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by Berni Dymet




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spiritual warfare transformation Year church & community destiny the devil discovering meaning
Easter faith fear

How to Enter God's Rest

So many people are so tired. And God's Word promises us His rest. Question is – how do you get it?

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how to enter
God's rest

by berni dymet

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CONTENTS

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. God's rest comes on God's terms | 1 |
| Life application - I did it my way | 10 |
| 2. Emotional rest | 13 |
| Life application - Resting on the inside | 22 |
| 3. Physical rest | 25 |
| A time to pray - Praying for peace | 34 |

CHAPTER 1

GOD'S REST COMES ON GOD'S TERMS

I'm sure you know just how difficult teenagers can be when they are growing up – I certainly was a difficult customer back then! But there's a reason for that. Being a teenager is about moving from childhood to adulthood and that means establishing yourself as someone who is independent of your parents. And because the teenage years are a learning time, we all make lots of mistakes.

That's why God put us in families with parents who had both the love and the maturity to cope with our mistakes and to guide us through that growing-up process.

Anyhow, I must have been pushing the

boundaries quite a bit at some stage, so my father said to me, *'Son, I love you very much but as long as you live in my house, under my roof and eat the food I provide and wear the clothes I buy for you; you'll do as I say. If you don't like it, then there's the front door, go and live on the other side of it.'*

Well, I was so offended!! How dare he say that to me?! How *dare* he?!

Now, my dad passed away a few years ago and I am no longer a teenager. I'm well into my in my fifties with grey hair and hopefully, just a bit more wisdom and maturity in life than I had back then. And what I realise now, is that everything provided to me by my parents in those growing-up years was a privilege and a blessing. And because they were the providers, it came on their terms, not on mine.

In this booklet we are going to take a look at *how* to enter God's rest. I know that this is a subject that kind of hits the spot with many, many people – quite simply because so many people are so incredibly tired.

Tired of the grind, tired of the stress, tired of the problems, tired because they work so hard,

tired because ... well, there are so many things that can make us tired ... so many!

The question is *how* do we enter God's rest?

'How' is where the rubber hits the road!

And the first part of the 'how' comes back to the story that I shared with you about my teenage years and that tough lesson of love that my father had to teach me when I was being precocious and self-centred as teenagers sometimes are.

What was the lesson? Simply this: *the blessings that my parents heaped upon me came on their terms, not on mine.*

I always find it interesting that of the Ten Commandments, the first four are about our relationship with God – how we should honour Him – and the very next one, the fifth one, is about our parents and us. Let's take a look at it because the lesson that we need to learn is reflected right here in the Fifth Commandment of the Ten.

Honour your father and your mother so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)



Blessing follows honour
and it comes on the terms
of the giver, not on the
terms of the receiver.

.....

how to enter God's rest

We see here that the blessing of long days is attached to honour and obedience. God blesses us when we honour our parents and get this ... this Commandment comes ahead of: “You shall not murder”, which is number six; “You shall not commit adultery”, which is number seven and “You shall not steal”, which is number eight, and so on. So God considers this particular commandment of first importance after our relationship with Him and that ... that is the first thing that we need to know and to learn about blessing.

Blessing follows honour and it comes on the terms of the giver, not on the terms of the receiver.

And it's exactly the same with blessings that God gives us – peace and rest. Those come on God's terms and that's something that I've had to get through my thick skull. It's taken a while and you know, to be honest, it's still a work in progress. *You see, spiritually, when it comes to obeying God, I think we want to be teenagers – we want the blessing on our terms, as though somehow we deserve it.*

Well, let's get a revelation together today, you and me: we just don't deserve it! God's blessing is an act of grace that comes to us through the death of His Son who paid for all our sin.

In a nutshell, here it is: Adam and Eve had a perfect existence in the Garden until they disobeyed God. God said to Adam:

Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? (Genesis 3:11)

And so they lost their perfect existence. We've done that too, you and I, in rebelling against God. As we read through the whole of the Old Testament we see how incapable humanity is of honouring God and so He sends His Son to pay for my sin and for yours, to open the door again so that we can have a relationship with Him.

But have a look at what the New Testament says about God's peace and rest and how we get it – how it becomes available to us.

So then, a Sabbath rest still remains for the people of God. For those who enter God's rest also cease from their labours just as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest so that no one may fall through such

disobedience as theirs. (Hebrews 4:9-11)

The one thing that takes God's Sabbath rest away from us is what? Disobedience! And actually that's something that I've learned in my walk with God. It's something I know in my experience.

When I've decided on occasions to go *my way*; to do things my way – just like the old Frank Sinatra song – against God's will, you know what happens? There's no rest; there's no peace; life all of a sudden, starts getting complicated. If we harbour anger in our hearts, if we fail to forgive people, if we steal or lie or grumble or commit sexual immorality against God's will – and all those things *are* against God's will – we lose any sense of peace. And without the peace there's no rest.

On the other hand, when we obey God, well, have a look:

For the love of God is this: that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world – our faith! (1 John 5:3-4)

When we obey God we have victory. And what does victory bring? Well, when there's a war and finally, one side wins in victory, what comes next is peace – what comes after that is ... yes, you guessed it ... rest!

When Israel entered the Promised Land they fought battle after battle after battle to take the Promised Land from those who were living in it. And they obeyed God along the way and so what happened?

... the Lord gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors.

(Joshua 21:44)

My friend, the rest of God, His peace, come on His terms and not on ours. And the sooner we get that, the sooner we will enter God's rest.

LIFE APPLICATION

I Did It My Way

It's easy to forget that God is God and that His rest only comes on His terms. And you know something – when I look back now through the wisdom that comes with years, what my father said to me as a teenager was perfectly reasonable and absolutely right.

And the more I read of God's Word, the more I listen to Him speak, the more I realise that His plans and purposes for our lives involve His peace and His rest. Because when we enter His rest, our lives are radically transformed. It's a whole new world.

So let me pose some questions for you to ponder in your life.

1. What's one area in your life right now where you've decided to "Do it My Way" as the old Frank Sinatra song goes? An area of rebellion against God?
2. Why did you decide to do that? What's the benefit or the advantage that you're after?
3. Is there a negative side to this rebellion – some negative consequences?
4. And finally, is the disobedience worth it? Does the gain outweigh the pain?

These are the questions that we need to be asking and answering honestly for ourselves. There are actually only a very few things that God tells us not to do. Just a handful really – and they're only the things that in the end, are going to hurt us.

Disobedience toward God has a cost. Maybe it's time to count that cost.

CHAPTER 2

EMOTIONAL REST

Peace, rest, satisfaction, contentment ... I don't know one person on this planet who doesn't want those things in their lives.

But I know lots who are the way I used to be – troubled, stressed, torn on the inside; people who chase after what this world has to offer; what the advertising industry holds out as being THE holiday, or THE car, or THE house, or THE clothes, or THE watch – whatever it is that's going to deliver us rest.

The problem is none of those things can deliver, because rest is something that comes when we are at peace inside and there's only

one place – only one – where I’ve found that. You see, for us to have rest, the battles have to cease.

When Israel was entering into the Promised Land, they had to fight battle after battle to take the land that God had promised to Abraham centuries before. But at the end of it all, as we saw earlier, *‘The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as He’d sworn to their ancestors’* – rest on every side!

Wouldn’t that be nice? How do we get that?

Because the reality is that we all have battles in our lives. There doesn’t seem to ever be a time in our lives when we don’t have at least one battle going on – if it’s not this thing, then it’s another. And we somehow imagine, *‘If I had enough money, if only I were rich, then those battles would go away.’* But they don’t! Look at the number of rich and wealthy and famous people – movie stars, rock stars – who have taken their own lives or have died from drug overdoses. It doesn’t end when you have lots of money.

So where do we find that peace? Where do we find that rest? Let’s take a look at where the

Apostle Paul found his rest:

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we now stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and that hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Romans 5:1-5)

Peace with God! *"Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God."* When we put our trust in Jesus, we are justified through that faith. In other words, when we turn against God and while we are in that state, there is hostility between us and God.

Elsewhere in Romans chapter 8, verse 7, Paul writes that when we set our minds on ourselves – our wants, our needs – then our minds are hostile towards God. Paul finds peace when the hostilities between him and God cease.

They are no more, because he has surrendered his life to God by putting his faith in Jesus Christ; by believing that Jesus dying on that cross paid for his sin the requirements of justice were met, and by faith in Him, Paul and the rest of us now have a right standing with God.

That's what '*justified*' means.

You see, we go looking for peace in all sorts of funny places – all over the place. I've jumped so many planes, travelled to so many places, bought so many things in my life in an effort to find that rest and that peace and none of them ... NONE OF THEM delivered a lasting rest. The only place I found that is in the end of hostilities between God and me is when I surrendered and I put my life in His hands by putting my trust in His Son.

Notice how Paul goes on then to talk about suffering. Suffering takes on a whole new meaning – it's not the thing that robs us of rest anymore, it's the thing through which our hope in God becomes real.

And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces

endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and that hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who's been given to us. (Romans 5:3-5)

Suffering is the place where we experience the love and the Presence of God through His Spirit. Suffering is the place where we grow up; where we mature and where the light of God's hope shines ever more brightly. Paul demonstrates that when he writes to his friends in Corinth, talking about his sufferings and the reality of God's Presence in him through those sufferings. Here is Paul writing again:

For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But you see, we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be clear to everybody else that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying



We carry around the
death of Jesus in our bodies
and what happens then is
the thing that everyone else
sees in us is life – the life that
Jesus brings.

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how to enter God's rest

in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be visible in our bodies.
(2 Corinthians 4:6-10)

We imagine somehow, that the battles in our lives have to cease for us to discover the rest and the peace of God but Paul is saying exactly ... exactly the opposite here. What he is saying in effect is:

'Look folks, the most powerful thing in my life is the reality of the Presence of God – my relationship on the inside, with Him. Now sure, I carry that round in an ordinary body, a clay jar if you will, but have a look at what that means. People persecute us and try to kill us for telling others about Jesus, but even though we are afflicted in every way, we're not crushed. Okay, perplexed some days, sure, but not driven to despair; persecuted, absolutely, but not forsaken; beaten, struck down, yep, that too, but not destroyed.'

We carry around the death of Jesus in our bodies and what happens then is the thing that everyone else sees in us is life – the life that Jesus brings. My friend, yes, there are times when rest is about physical things –

sleep, a break from work each week, a holiday each year, good diet, exercise – those things are important. But we can have all those things and still not enter into the rest of God.

As Israel stood on the threshold of the Promised Land, knowing the battles that they would have to face to take it over, this is what their leader, Joshua said to them:

Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord, commanded you saying, “The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land. (Joshua 1:13)

For you and for me, we have something better than the land; we have God Himself and no matter what battles may be raging on the outside, on the inside the very Presence of God Himself brings us rest.

LIFE APPLICATION

Resting On The Inside

Hmm ... I think we've all been there. Resting in a physical sense but inside – we're anything but rested. This Jesus who said, "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you", wants for us to experience rest both on the inside and on the outside.

1. I wonder if you can think of any things that are causing you turmoil on the inside. Often it's just one thing, sometimes it's many things. I wonder if you could jot them down on a piece of paper.
2. And as you look at the things causing you turmoil – can you identify any disobedience in your life that's contributing to that?

Often it's cause and effect. We're carrying around the burden of say, unforgiveness – so we shouldn't be surprised that we're exhausted.

3. What you do with that disobedience right now is entirely up to you. But if it was me – I'd repent. I'd turn away from it, and back to God.
4. And finally if there's something causing you turmoil that either doesn't make sense, or it's completely out of your control – then I want to encourage you to hand it over God. To pray over it. To seek His wisdom and to go with His Spirit and His Word. Why not pray and hand the whole thing over to Him right now?

Remember my friend, Jesus truly does want you to enter into His rest. He wants that so much for you and for me that He died on that cross to open the door into God's rest for us. It is a pity that so many of us don't seek out His peace. God's Word commands us that we should make every effort to enter the rest of God (Hebrews 4:11). It shouldn't require a command, should it?

CHAPTER 3

PHYSICAL REST

In Chapter 2 we saw that we need emotional and spiritual rest. But we also need – some people desperately need – a physical rest. So how do we get a physical rest? Well, we sleep every night; we hopefully, each have at least one day off work, maybe two, each week – for most of us that’s Saturdays and Sundays; then once or perhaps twice a year we take a break from work – they call that a holiday.

Now, that’s the ideal but the problem is that many, many people struggle incredibly, to get the sort of physical rest in their lives that they need. Take Japan, for instance.

Traditionally, Japanese people work very long hours, then many of them will go out for drinks and dinner afterwards with their work colleagues. On top of that, most of them have a really long commute home – an hour or even two by train – often getting home late at night, only to have to get up the next morning early, turn around and do it all again for another day. Socially, it's a huge issue for the Japanese.

Others, well, millions and millions of people, work in sweatshops in the developing world for a few cents an hour, to make the consumer goods that we in the West consume so voraciously. The idea of getting two days off a week or a holiday, well, that's just a pipe dream.

And then there are people like me, who can choose to have time off but we were born as natural workaholics. We get up early in the morning; we work until late in the evening, burning the candle at both ends. So when it comes to talking about having physical rest, I'm sharing some thoughts with you and hopefully, a bit of wisdom too, as someone who's spent much of his life as a workaholic, suffered the

consequences of that and learned to get some balance back into his life. (Still learning, actually!)

Perhaps you've heard me quote this Psalm before but when we talk about getting physical rest in our lives, it's one that comes back to me again and again, because it speaks of God's love for us and His will for us, which is why I want to share it with you again right now:

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil, for God gives sleep to those whom he loves. (Psalm 127:1,2)

What I've discover is that when we're addicted to something or we have some entrenched pattern of behaviour going on in our lives that we can't seem to shake, we need a reason to change. And when that reason takes hold of our hearts, the changing is much, much easier.

Let me give you an example.

When I was young, in my late teen years and my early twenties, I was a heavy smoker – three packets a day; between sixty and seventy-five



When we're addicted to something or we have some entrenched pattern of behaviour going on in our lives that we can't seem to shake, we need a reason to change. And when that reason takes hold of our hearts, the changing is much, much easier.

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how to enter God's rest

cigarettes a day. I was absolutely addicted. I'd tried to give up on many occasions but I'd failed over and over again.

And then one day, I was in a hospital room with a woman dying of cancer. It had started in her lungs – she'd been a smoker too when she was young. And that night I stood there and I watched her breathe her last breath on this earth. I saw the death rattle that goes on in the body when it dies. I walked out that room that night, took the half full packet of cigarettes in my pocket, threw them in a bin outside the door.

That was back in 1983 and I haven't had a cigarette since.

Do you see how when something happens deep in our hearts, it can result in powerful change in our lives? And that's what this Psalm is about:

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It's in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil, for God gives sleep to those whom he loves. (Psalm 127:1-2)

What that tells me is that God loves me; that He's interested in my life; that He's doing things in my life and I don't have to kill myself to get it all done for myself.

Actually, He doesn't want me to be anxious and to work eighteen hours a day. As long as I get about building the house that He's building, all I have to do is my bit and He'll take care of the rest. And He wants me to have a good night's sleep because He loves me.

You see, *that* touches my heart!

So as much as I am a workaholic by nature and as much as, growing a ministry like Christianityworks that serves you and millions of others around the world every day is hard work, and as much as I love doing what I do, here is what this Psalm has taught me to do: I'm an early riser. In fact, the morning I was writing this booklet I was up at 3am, a cup of tea in bed and then after some time with the Lord in prayer, I was at my computer in the study room around 4.15am.

You may think I'm crazy, but that's been my way all my life – it's when I do my best

work. But these days, even though I work a long day, come around 3.30 to 4.00 in the afternoon, that's it! I'm done. I don't work nights, except on very rare occasions. I have almost all of my weekends off and each year I try and take a couple of breaks, particularly over summer and Christmas, to get away from work. And I turn my emails and mobile phone off.

Now, it may sound simple but making those changes have been a huge deal ... a HUGE deal for me. I've discovered I can work hard (which I love) *and* have physical rest at the same time. And even though some nights I might only sleep, five or six hours, other nights I make sure I get eight or nine hours to compensate.

I am through walking through life bleary-eyed, it's plain dumb!

Now, I don't know your circumstances – maybe you have young children or a long commute or whatever it is, but here's the thing: pretty much all of us can figure out how to get enough physical rest, sleep and a break from

work once in a while, to make sure that instead of being bleary-eyed, good-for-nothing zombies, we're more at the bright-eyed, bushy-tailed end of the spectrum.

And as well as just enjoying our lives a whole bunch more, it'll bring joy to God's heart because He loves us and He wants us – you and me – to get a good night's sleep ... *for God gives sleep to those whom He loves.*

Do you get it?

A TIME TO PRAY

Praying For Peace

There's more to entering the rest of God than it may at first appear. It's spiritual, emotional and physical. We can't be at rest when we're afraid, when there's turmoil going on inside us.

I heard an interesting thing from a farmer who told me that unless his sheep feel at peace, they won't lie down in the field. If they're unsettled or afraid they'll stand, ready to run. That brings a whole new meaning to Psalm 23 doesn't it:

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures; He
leads me beside still waters;* (Psalm 23:1&2)

In other words, God wants us to have rest – His rest. Why don't we pray for that right now?

Father God, Your Word tells us that Your peace and Your rest are available to us. That's what You say. But we confess that sometimes it's really difficult to accept Your Word. Some days things are so tight, we're so hard pressed, we're so afflicted – that any idea of rest and peace from You seems like a million miles off.

But today, we choose to believe Your Word above our circumstances. We choose to come to You today and ask of You – Father, please show us Your rest. Please teach us the things that we need to know so that we may enter Your rest, once and for all. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Let me encourage you to take God's promise of peace and rest seriously. He does mean it for you – just as He means it for me. And as His Word says – I encourage you to make every effort to enter the rest of God.

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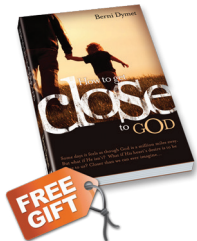
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Berni Dymet is a contemporary Christian communicator with a passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus right into the middle of life. He comes from the perspective that this Christianity thing - it isn't just a faith that lives in our heads or even our hearts, but that it actually works right here in the middle of our lives.

Christianity actually works when we dare to accept Jesus Christ into our lives!! Not just as Saviour, but also as Lord.

Millions of people around the globe tune into Berni's radio programs each week. The Lord has given him a special gift for sharing the Gospel in a truly practical way. In a way that really connects into the hearts and lives of real people in real places, transforming their lives. That's what the ministry of Christianityworks is all about. Leading people into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

But Berni's passion, his enthusiasm and his insights into the day to day realities of life are simply tools in God's hands. The real change agent is God Himself.

And to Him - and Him alone - be all the glory.

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Berni Dymet

How to Enter God's Rest

Tiredness. We all feel tired sometimes. And actually, it's something that creeps up on us – so subtly, so unexpectedly that we don't even realise it. In fact – many, many people are chronically tired. Tiredness is a pandemic. It's physical, emotional ... even spiritual. People carrying around heavy burdens – and so many cry out, “Oh God, I need a rest”.

But the last thing they expect is for God to answer. That's sad – because God wants to deal with our tiredness. I mean, actually, actually deal with it.

So why not join Berni Dymet – as he looks at tiredness and God's plan for giving us rest. Real rest – His rest.

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