

# Melva's Corner

## Rest For The Simplified Soul

February 21, 2005

**Bible Text: Exodus 33:14, Hebrews 4:9-11**

**Central Truth: God is . . . Someone who understands your past, believes in your future and loves you just the way you are.**

**As we continue our study of Soul Simplification let me reassure you that there is total rest at the end of the process.**

### **"You Can Do It All" Really Is a Myth**

**Let's be honest. Most of us overcrowd our schedules because we want to. We say yes to projects that interest us, to commitments that offer temporary satisfaction or the approval of others, and to jobs we think we should do. Most of the items on our to-do lists are good and worthwhile—at least on the surface. And though we give lip service to the notion that we can't do it all, we'd still like to try.**

**The problem is that we really can't do it all—and if we try, the items we never get to are sometimes the most important ones. Over commitment is not only exhausting; it also makes maintaining balance almost impossible because "urgent" issues will almost always crowd out those that are more important but less time sensitive. We quickly reach the point where we are routinely postponing time with the Lord and with family and friends in favor of "getting things done"—even replacing meaningful relationships with the temporary rewards of trying to live up to everyone's expectations.**

**Over the years I have often fallen into that trap. Something as simple as changing the style of my appointment calendar has helped me. One year I bought a slim pocket calendar without spaces to schedule every half hour. The section for "must do" items was small, leaving more space in my day for "want to dos."**

Here's another idea that has helped: Whenever I wonder if I'm making a difference in my world, I resist the temptation to answer that question with my to-do list. Instead, I look around at my family and friends and see how I'm responding to them. If my relationships are strong, I decide I'm doing all right. It's a good feeling.

Have you ever wondered what Jesus' appointment book would have looked like if He'd kept one? Someone once suggested that written across every page would be just a few words: "To do the will of my Father." Keeping that picture in mind really helps me reserve space for unscheduled listening and following.

### **Helping Is Not Always Helping**

I just recently counseled with a single mother, who desperately wants her children to succeed. Unfortunately, that means she is doing things for her teenage son—like doing his laundry and making sure he gets to school on time—that he is perfectly capable of doing himself. She is afraid he won't manage, so she hovers over him, hoping to protect him from making mistakes. What she's really doing is gratifying her need for control and trying to protect her image of being a good parent. In the process, she's depriving her son of the valuable opportunity to learn responsibility . . . and she's also wearing herself out.

If you let it, the desire for control and protection will flow into all areas of your life. You'll take on the leadership of a committee or a project just so you can make sure everything is done the way you think is best. You'll find it hard to delegate because you feed yourself the overused line, "It's easier to do it myself." And maybe that's true—but only in the short term.

Delegating tasks and responsibility is a wonderful way to mentor others. Teaching and encouraging may indeed take extra effort on your part, but only at the beginning. Before you know it, your children or junior coworkers will be flying on their own, developing valuable skills—and helping you! Allowing people to learn through their own mistakes and successes is a gift you give to others. At the same time, you will be giving yourself the precious gift of time. It has taken me a lifetime to come to terms with this skill.

### **Delay Saying Yes and Learn to Say No**

Most of us are tempted to respond immediately to requests. We're almost programmed that way—and our first instinct is to say yes. We're flattered to be asked. We like the feeling of being needed. **And we're willing to overlook the important difference between being asked and being called.**

I've found I can short-circuit this process if I can delay my yes long enough to seriously seek God's direction. Along with praying and looking for answers in the Bible, we need to ask ourselves some hard questions.

- ◆ How does this fit in with my other priorities?
- ◆ Do I have the time and energy, to carry through with this project? How will this commitment affect those I love?
- ◆ Can someone else do the job better than I could?

If your schedule is already full, a simple rule is to never add any new responsibility until you have eliminated something else. If you can't do that, then the appropriate answer is probably no.

Is no a hard word for you to say? It is for stressed-out people. But if you want to clear more time for following what God wants you to do, you simply have to get comfortable with the word no. You must learn when to say it and possibly how to say it as well.

Years ago I found some tips on how to say no. I've included them below. I don't have the original author's name, but I love what she wrote. The words are humorous at times, but they actually work. I encourage you to practice daily so they're on the tip of your tongue whenever you need them—which may be more often than you think. If you want to be available to say yes to God's call on your life, you're going to have to say no to something else.

### **How to Say No**

To learn to say no, put your tongue on the roof of your mouth and say:

- ◆ I'll have to pass it up this time.
- ◆ I've done it in the past. I'll do it again in the future. But I can't do it right now.

- ◆ I'm sorry, but my schedule doesn't permit me to take on any more obligations this week, this month, this year, this decade!
- ◆ It was very kind of you to ask me, but I really must say no.
- ◆ I've made a mistake. I shouldn't have committed myself. I'm sorry, but I really must back out this time.

I know the last one is tough, especially for the over achievers reading this message.

### **Beside Still Waters**

There is a longing in my heart to come alongside all the stressed-out people in the world. If we could walk together for a while, I would share my regrets about pushing the limits for too many years. Believer to believer, we could talk about the value of listening to God and taking care of ourselves, of reserving more empty places on our calendars, of treasuring relationships more than accomplishments.

Our journey would take us along a quiet path and over a little stone bridge to an open meadow. Kicking off our shoes and lying back in the grass, our faces turned to the warm sun, we would softly recite together Psalm 23. As our duet reached the words, He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul, we would smile, knowing this is God's pleasure. Just a typical day—full and purposeful, but with time to spare for eternity.

As you separate yourself from unproductive activities and give your attention more and more to Him, you will hear His voice. He will give you instructions that will change the situation that you have prayed about or the habits you have tried to overcome. As you obey His promptings, you will see results. Seek Him with all your heart and then be obedient to His guidance. He will perform His Will in you and through you.

**In Exodus 33:14, God told Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."** This applies to us as much as it applied to Moses. Seek to be in His presence. Be diligent in spiritual things. Be eager and give yourself to Him. His presence will give you rest and you will find peace of mind. Using your faith will be much easier when you come into that rest. There will be no

struggle because you will be walking in the spirit. You will begin to enjoy the freedom that is there. Glory!

The image of Jesus will come into focus as we give our attention to God and fellowship with Him. The more time we spend with Him getting to know Him, the clearer we will see what He has done. God has actually filled us with Himself. He didn't just give us a gift when He gave the Holy Spirit, He gave Himself. As we become more aware of His presence through the Word, prayer and fellowship, it will become natural to expect His power to be manifested. We will say with confidence, "It is the Father dwelling within me; He does the works through me."

The confidence can only come from Him. We must give our attention, reverence, respect, love and our very selves to Him. When we are resting in His ability in us, then we are truly walking in the power of God through faith.

**Hebrews 4:9-11** says, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works....let us labour therefore to enter into that rest." How can you labour to enter into rest? By ceasing from your own works and sowing to the spirit. Spend your time and energy in the things of God....praying in the spirit fellowshiping with God in His Word by the Holy Spirit, learning His ways and following His voice.

**Memory Text:**

**"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right, persevering, and steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit." (Psalm 51:10-12) Amplified**