



"We become what we think about all day long."  
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

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## Beating the Rat Race (Part Six)

Only when we are still can we truly concentrate on knowing [God](#). When our lives are upside-down, confusion and chaos reign, events and ideas rush by, and our attitudes and expectations are in flux. Under these conditions, the odds are against real spiritual growth. Often, we are just barely hanging on spiritually because circumstances have so distracted us and perhaps have even taken us down a side path that leads away from God. We may be trying to solve the problem—which is fine and right—but our minds are not straying very far from our own concerns. Like Job, we are failing to see the bigger picture of what God is doing.

In such times, we need to find that still place—a peaceful, quiet environment—where we can meditate on what God has done and is doing, and resolve to let Him work. Only in a setting of [peace](#) and calm do we have the opportunity to take stock and work on improving ourselves and our relationship with God.

The previous essays have discussed five spiritual activities that are enhanced by our being still:

1. Being still helps us to *have the [right attitude](#)* ([Job 37:14](#)).
2. Being still helps us to *see [righteous reasoning](#)* (I Samuel 12).
3. Being still helps us to *receive [instruction](#)* ([Numbers 9:6-9](#)).
4. Being still helps us to *[see God](#) at work in us and for us* (Exodus 14; Ruth 3).
5. Being still helps us to *come to know God*. (Psalm 46; [James 3:18](#)).

Despite observing this principle at work in these Old Testament examples, we have yet to see the best biblical example of being still in God's Word. It is, of course, the example of our Lord and Savior, [Jesus Christ](#). The gospels record several scenes in which He leaves His disciples to be alone or climbs a high mountain to pray. Perhaps the most "severe" of all of His attempts to carve out a small zone of tranquility for Himself occurred just before He began His ministry.

Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, he was hungry. . . . Now when

the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. ([Luke 4:1-2](#); 13-15)

Verse 13 suggests that [Satan](#) had tempted Him much more extensively than what is recorded for us, but He was more than up to the challenge. During those forty days in the wilderness, Jesus was so still that He did not allow even food and water to distract Him from His unity with His Father, who gave Him the strength to endure and to overcome the Devil's every test. Preparing for His ministry was so vital that He had to be entirely focused on His relationship with God. It took total seclusion from [the world](#) to fix His mind on what God wanted Him to do.

The result is that, when He walked out of the wilderness, He came with power and strength to do the difficult, intense work that He knew would end in His sacrificial death to pay for man's [sin](#). That power carried Him forward for a long time, and He frequently recharged it by going to a still place and refocusing on His mission. The product of being still before God is to be filled with spiritual power to do God's will.

[Hebrews 4:1-11](#) contains two points that will help us in being still:

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed [the gospel](#) was preached to us as well as to [the Israelites]; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with [faith](#) in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works;" and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest." Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

The first point is a long-range one, and the second is more immediate:

1. We need to be diligent to enter the rest that is the [Kingdom of God](#). This is the true rest toward which all Christians should be intently pressing. It will be a true rest from the sin, confusion, and turmoil that are hallmarks of this age.
2. In the mean time, as verse 9 reads, "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God." The word "rest" is *sabbatismos* in Greek, and it refers to both the weekly [Sabbath](#) rest and the ultimate rest in God's Kingdom, of which it is a type. God has given us a weekly, twenty-four-hour period when we can be still and use that time to come to know Him.

The people of God need this one day to recharge physically, but more importantly, they need it to pull out of the world, to remove themselves from the rat race, and to get into communion with God. The Sabbath day gives them the opportunity to adjust their attitudes, to understand godly reasoning, to receive instruction, to see God at work, and to come to know Him more intimately.

Being still need not be limited to the Sabbath day. We should make a concerted effort to find time during the workweek to stop our headlong rush through life, be alone with God, and simply, prayerfully think, which is biblical meditation. In a world like ours, we frequently need to evaluate ourselves and reevaluate our course, and the way to do these things is to be still.

In [John 14:27](#), our Savior says to us: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." If we can learn to be still, we will enjoy the wonderful benefits of Christ's peace in us.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Prayer and Seeking God](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

We must not have an apathetic relationship toward God (Revelation 3:15), but instead to ardently, earnestly, diligently, and fervently seek God in order to imitate His behavior in our lives. The fervency of a passionate courtship and marriage relationship provides the grounds for comparison of the kind of relationship God wants with us. Jesus, David, and Jacob exemplified the passionate fervor and heat (both to purify good and to destroy evil) God demands of us. If we search for God with all our hearts, looking for something which is a vital necessity for us (Deuteronomy 4:29; Jeremiah 29:12-13; Hebrews 11:6) God will reward us, giving us what we are seeking: a warm, ardent relationship, transforming us into what He is.

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## From the Archives: Featured Article

### [Can Theology Define God's Nature?](#)

by Earl L. Henn (1934-1997)

Matter interacts with energy in a different way at the atomic level than it does at the macro level. Earl Henn show that in a similar way human reason and logic are practically useless as tools in determining the nature of God. Only the Bible gives a complete revelation of God.

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