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Today we curse rest  
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and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and  
learn from me, for I am gentle and humble  
in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*  
—Matthew 11:28,29



## slow down, you move too fast

### stewarding rest and margin

Steve Brown and Dave Legg, People Resources Team

Imagine you wake up one morning and feel so weighed down that the thought of preparing a Bible study is just too much. Or perhaps you are beginning to resent your calling. What happened to that energy you used to experience? The answer may lie in how you are stewarding rest and margin in your life.



Steve Brown

### the principle of rest

It is interesting to note that the third thing God blessed in creation was rest (Genesis 2:2,3) and the third thing God cursed after the Fall was the work of man's hands. (Genesis 3:17–19). In our fallenness we often get the ways of God backward. Today we curse rest and exalt work.

### the precedent of the Sabbath

This principle of rest is the foundation for the precedent of the Sabbath, the Feasts, and the Sabbatic Year. When God laid out a lifestyle for His people He included times of no regular work. In Leviticus 23 and 25 God commands:

- ⊕ a Sabbath every seven days
- ⊕ feasts and sacred assemblies scheduled throughout the year
- ⊕ a Sabbath Year and the Year of Jubilee

God's intended lifestyle for His people includes times of “no regular work.” In fact God exalts rest as an act of worship and of self-denial (Leviticus 23: 29,32).

### the plan for managing pace and margin

The principle of rest and the precedent of the Sabbath leads us to a plan for managing pace and margin in our lives. What happens if we don't manage pace and margin in our lives? If we don't, we'll be headed toward burnout and barrenness.

If we examine the anatomy of burnout we learn that life without margin leads to stress without recovery, which leads to physical exhaustion and spiritual dryness, which results in burnout.

Similarly, when we look at the anatomy of barrenness we learn that busyness leads us to a place where we have no unhurried time to think, pray, listen, and study, which results in barrenness.

### an issue of lordship

God intended life to be lived with a rhythm to include periods of productivity and periods of restoration and refreshment. Loren Sanny once said, “The greatest lesson I ever learned was to live my life at 80 to 90 percent of my capacity, so that when I had to give 110 to 120 percent, it was there. Then after the push was complete to give myself permission to go back to 80 to 90 percent of my capacity.”

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## space savers

Dave Legg

People Resources Team Director

This issue of *UpFront* is about rest and margin. Margin is space—the space between our load and our



limit. When our load exceeds our limit, we have no space and enter overload. Many if not most Navigator staff are functioning in some degree of

overload. The scary thing is that overload is only one step away from burnout.

Margin is about managing the pace of our lives. That's an issue of lordship and stewardship. Richard Swenson in his book *The Overload Syndrome* says that "busyness isn't a synonym for kingdom work. Busyness is what happens when we forget who God is."

Margin allows time for the important and makes you available for God's interruptions. Rest is the key to maintaining margin in our lives. We shouldn't see rest as a luxury. It was important to God and should be to us (see the article on page 1). Practicing the principle of rest gives perspective to life and keeps the important things in focus. It's our hope that some of the thoughts in this issue will help you be a better steward of *you*.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### October 2–5

Sabbatical Development Retreat  
Colorado Springs

### October 10–12

Personal Contribution Assessment  
Colorado Springs

### October 19–20

Healing Prayer Seminar  
Colorado Springs

For more information contact (719) 594-2555.

## burnout inventory

This survey may give you an idea to what degree you are experiencing burnout. Rate your response to each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = Does not describe me at all. 5 = Very accurately describes me.

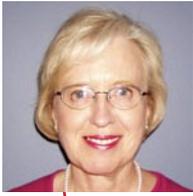
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am exhausted much of the time and rest doesn't seem to help much.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I do not get as much satisfaction from ministry as I used to.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I dread beginning my ministry responsibilities most mornings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I feel like a failure in the ministry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I do not sleep as well as I used to, or I am sleeping more than I used to.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is more and more difficult for me to deal with people's problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have more difficulty making decisions than I used to.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I get very frustrated when things don't go well in the ministry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ More and more I find myself thinking about leaving The Navigators.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm greatly bothered or feel guilty about ministry responsibilities that are not done or are not done well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I get angry and/or irritable more easily than I used to.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I often feel a sense of emptiness and depletion, like I have nothing more to give.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The ministry gives me very little or no joy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am concerned that I won't be able to last much longer in the ministry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is getting more and more difficult to do some aspects of the ministry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I struggle with feeling pressure to perform and succeed.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Total**



### assessing your level of burnout

- 15-29: You probably don't have a problem with burnout.
- 30-49: You may be experiencing mild to moderate burnout.
- 50-64: You may be suffering significant burnout.
- 65-75: You may be in serious trouble.

Adapted from a similar Burnout Inventory prepared by Ken Williams, Ph.D., Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.



## a plan in the desert

### discovering the truth about rest

Marilyn Gnekow, Metro Ministry, Minneapolis

Here I was again. I found myself in the bleak desert of depletion, depression, and burnout. I'd been here before, but this time it was darker and seemingly devoid of hope. For years I had been running at the end of my leash, feeling like a victim of my commitments, responsibilities, and growing health issues. Internally I struggled with doubts about God's goodness. Indeed, I was in a desert—feeling alone, afraid, and abandoned by my heavenly Father.

Now I realize that He had plans for me in the desert—plans to let me see who He really was and who I really was. Plans to set me free from my compulsive strategies to manage my own life. Hosea 2:14 became a beacon of hope.

*“Therefore I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness, and speak kindly to her. Then I will give her her vineyards from there, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.”*

Rest is the Father's gift that renews, refreshes, and fuels our passion. But before I could enter rest, the Father, in His severe mercy, needed to strip me of the props that held up my life. He exposed the lies that motivated my life and ministry.

Each of us has a set of core lies that keep us from receiving the gift of rest that our Father graciously longs to give us. Even beyond physical rest, He promises “rest for our souls” (Matthew 11:29).

#### Lie #1: I have to earn love

One of the lies that kept me from entering the joy of rest was the belief that I must earn love—both from people and my heavenly Father. As a child I learned the need to be responsible and help carry the load. When I transferred that into my career and ministry, I came to believe that I was primarily loved for what I could offer others. The Father graciously brought me to a place of emptiness and brokenness where I had nothing I could give to Him or others.

In His kindness He helped me to see that anything I had ever offered Him or anyone was purely by His grace working through me. What a release to be able to freely give because I was already pleasing to Him—not so I would become pleasing to Him.

#### Lie #2: I have to please people

The need to earn love led to people pleasing. I pursued acceptance, approval, and admiration—idols that deliver a “hit” of

validation but lead to bondage. When I live my life to please other people, it tells my Father that His unconditional, gracious, and inexhaustible love is not enough.



#### Lie #3: I must be strong

Bottom line in the refusal to rest is the belief that I must be self-sufficient. I must be strong for me. I must be strong for others. In fact, God really needs me and I can't let Him down either. I am most able to “relax in Him” as I realize that He has no needs, no deficiencies, and is not dependent on anyone. He is a God of infinite supply, infinite joy, infinite love.

Rest is possible when I come to Him in utter dependence rather than trying to live independently from Him. Rest happens when I lay my sinful strategies at the foot of the Cross, when I allow Him to carry my burdens. When I am overcome with awe at His extravagant grace to the likes of me, then I can experience rest for my soul.

“Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. . . . Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly” (Matthew 11:30, *The Message*).

## slow down

*Continued from page 1*

So how can you put some margin in your life?

- ⊕ **Plan regular personal retreats.** Spend three to seven days away to listen to the Lord and refresh before Him.
- ⊕ **Adjust the pace of your life and ministry.** Where can you slow down and what can you do without?
- ⊕ **Ask the tough questions.** “How much of my identity comes from my ministry activities or my productivity?”
- ⊕ **Put rest first.** Schedule recharging times in your calendar first. Then plan activities around those rest points.
- ⊕ **Participate in a sabbatical.** The Navigators' National Leadership Team strongly encourages every Navigator staff person to take a three to six month sabbatical every seven to ten years.

Give PRT a call. Our passion is to bring you help, hope, and healing.



## sipping Cokes with Papaw

finding rest for my soul

Vic Black, National Prayer Director

When I was a skinny, young boy, my grandfather, Papaw, and I would rock contentedly on the front porch, saying nothing in particular, just happy to be with each other. Papaw would say, “Run down to Raymond’s and get us a Coke and an oatmeal pie.” So I would run through the neighbors’ backyards to Raymond’s Garage to buy our treats. Papaw and I would enjoy our time together even more as we savored our oatmeal pies (Little Debbie’s) and sipped our Cokes. Pure pleasure, grandfather and grandson soaking in the priceless moment of being together. Soul rest.

Usually, when we consider rest, we think of physical rest. Physical rest is pretty straightforward. Take care of your body, get plenty of sleep, eat the right foods. But physical rest is only part of taking care of ourselves. Our minds also need rest—rest from thinking, rest from contemplating, rest from calculating. Our emotions need rest—rest from worrying, rest from stress. We are very complex beings. We need to pay attention to much more than our physical need for rest.

There is yet another aspect of rest that the Bible speaks about, rest for our soul. Jesus recognizes this need for soul rest in Matthew 11. He beckons us, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (v. 28). The phrase, “all who are weary,” can be expressed as, “those who work to exhaustion.” Sound familiar?

“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (vv. 29,30, *NASB*). Jesus is not promoting carrying no load, but rather carrying His load. As I look around me, I see folks who are worn out, burned out, and tired. Jesus sees them too. His heart goes out to these people. He says, “Come to Me, get away with Me, walk with Me, work with Me, keep company with Me.” Jesus really wants to be with us. He wants us to be aware of His presence with us. And His very presence can refresh us.

As a child, my soul rested when I was with Papaw. There was nowhere else I would rather be than with him. But I can confidently say there was nowhere else he would rather be than with me, his tall, skinny grandson. But that is where most of us breakdown in our relationship with God. We don’t believe that He really enjoys us. If we were honest, we would probably say He tolerates us.

Rest for your soul is very important to God. We don’t have to figure it out. He says He will give us rest for our souls if we will “come to Him.” I encourage you to “come to Him” and receive rest for your soul. “Come to Him” and receive a load adjustment.

As I consider my relationship with my Papaw, trust stands out as my response to him. I trusted Papaw with my whole being. But there is One who is far safer and more trustworthy than my Papaw. Trust the Lord as you “come to Him,” hold nothing back, don’t try to impress, come as you are. He promises that He will give you rest for your soul and a yoke you can carry and learn from even while you work. 

### defining rest

According to *Vincent Word Studies*, the phrase “weary and heavy-laden” (Matthew 11:28) exhibits both the active and passive sides of human misery. We work to exhaustion, weighed down with a load of responsibilities and concerns. And in this context, Jesus extends rest. Not a resting from work necessarily, but a rest for our soul while working. Jesus goes on to explain what one might call a “load adjustment.” He wants to examine our load and have us take on His yoke and load. The rest that Jesus is offering is the radical concept of relief, ease, and refreshment. Far more than mere rest, He offers rejuvenation. The Amplified translation expands the word “rest” to say “relief, ease, refreshment, recreation, and blessed quiet.” Clearly, “rest for our soul” goes far beyond our normal interpretation of “rest.”

When Jesus says His yoke is “easy,” He means it is “comfortable and pleasant.” When we see ourselves double-yoked with Jesus, the word picture begins to make more sense. He is the big, wise ox; we are the little ox in training. He pulls the majority of the load, and we can actually learn from Him as we pull together.

In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson takes the Lord’s invitation in Matthew 11 right down to shoe leather when he says, “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

