] Alexander Solzhenitsyn once said that hastiness and superficiality were the psychic diseases of the 20th century. God says, "Wait patiently for Me. Don't run ahead and don't lag behind. Walk in step with My Spirit." (See [Psalm 37:7-9](#); [Galatians 5:16](#), 24.)

Have you spotted any symptoms so far of this deadly condition called overload? If so, I encourage you to pray about each of them, asking the Lord to continue to open your eyes to areas in your life that need His gentle touch.

## WEDNESDAY: How to Unload Your Life

*"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth ...; but lay up ... treasures in heaven .... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21, Emphasis added).*

Yesterday was the first part of a diagnostic test that can help us detect the symptoms of overload. Two remain, which I'll cover today, and then share God's simple solution for getting out from under such a deadly burden. So then, what are some other ways that we have let ourselves become entrapped in the overload syndrome?

**We allow our lives to have possession overload.** We have more "things per person" than any other nation in history. Closets are full, storage space is used up, and cars can't fit into garages. Having first imprisoned us with debt, possessions then take over our houses and occupy our time. This begins to sound like an invasion. Everything I own owns me in return as I become responsible to care for it, maintain it, clean it, insure it, store it, update it, and so forth. So why would I want more? God says, "Beware of having so much in life that the care of things makes your heart grow cold toward Me." (See [Matthew 13:22](#); [Luke 12:21](#); [1Timothy 6:8-10](#); [Hebrews 13:5](#).)

**We allow our lives to have media overload.** Did you know that a single edition of the *New York Times* magazine has more information than a seventeenth-century Britisher would have encountered in a lifetime? We live in an era of information overload! Solomon, whom God says is the wisest man who ever lived, had this to say at the end of his life: "... Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh" ([Ecclesiastes 12:12](#)). I like John MacArthur's comment on that verse: "Books written on any other subject than God's revealed wisdom will only proliferate the uselessness of man's thinking." [12] [12]

But an even more damaging effect than being constantly bombarded with information in books is the power of TV, movies, and games. Ninety-nine percent of Americans have TV in their homes; the average U.S. home has two, and both are blaring seven hours a day. Such distraction robs us of depth, neutralizes the benefits of meditation, and encourages restlessness.

In contrast to time spent on the information-overload treadmill, how well do you know God? How much depth is there in your personal relationship with Him? For instance, do you know His Word as well as you know your favorite hobby or sport? That is the danger of information overload—our minds become full of so much that does not matter to God or for eternity. *God says, "To know Me, you must guard your heart."* (See [Isaiah 33:14b-17](#).)

Spending regular time alone with God is the only way that you will ever get to see "the King in His beauty." You will never find God's best for your life while drowning in the overload syndrome. Remember what wise old Solomon concluded after his quest to find the meaning of life: "... Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil" ([Ecclesiastes 12:13-14](#)).

This passage, "Solomon's final word on the issues raised in [Ecclesiastes], as well as life itself, focus on one's relationship to God. All of the concern for a life under the sun, with its pleasures and uncertainties, was behind Solomon. Such things seemed comparatively irrelevant to him as he faced the end of his life. But death, in spite of the focused attention he had given to it in Ecclesiastes, was not the greatest equalizer as Solomon saw it, for God will bring every person's every act to judgment. Unbelievers will stand at the Great White throne judgment (cf. [Rev. 20:11-15](#)) and believers before Christ at the Bema judgment (cf. [1 Cor. 3:10-15](#); [2 Cor. 5:9,10](#)). When all is said and done, the certainty and finality of retribution give life the meaning for which David's oft-times foolish son had been searching. Whatever may be one's portion in life, accountability to the God, whose ways are often mysterious, is both eternal and irrevocable." [13] [13]

What an appropriate reminder for living in the end times when time is so short!

**Submit to Christ's rule.** It would be the rare person who did not spot any symptoms of the "overload syndrome" in his or her own life. But the good news is this: you can find relief and rest for your soul by obedience to Christ's command: "Take My yoke upon you ..." ([Matthew 11:29](#)). The yoke is a universal sign of submission. The Bible begins and ends with the call to submit to Christ. From Adam and Eve in Genesis to the end of the age in Revelation, Scripture tells us that we are to obey God—or face the consequences along with those who rebel and come under God's endless wrath forever.

Have you given obedience to God the highest place in your life, as the inspiration for every action and motivation? If you yield to the searching of the Holy Spirit, you may find that you have never given Him total submission, or that you have somehow, over time, taken it back. I exhort you therefore to go before the Spirit in prayer and ask Him to show you: how defective the Christian life is where obedience doesn't rule all; how that life can be exchanged for one of full surrender to absolute obedience; and how sure it is that God in Christ will enable us to live it out! [14] [14] So ask yourself: *Does submitting to God take the highest place in my life?*

**Become Christ's lifelong disciple:** "Take My yoke upon you and **learn from Me** ... and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29, Emphasis added). Cling to Jesus that you may obey His admonition to "learn from Me." Surround yourself with His true Word. Meekness toward God is that disposition of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting. In the Old Testament, the meek are those wholly relying on God, rather than their own strength, to defend them against injustice. Thus, meekness toward evil people means knowing God is permitting the injuries they inflict, that He is using them to purify His elect, and that He will deliver His elect in His time. (See [Isaiah 41:17](#); [Luke 18:1-8](#).)

Gentleness, or meekness, is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest. It stems from trust in God's goodness and control over any situation. The gentle person is not occupied with self at all. This is a work of the Holy Spirit, not of the human will ([Galatians 5:23](#)). Are you a gentle spirit—or one who is wrapped up in self?

## THURSDAY: Christ's Promised Refuge for the Weary

*"... I am gentle and lowly in heart, and **you will find rest for your souls**. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:29-30, Emphasis added).*

As we continue our study of how to apply [Matthew 11:28-30](#) to learning to live contentedly and victoriously for Christ, we have come to the part where we get to find out how to enjoy Christ's promised refuge for the weary. What a blessing!

Everything that Jesus did was in submission to knowing and doing the will of God. This included:

**Jesus' purpose in life:** "... Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God" ([Hebrews 10:7](#)). Do you want God's will more than your own plans?

**Jesus' delight in life:** "... My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work" ([John 4:34](#)). Are the things of earth more delightful to you than the Truth of God?

**Jesus' patience in life:** "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering you did not require" ([Psalm 40:6](#)). Are you patient enough to let God choose what is best? Remember: God gives the very best to those who leave the choice to Him!

**Jesus' priority in life:** "... I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" ([John 6:38](#)). Are you dying to self daily so that you are alive unto Christ in the Spirit?

**Jesus' attitude in life:** "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" ([Luke 22:42](#)). Are you humbly whispering daily to Jesus: "Not my will, but Yours, be done"?

Again, I remind you: Jesus is the Refuge for the weary. There is no sheep of His pasture that He doesn't invite to find rest in Him. He seeks us, finds us, and offers His perfect rest to us. As the world around us accelerates, our energies wane. But we are not defenseless victims. Fleeing to Jesus as your Refuge will replace frenzy with peace and rest!

**Find stillness as you bow before God:** "Be still and know that I am God" ([Psalm 46:10](#)). Before hurrying past that profound command, stop and consider it in your mind. The scene is one of stillness and quietness, listening and waiting before Him. That is largely a foreign experience in these busy times. Nevertheless, knowing God deeply and intimately requires such discipline. Silence before Him is indispensable if we hope to add depth to our spiritual life.

**Offer yourself in surrender to God.** This is done by trusting the Lord completely as you exercise the discipline of surrender. There is a wonderfully challenging book by the founder of Wheaton College, Dr. Raymond Edman. Nothing better describes the give-and-take struggle of our early years as a Christian. They are words from a collection of Puritan prayers and devotions:

*When thou wouldst guide me  
I control myself.  
When thou wouldst be sovereign  
I rule myself.  
When thou wouldst take care of me  
I suffice myself.  
When I should depend on thy providings  
I supply myself.  
When I should submit to thy providence  
I follow my will.  
When I should study, honor, trust thee,  
I serve myself;  
I fault and correct thy laws  
to suit myself,  
Instead of thee I look to  
Man's approbation,*

And am by nature an idolater.  
Lord, it is my chief design to bring my  
heart back to thee. [15] [15]

**Prepare for true worship.** [16] [16] The answer to the problem begins with Saturday preparation. (Any men who interpret the following as women's work are wrong. Both husband and wife should share responsibility for the practical and spiritual preparations for the Lord's Day.) It is advisable that young families have their clothing clean and laid out on Saturday night, and even that the breakfast be decided upon. The whereabouts of Bibles and lessons should be known, and even better, ought to be collected and ready. There should be an agreed-upon time to get up which leaves plenty of time to get ready for church. Going to bed at a reasonable hour is also a good idea. Spiritually, prayer about the Lord's Day is essential—prayer for the service, the music, the pastors, one's family, and oneself. [17] [17]

**Cultivate the discipline of simplicity in your life.** You can do this by reordering your private world. [18] [18]

**The Decision:**

To reorder one's private world  
To be still  
To cultivate serenity  
To trust the Lord completely

**The Discipline:**

Simplicity  
Silence  
Solitude  
Surrender

## FRIDAY: Enjoying Jesus—Your Refuge From Weariness

*"Truly my soul silently waits for God; **From Him comes my salvation.** He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved" (Psalm 62:1-2, Emphasis added).*

**Fleeing to Jesus as your Refuge will help you have the genuine expectancy of God's presence.** A knowledge of God through His Word ought to heighten your expectations and instill healthy fear and reverence. As Annie Dillard wrote: "On the whole, I do not find Christians, outside of the Catacombs, sufficiently sensible of conditions. Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? ... It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense, or the waking god may draw us out to where we can never return." [19] [19]

**Fleeing to Jesus as your Refuge will help you preserve your experience of the depths of God in your life.** How can you preserve your heart for the Lord's Day? Edith Schaeffer tells how, when living in Villars, Switzerland, the church bells would toll every Saturday at 4:30 P.M. as a reminder to prepare for the Lord's Day. The bells were ignored by most but were a poignant reminder of a more enlightened day. [20] [20]

Is Christ like a "city of refuge" to you? Do you find Him easy to reach? Are His arms open to you? Do you see His entrance as never locked, and that He is a completely sufficient Refuge? Do you see that there is no other hope but Him? Then He is *your* blessed Refuge! (If you would like to study the wonderful truths of this facet of Jesus, see the "Christ Our Refuge" MP3 CD description in the resources listed at the back of this book.)

How can you start cultivating the practice of fleeing to Christ's promised refuge for the weary? Jesus demonstrated that as being our priority, but where do we start? We simply begin by making it a precious habit to read God's Word every day. Remember to faithfully follow the adage I mentioned earlier in this book: No Bible—no breakfast; no Bible—no bed.

Rest for your soul comes most readily by reading God's Word. This is the voice of God, and we must listen. No Christian can lead a Spirit-filled life full of power without regularly reading the Bible. Our minds are such that we do not retain what we need to know. They need to be refreshed again and again—which includes memorizing and meditating upon God's Word regularly!

## SATURDAY: Rest at Last!

*"Blessed is the man [whose] ... delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law **he meditates day and night.** ... And whatever he does shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3, Emphasis added).*

Why is meditating upon the Word so very important? Meditation brings us immediately into the intimate presence of God. Few are willing to pay the price, but for those who do, the rewards are great!

I believe Mrs. Nguyen Thi An (a fictitious name) learned the art of fleeing to Jesus as her Refuge in weariness. She is a glorious example of how to live contentedly and victoriously for Christ—regardless of the circumstances. Though she has lost everything, she has all things in One. Her husband, her home, and her belongings were all taken away, yet the Vietnamese could not take her contentment.

Mrs. An's husband was a pastor in Vietnam. When police closed their church, he was thrown into prison. Without official papers, she and her children were evicted from their apartment, but her faith forged a sanctuary out of her surroundings, from which she greets us:

My Dear Friends,

... You know around here we are experiencing hardships, but we thank the Lord He is comforting us and caring for us in every way. When we experience misfortune, adversity, distress and hardship, only then do we see the real blessing of the Lord poured down on us in such a way that we cannot contain it.

We have been obliged recently to leave our modest apartment and for over two months have been living on a balcony. The rain has been beating down and soaking us. Sometimes in the middle of the night we are forced to gather our blankets and run to seek refuge in a stairwell.

Do you know what I do then? I laugh and I praise the Lord, because we can still take shelter in the stairwell. I think of how many people are experiencing much worse hardships than I am. Then I remember the words of the Lord, "To the poor, O Lord, You are a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat" (cp. [Isaiah 25:4](#)), and I am greatly comforted....

Our Father ... is the One who according to the Scriptures does not break the bruised reed nor put out the flickering lamp. He is the One who looks after the orphan and the widow. He is the One who brings blessings and peace to numberless people.

I do not know what words to use in order to describe the love that the Lord has shown our family. I only can bow my knee and my heart and offer to the Lord words of deepest thanks and praise. Although we have lost our house and our possessions, we have not lost the Lord, and He is enough. With the Lord I have everything. The only thing I would fear losing is His blessing!

Could I ask you and our friends in the churches abroad to continue to pray for me that I will faithfully follow the Lord and serve Him regardless of what the circumstances may be? As far as my husband is concerned, I was able to visit him this past summer. We had a 20-minute conversation that brought us great joy....

I greet you with my love.  
Mrs. Nguyen Thi An [\[21\]](#) [21]

Learn from Mrs. An's wonderful example of how to live contentedly and victoriously in Christ. And then flee on your own to Jesus as your eternal and secure Refuge!

**Make a Choice to Live in Hope:** I pray that over the past three weeks you have made the choice to live in hope by giving your all to God, giving God what is His in this life, and committing to learn how to live contentedly and victoriously for Christ! May God, through the Holy Spirit, grant the empowerment to embrace as a lifestyle 1 Timothy 6's seven keys to biblical contentment:

1. Remember that things are only temporary (vv. 6-7).
2. Only seek necessities—wait for the rest (v. 8).
3. Avoid a consuming desire for prosperity (vv. 9-10).
4. Flee materialism (v. 11).
5. Cling to eternal life (vv. 12-16).
6. Fix your hope on God (v. 17).
7. Give until it hurts (v. 18).

As you follow the above path faithfully, you will experience Jesus' peace that passes understanding, and you can thus experientially sing all the words to this beautiful song.

#### Like a River Glorious

*Then your peace would have been like a river,  
And your righteousness like the waves of the sea. —Isaiah 48:18*

*Like a river glorious Is God's perfect peace,  
Over all victorious In its bright increase;  
Perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day,  
Perfect, yet it groweth Deeper all the way.  
Hidden in the hollow Of His blessed hand.  
Never foe can follow, Never traitor stand;  
Not a surge of worry, Not a shade of care,  
Not a blast of hurry touch the spirit there.*

*Every joy or testing comes from God above.  
Given to His children As an act of love;  
We may trust Him fully All for us to do—  
Those who trust Him wholly Find Him wholly true.*

*Refrain:  
Trusting in Jehovah, Hearts are fully blest—  
Finding, as He promised, Perfect peace and rest.*

—Francis Ridley Havergal

[\[1\]](#) [1] Robert Kanigel, "Too Much of a Good Thing?" *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, 12 January 1998, p. 25.

[\[2\]](#) [2] Richard A. Swenson, M.D., *The Overload Syndrome* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998), pp. 97-98.

[\[3\]](#) [3] Paul E. Billheimer, *Destined for the Throne: A New Look at the Bride of Christ* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1975), p. 53.

[\[4\]](#) [4] Swenson, pp. 123-133.

[\[5\]](#) [5] This section on the symptoms of overload was adapted and

quotations taken from Dr. Swenson's *The Overload Syndrome* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998), pp. 83-87.

[6] [6] Dr. J. Grant Howard, *Balancing Life's Demands*, (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1983), p.144.

[7] [7] Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Bantam, 1984), p. 269.

[8] [8] John Bertram Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English* (London: G. Bles, 1958), [Matthew 5: 1-8](#).

[9] [9] Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor books, 1997), in loc.

[10] [10] Kanigel, p. 25.

[11] [11] Swenson, pp.126-133.

[12] [12] *The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 939.

[13] [13] Ibid.

[14] [14] Andrew Murray, *Absolute Surrender* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1897), p. 24.

[15] [15] V. Raymond Edman, *The Disciplines of Life* (Wheaton: Scripture Press, 1948), p. 83.

[16] [16] The following pamphlets are available from Chapel of the Air: #7245, *Getting Ready for Sunday* by David and Karen Mains; #7451, *Rules for the Sunday Search* by David R. Mains; #7462, *The Sunday Search: A Guide to Better Church Experiences* by Steve Bell.

[17] [17] R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), pp. 109-115.

[18] [18] Charles Swindoll, *Intimacy with the Almighty* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996), p. 28.

[19] [19] Annie Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), pp. 40-41.

[20] [20] R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of Grace* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993), pp. 82-84.

[21] [21] Steve Farrar, *Better Homes and Jungles* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1977), pp. 189-190.

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