

## REST & RESTORATION – 15 DAY READING PLAN (INDIVIDUAL)

### OVERVIEW

The imagery in Ezekiel 37 is stark: A valley surface, as far as one can see, is covered with dry bones. But there is no sound of wind, only stillness, an unsettling stillness.

Would you characterize your relationship with God right now as a bit dry (or really dry)? Has it been weeks, months, or years since you have felt movement or heard anything from him?

The following is a 15-day devotional reading plan that takes you on a journey to reconnect and restore your relationship with your heavenly Father. Each day offers a Scripture reading, a short devotion, and a simple spiritual practice.

### WIN

Read the plan and engage in the suggested spiritual practices individually as a way to reconnect with your heavenly Father and form a deeper connection with him.

### PREPARE

Look at the calendar and choose a date to start the reading plan. All fifteen days of devotional content are located here.

If you would like to read the plan in the YouVersion Bible app, download the app to your phone or tablet and [create a login](#). After that, you can access the study by searching “Rest & Restoration” or by using [this link](#).

## DAY 1 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 37:1–3; Romans 15:13

The human body is fascinating. From cells to neurons to synapses to ligaments to organs to skin, all the parts work together to move us forward... to help us take our next steps.

The complexity and functionality of the human body are reasons the valley of dry bones is so striking, so unsettling. Bones aren't meant to be dry. They are meant to be covered with flesh, alive!

I am grateful to God and Ezekiel that we don't get the "play-by-play" on how those bones became dry. No need to be gruesome, but it must have taken some time.

As you move through this plan, it's important to reflect on why you're a bit dry (or very dry). How did you get to this season? What caused your relationship with God to become less vibrant or less personal? Why is it hard for you to hear from God right now?

- *Has something or someone interrupted your rhythms of connecting with God?*
- *Did something happen that has you questioning God's goodness or character?*
- *Are you quietly suffering through something and worn thin?*

Make no mistake—God's desire is for you to have a full, vibrant, and life-giving relationship with him. That's why I am encouraged that you are starting this plan. Bringing God your confusion, stress, weariness, or apathy is a good first step to restoring your relationship.

## APPLICATION

Restoration takes time. Start the journey by committing to complete all 15 days of this reading plan. If it helps, set a reminder on your phone to open this plan every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for the next month. Tell a friend you want to complete this plan and ask them to check in with you on your progress. Better yet, invite them to read the plan with you!

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

Wondering how you would describe your relationship with God right now? Are you approaching him as a curious skeptic? Restless veteran? Hungry novice? Happy camper? Watch or listen to [this sermon](#) to better understand some of the obstacles to growth you might experience as you start.





## DAY 2 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Psalm 32

David describes what happens when we leave our dry bones alone: they waste away, ignored by our groaning. Often, this groaning sounds like an excuse: *“I’m busy and there’s so much I’m working on. I can always reengage next week.”* And week by week, our choices keep us from reconnecting and our bones begin to waste away. We prioritize our work, our time between, and our selfish endeavors over our relationship with our Father. Eventually, we start to feel guilty and our hearts become hardened.

To be candid, we’ve all been there. We’ve all put our own desires and ambitions above our pursuit of God and felt distanced from him at one point or another. That might be you right now. It’s part of our sinful nature and we get to name that honestly. Luckily, our proclivity to sin doesn’t end the story.

In Psalm 32, we learn about the beauty of confessing our sin. When we name it and allow it to no longer be a stumbling block, we begin to chip away at our guilt. God forgives us and surrounds us with his love in a way that makes it clear we won’t be controlled by it any longer. We are free people who have access to the Father and are offered restoration through the confession of our sins.

## APPLICATION

Confessing your sins can be hard. You might not know where to start or what to name specifically. Try thinking about sin as anything that distances you from your relationship with God. After you’ve had time to name what that might be, confess it to God with this prayer:

*“God, I realize my bones are drying as I’ve distanced myself from you. I confess my sin honestly and offer it to you for forgiveness. Forgive me, restore me, and protect me from \_\_\_\_\_ so that I can be closer to you. Surround me with your love and guide me to your heart. Amen.”*

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

Find a notebook or pieces of paper and write down your prayers of confession. Keep it with you through the week as a reminder of the things that hold you back from your relationship with the Father. When you see it, voice this simple phrase: *“The Lord forgives and the Lord restores”* as a way of acknowledging sin’s presence in your life but not allowing it to hold you back.



## DAY 3 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Psalm 91:1–7

There is a subtle lesson learned in geography when it comes to rest and safety with God. God tells us that the environment, atmosphere, and location need to be ordered to find rest. He directs us to the locations where we may find rest in close proximity.

Psalm 91 reminds us of this in verse 1: Those who live in the shelter (*location*) will find rest in the shadow (*proximity*). In order to be affected by a shadow, a person needs to be near enough to the object providing it. We see the same in verse 4: "He will cover you with his feathers," like a mother bird with her baby tucked into her bosom (*location*) and shelter you with his wings (*proximity*).

Think about when you feel safe, protected, comforted, unafraid, and shielded. Do you associate those feelings with being rested? In these places, it's easy to focus on God because you no longer have to defend yourself or "bat away the arrows." The psalmist tells us that in this *communion* with God, we find rest, protection, and restoration. Proximity to God restores us. So... take a breath, draw near, and be restored.

## APPLICATION

In the next week, pay attention to where you feel safe, protected, and comforted. Maybe it's a time of day or a place in your house. Maybe it's a walk in nature. Read through Psalm 91 and ask God to make these places apparent to you. Go there and practice rest.

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

- Explore what it means to "dwell in the shelter of the Most High" in our everyday lives by reading/listening to theologian John Piper's [Desiring God on Psalm 91](#).
- Gain a greater understanding of the Psalms through [The Bible Project](#):
- [Watch](#) or [listen](#) to Tim Keller's meditation on Psalm 91.



## DAY 4 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-17

In Exodus 20, the Israelites are given a list of 10 commandments. The fourth commandment, found in verses 8–11, is interesting and one we often ignore. It says, “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest.”

God knew we would need a rest in the middle of our busy weeks. The Sabbath was meant to be a gift to refresh us, a chunk of time for us to unplug, to rest, to connect with God and others... and to play.

There has been much written and studied about our constantly connected world and the negative effects it's having on our mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Our days are filled with constant buzzing as our phones fill us in on news updates, help us catch up with friends, and allow us to work wherever we go. While there are definitely benefits to staying in constant connection, one of the negative effects is that our souls become overwhelmed, overloaded, and flat-out *tired*. We need rest.

The remedy for our weary souls is engaging in solitude and silence. Silence is a life-giving gift; it allows the chaos in our souls to settle and helps us get in touch with how we are *really* doing. Silence allows us to connect with God and to listen to his voice.

Jesus modeled this for us in the Gospels. He had a rhythm of going alone to quiet places to pray. If you're feeling disconnected from God and/or yourself, spending time in silence with God can help bring you back.

## APPLICATION

Find 15 minutes to turn off your phone to create a quiet space to connect with your heavenly Father. Get comfortable in a chair or take a walk. Invite God into the time and check in with yourself. What are you excited about? What is draining you? What are you worried about? Give it to God. And then take time to listen to him.

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

*The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer (Book)



## DAY 5 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Hebrews 10:24–25

It's been said that there are rare times in your life when a person comes along and you just know you'll be better for knowing them. Those times need not be rare.

Not long after starting work at Buckhead Church, I joined my second small group. My first had been so amazing that I had high hopes. I expected great Bible teaching and a community of people just like me. What I got was *Jimmy*. I initially wondered (in the way that one does but doesn't often admit) if God really knew what he was doing. Jimmy wasn't a Bible scholar. He was rough around the edges. He wasn't the "churchy" type, but it turns out he was exactly what I needed. Everyone who met him was drawn to him. He was welcoming. He had a huge heart for people. He had a way of making everyone around him laugh. He treated everyone the same. He also had a gift for sharing what he knew about the gospel with people in ways that made them want to know more. I'd never known anyone who could talk about their faith so genuinely. As always, God knew exactly what he was doing.

Every small group I've been part of has brought me a Jimmy—someone used by God to draw me closer to him and someone I'd otherwise never have met.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

When we recognize the amazing relationships God helps us build, it reminds us of the relationship he wants to have with us. As we engage one another, we are able to give thanks to the Father who created them. Responding to this gift, our display of love to others and the pursuit of great relationships invites them into this story also.

## APPLICATION

Who are the people in your life right now that bring you closer to God? Does anyone come to mind? Do you need to find more? What can you do to become that person for someone else?

Thrive in these relationships by engaging them. Choose a person to invite to dinner or to encourage with a text message.

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

If you'd like to know more about the importance to your faith of walking with other Christ followers, check out this video by Andy Stanley: [Providential Relationships](#).





## DAY 6 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:10, 23:3; Galatians 5:22–23

How are you feeling these days?

- *Annoyed*
- *Bored*
- *Numb*
- *Passionless*
- *Peaceful*
- *Purposeful*
- *Relieved*
- *Resentful*

Don't worry: I'm not asking you to get all mushy. I'm just asking you to check in with yourself. *What is a word or two you would use to describe how you're feeling right now?* This exercise might seem elementary, but it can be profound. Glad, sad, happy, or mad, your emotions exist to tell you something about your environment and your well-being.

More often than we would like to admit, we are tired, quick to anger, and restless. We label these “bad” emotions and try to ignore them, cover them up, or explain them away. You probably have examples from your life when you pushed through or protected someone you loved from one or more of these “bad” emotions, only by the end of the day to feel their weight multiplied. Emotions do not show weakness. They can actually be a superpower in the hands of God. He can take your weariness and turn it to rest, your anger to forgiveness, and your restlessness to peace. What the Father desires is for you not to hide from him, but to come to him... just as you are.

God wants to renew a right spirit within you (Psalm 51:10), restore your soul (Psalm 23:3), and make accessible to you an abundance of peace, joy, and faithfulness (Galatians 5:22–23). Run to the Father; he is ready to embrace and restore you.

## APPLICATION

No matter your gender, age, or stage of life, it can be hard to put into words what you're feeling. [The Feelings Wheel](#) is a handy tool to help you match a word to a feeling. Start on the inside of the wheel and work your way outward to explore the secondary causes of your feelings. For example, I am scared, but how that is really showing up for me is feeling constantly overwhelmed.

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

*“I've carried a burden  
For too long on my own  
I wasn't created  
To bear it alone  
I hear Your invitation  
To let it all go  
Yeah, I see it now  
I'm laying it down  
And I know that I need You”*

Listen to [Run to the Father](#) and be reminded of God's great love for you and the invitation to find our rest and restoration with him.



## DAY 7 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Psalm 25

Today's Psalm opens with a bold proclamation. It's not a question or a topic to be discussed but a statement parsed out into practical pieces. David tells us trusting in God eliminates shame, and the burdens of sin to elevate love, guidance, protection, and grace. Fast forward into the story and we know that God does rescue Israel from their captivity. God fulfills promises he makes to his people.

Dictionaries relate trust to reliability. If someone or something displays a consistent and reliable outcome, you trust that thing or person. We trust people and objects all the time without even thinking about it. Here, we learn that we can trust God because he has been faithful in keeping his promises to Israel.

As we move from confessing our sins to making prayer a part of our efforts to reconnect with the Father, trust plays a huge role. When we engage in trusting relationships, we experience the freedom of being ourselves. We offer everything we have so that authentic bonds develop. In the Psalm, we learn that when we put our trust in God, he becomes the source of our strength.

For this second day of prayer, our objective is to take a step towards trusting the bond with our heavenly Father. It's recognizing that we get to bring our imperfect selves to the relationships and in the midst of confessing our sins and seeking reconnection, he provides the strength we need to keep pursuing him no matter the circumstance. We get to trust that God's redemptive power is true and find rest in his promise to protect and love us.

### APPLICATION

Trust doesn't happen overnight. It isn't a one-and-done kind of transaction and it's not easily gained. Today, practice asking God to show you ways He can be trusted. Think of your own circumstances where trusting the Father will provide protection and offer grace. Pray a prayer similar to this one:

*"Father, trust is hard. Past relationships may give me a false image of trust but I want to trust you. I've confessed my sins and you know my circumstances. Show me the will you have for my life. Show me the ways your love facilitates grace in my life. Grow in me the strength to trust You. Guide me. Comfort me. Lead me. Amen."*

### GO DEEPER RESOURCES

Check out [this sermon series](#) from Andy Stanley entitled "Grown Up Prayers."





## DAY 8 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Exodus 33:14

God has told the Israelites, through Moses, that he has removed his presence because of their sin. It is much like a parent to a misbehaving kid who's told to "Go to your room," which, let's be honest, is sometimes as much a break for the parent as it is a punishment for the kid.

Moses intercedes on behalf of his people and asks God for his presence. The people repent and God makes a promise to Moses that his presence will resume *and* that he will give him rest.

We know that feeling: the lack of rest the Israelites were experiencing. When we are "misbehaving children," and turn toward sin instead of God, rest can elude us.

We lack peace. We are unsettled. And we tire quickly. Like the forgiving parent with a misbehaving child, God's presence brings us comfort and rest. Forgiveness draws us closer to him because the barrier between us is removed.

We often hesitate to look to God while we are misbehaving. We hide, we dodge, we turn away, and we wear ourselves out. We choose the opposite of rest and restoration. Yet God's message to Moses—and to us—is clear. In *his* presence we find rest and in *his* forgiveness, we find restoration.

## APPLICATION

Ask God if there is anything in your life (sin?) that is keeping you from fully experiencing his presence. The asking step is easy. The next step can be tough, but as he brings something to mind, take a moment to repent. Ask for God's forgiveness and the wisdom to move forward in victory. In it, you will find restoration.

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

- One of the gifts of Scripture is that it gives us the words to pray when we are unsure, unable, or unprepared to connect and confess to God. Over the next five days, pray these Scriptures as a means of confession and repentance:
  - Psalm 139:23–24
  - Psalm 51:1
  - 1 John 1:5–9
  - Proverbs 28:13
  - James 5:16
- Understand and explore what it means to receive God's presence in your daily life by reading the Christian classic [The Practice of the Presence of God](#) by Brother Lawrence.



## DAY 9 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:28-30

Matthew 11:28–30 is one of my favorite verses in the Bible, and I love the wording in The Message translation. As you read, be reminded that these are Jesus’s words, his invitation to us.

*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.*

I’m not sure about you, but I normally describe my life—and my days—as pretty heavy. There is a lot going on both personally and collectively in our world, and I resonate with the adjectives described at the beginning of the verses: tired, worn out, burned out.

It can be easy to either forget the invitation Jesus is offering or to think of it as too good to be true. But the truth is that this really is the offer on the table—an invitation to recover our lives, to take a real rest, to walk with Jesus, to live freely and lightly.

That’s one of the reasons observing the Sabbath is a gift, meant to heal and restore us. It invites us into rest and trust instead of pushing, going, and striving, which leads to burnout. The word “Sabbath” comes from the Hebrew word “Shabbat,” and it literally means “to stop.” We need to stop and take a rest from all the things we are worrying about, and all the work we are doing. We need to stop and rest in order to be restored.

## APPLICATION

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is take a nap! If you are exhausted right now, take a 20-minute nap. If you feel energized and don’t need actual sleep, take a 20-minute rest for your mind and soul. Get in a comfortable position, put your phone away, and pray or read.

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

Check out [this resource](#) from The Bible Project on Sabbath Rest.





## DAY 10 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Luke 22:42

Do you trust God? I mean...do you *really* trust God?

The difference between the courageous follower of Christ and the average follower of Christ has nothing to do with fear. They both feel fear. The difference is trust.

Choosing to trust God in a difficult situation and seeing him prove himself faithful is what builds our courage to trust him the next time. The hard part is that we don't often know how that faithfulness is going to play out when we're experiencing fear. We have only a "right now" perspective, but God has the eternal perspective. Trusting is scary, but we have a great example. As Jesus was preparing to face the most difficult trial of his life on earth, he prayed an amazing prayer. He said:

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

Luke 22:42

When you're facing a trial, fear is natural. You can choose to try to control the situation, to manipulate the outcome, or even to run, but in those moments, trust is what draws us closer to God. It's okay to pray to God and ask him to change your circumstances, but in the end, those who pray, "Not my will, but yours be done" experience the peace of God and grow closer to him. We must learn to trust God so that we may be restored through him.

Trial + Trust = Growth

## APPLICATION

Draw a timeline of your life, marking the high and low points of your faith. What do the high points have in common? What do the low points have in common? Now that you're on the far end of the timeline, think about how you're still standing tall and moving forward. In your current situation—whether content or tumultuous—take a moment to consider how you might trust God to be your source of strength. For some, it's thanks for overcoming the battles behind you and for others, it's strength for the battles ahead.

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

If you'd like to learn more about God's history of using tragedy for good, read Acts 6:1–15, Acts 7:51–60, and Acts 8:1–4. It's the story of Stephen. It's heart-wrenching, but what you'll see is that the tragedy of the stoning of Stephen was one of the greatest turning points in the history of the church. It's also the first time we're introduced to a young Pharisee named Saul.



## DAY 11 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 36:26–27; Romans 8:6–11

Congratulations! You have almost reached the end of this reading plan. That’s no small thing! It took discipline and intention to get here. You might be wondering what will carry you through to the finish line.

We started this reading plan by looking at Ezekiel 37 and the Valley of Dry Bones. In that graphic depiction of the people of Israel, it was only God’s Spirit that could breathe new life into those bones.

Just a chapter earlier in Ezekiel 36, God hinted at what he was capable of doing: “I will give you a new heart and I will put a new Spirit in you...”

The apostle Paul identifies the same active work of God in the New Testament:

“If the Spirit of [God] who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal bodies to life through his Spirit who lives in you.”

The Holy Spirit, the teacher, the comforter is living and active in your life. You don’t have to white-knuckle your way to a fuller, richer life with your heavenly Father. God is with you through the Holy Spirit to carry you along, to make the hard places soft, to do the heavy lifting of transforming your heart, your connection with him.

*So what do you need to start doing or continue doing?*

- Acknowledge that God is with you and capable of transforming your heart, drawing you closer to him.
- Make yourself available to connect with God through the practices highlighted in this plan.

## APPLICATION

[Breath prayer](#) is an ancient form of prayer that follows the natural rhythm of your breath. With your inhaled and exhaled, you repeat a short and simple prayer. Your prayer can focus on the character of God, a desire of your heart, or a need that is front of mind for you or others.

Following today’s devotion, try this breath prayer: [Inhale] *The Spirit lives in me*, [Exhale] *the Spirit transforms me*.

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

For a solid introduction to the active work of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life, pick up [Forgotten God](#) by Francis Chan.





## DAY 12 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:33-48

There is much beauty to be experienced while living out of the identities God created us to be. He calls us to be people who are after his own heart, which means loving him and those around us as he loves us.

Through Jesus' example, we realize that love isn't easy. Sometimes it's messy and requires a great deal of sacrifice on our part. It requires us to deny ourselves of some pieces in our life that work against it. People, jobs, commitments – all of these though potentially innocent by themselves may not allow us to see the hope that lies ahead of us because they cloud our field of vision.

In the list of the work, this beauty is found. It's those glimpses of light that show us who God is and lead us to the steadfast pursuit of a relationship with Him. When we don't know the days ahead or the next steps to take, He directs our path. When we're feeling trapped or inadequate, he tells us to walk in freedom. And when the sin of today or yesterday keeps us from feeling like we can seek the voice of God, He reminds us we are forgiven.

No matter our circumstance, there is hope to be found by praying to the very source of hope himself. When we turn our eyes away from the things that cloud our vision, we see the source of light that promises love in the end and fights until we find it. Praying for this clarity guides us into restoration as our trust builds and His light reveals how much we really are loved and adored.

### APPLICATION

Adapted from the old Irish hymn, "Be Thou My Vision," pray these words as a prayer of hope to the Father. Use them as words to call upon the hope we have in Jesus to provide for us no matter our circumstances. In good times and bad times, let these words allow us to move forward to love one another and love our Father.

*Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart*

*Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art*

*Thou my best thought, by day or by night*

*Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.*

### GO DEEPER RESOURCES

Create your own anthem. Write a short chorus or verse that outlines your own journey of trusting in God. How has God shown you that you can trust him? What are the barriers to trust you hope to overcome? What are the benefits to you trusting? Include these questions in your lyrics and commit to speaking or singing them daily as a reminder that God can be trusted. If you're comfortable, tell us about it! Email [groups@buckheadchurch.org](mailto:groups@buckheadchurch.org) to share your trust story.



## DAY 13 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Read Psalm 23

From the outset, the psalmist (David) is supremely confident of who God is. In verse 1, David emphatically states he has *all* he needs. David goes a step further and extols in beautiful imagery and detail all God provides: peace, renewal, guidance, and *rest*.

Then the ultimate point. Not only does God provide for all David's needs, he elevates him. He bestows on David a place of honor at the table.

*You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows. (Psalm 23:5)*

We are given this same honor. Even among "enemies," such as hurts, challenges, and struggles, we are held to the highest place of honor at God's table. We are served and fed and cared for. Every need is met, including rest. Like a great dinner host who has thought through the details of the entire evening, our host God misses nothing. He provides for *all* our needs.

For us, Psalm 23 is a reminder of God's character and how he sees us. Yet it is also an invitation to see God the way David saw him: Protector, Provider, Rest-giver. The Father has already prepared the table so that when we arrive, our only obligation is to sit and dine with him.

## APPLICATION

Read through Psalm 23 more than once. What imagery resonates with you? What imagery stirs a desire or want in you? In what part of the psalm can you picture yourself? Pray that God will give you a picture of what rest can look like for you.

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

- Commit Psalm 23 to memory. As you feel overwhelmed, struggling, tired, or more, pray the psalm. Let it be a reminder to you of God's invitation to rest.
- Listen to Passion City Church's [podcast journey through Psalm 23](#).





## DAY 14 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Mark 2:27

When Jesus was walking on the earth, observing the Sabbath was of the utmost importance in the Jewish community, so there were many rules and regulations around it. Jesus clarifies the intent for the Sabbath in Mark 2:27. He tells us, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

We were meant to live in a rhythm—six days of work and one day of restorative rest. Though there are many aspects to observing the Sabbath, in this devotion we have focused on three: unplugging, resting, and delighting. Joy and delight are important parts of the Sabbath.

In Dan Allender’s book *Sabbath*, he says this:

“The Sabbath is an invitation to enter delight. The Sabbath, when experienced as God intended, is the best day of our lives. Without question or thought, it is the best day of the week.... It is the holy time when we feast, play, dance... pray, laugh, tell stories, read, paint, walk, and watch creation in its fullness.”

We often reduce the Sabbath day to a day of running errands, getting things done, or catching up on work. But doesn’t something stir in your heart when you read Allender’s words? The gift of having one day a week to rest, to be with people you love, and to do something you love? We often only experience this on vacation! Wouldn’t it be amazing to create a rhythm where you have one day a week to connect your heart to God’s through joy and delight?

## APPLICATION

Take a few hours this weekend to do something you love. Take a hike or walk, read, paint, go to a park and play—whatever gives you joy! Try to set aside an entire Sabbath day. Check out the blog post in the **Go Deeper** section to help you plan it.

## GO DEEPER RESOURCES

Read [this blog post](#) about rhythms of work and rest by Ruth Haley Barton.



## DAY 15 – REST & RESTORATION

**Scripture:** Romans 12:1

Imagine you're crossing the street with a friend. Suddenly you hear screeching tires and from the corner of your eye you notice a car that's not going to stop before it hits you. Your friend reacts quickly and pushes you out of the way to save your life. Is there anything in that moment you wouldn't do for that friend?

Romans 12:1 is a very popular verse, but many people skip right over the first half to get to the "offer your bodies as a living sacrifice" part. What we miss when we do that is a life-changing five-word phrase: "*in view of God's mercy.*"

We are told "*in view of God's mercy*" to give ourselves to God. What does God's mercy look like in your life? Have you ever really thought about it? When you use God's mercy as a lens through which you see your life and what he asks of you, it changes everything. It's the beginning of a new stage of growth, one in which you realize that giving of your time, your money, and your gifts to those around you isn't a burden or an inconvenience. It's an opportunity for you to be in the front row while God does amazing things through you. It's a way of giving thanks to God.

So in addition to the greatest act of mercy in history (Jesus giving his life for ours), what has God given you that is over and above what you deserve? How will you use those gifts to thank him?

### APPLICATION

Take the time to write a list of the top 10 most amazing things God has freely given you that you don't deserve. Next to each of them, write a way you're able to use those gifts to help others.

### GO DEEPER RESOURCES

Check out *Grace: More Than We Deserve, Greater Than We Imagine* by Max Lucado

