

MEDITATIONS FOR MEN

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REMEMBERING MY DAD

by Laura Leigh Benson-Greer

Memorial Day was a natural passage into summer. Pages 1 and 2 feature a Dad/Daughter duo on Remembering. As Joshua told the people of his time to build memorial stones in the Jordan river to remind them of God's faithfulness in delivering them from their foes—we need to remember the great faithfulness of our God for all of His blessings in our lives. It's also a good time to remember those of our Christian brothers and sisters who have ministered to us and our families in special ways.

I remember the past in terms of colors—sunny golden days when we rolled down the hill in sleeping bags and carried picnics down to the patio at the lake. Windy gray days when we built tents in the hall upstairs and pretended to go camping. And soft green days in the spring when I would wake up and walk across the wet grass to get a good-morning kiss from my dad.

Dad spent his life trying to share with us simple truths about living and loving. Dad's gift was in knowing that the most important truths in life are realized in the midst of the ordinary, everyday experiences that we all have.

So as I struggle to write the papers and read the books that come with being a grad student, and to do the laundry and pick up the stuff that comes with being a mother. I can hear the words of my father reminding me that none of these things are the important things about my life.

What matters are the talks and the tears and the laughter and the songs and the walks and the colors that I share with my husband and my son—and the time I spend being quiet enough to hear the voice of God.

I know now, dad, that the way you lived and the words you said taught me things I had only begun to realize at the time. And thank you, dad, for the words well said, and the life well lived. And I thank you, dad, for the colors!

By Laura Leigh Benson-Greer, from the Foreword of *Laughter in the Walls*, copyright 1990, by Bob Benson. All rights reserved. Generoux-Nelson, Nashville, TN

NOTE: For many of the country's Christian artists and writers, as well as for pastors and lay leaders everywhere, Bob Benson was a friend, counselor, sounding board, chaplain, fellow pilgrim, and comrade-in-arms in the struggle to punch as many holes in the darkness as they could. He laughed with, created with, argued with, prayed with, corresponded with, and retreated with enough of them to earn a place that few others will ever achieve. Bob was promoted to heaven after a lengthy battle with cancer. He would say that, though he may have lost the cancer battle, he surely won the war.

THE SABBATH REST OF GOD

by Mark Buchanan

I became a Sabbath Keeper over time. It happened in subtle ways. I noticed at some point that the harder I worked, the less I accomplished. I was often a whirligig of motion. But there was little joy, and stunted fruit. To justify myself, I'd tell others I was purpose-driven, or words like that. Often I was just obsessed. I once went forty days and was proud of it. But things weren't right. Though my work often consumed me, I was losing my pleasure in it—and, for that matter, in many other things besides—and losing, too, my effectiveness in it.

I finally came to my senses. I wish I could say this happened in one blazing, dazzling vision—a voice from heaven, a light that blinded and wounded and healed—but it didn't. It was more a slow dawning. I didn't lose my marriage, or family, or ministry, or health. But it became clear that if it continued in the way I was heading, I was going to experience lasting damage.

Perhaps you grew up indifferent about Sabbath. To you it may be a musty, creaky thing about which only ancient rabbis and old German Mennonites bother. I hope to awaken in you wonder and expectancy about it. I want to rid you of the notion that Sabbath is something archaic and arcane. That it is akin to bloomers and corsets and top hats that went out of style long ago and is not likely to make a comeback soon.

Waylaid by life's demands and stifling routines, many of us feel utterly ransacked. Even our vacations have a panicky, task-like edge to them. "If only I had more time," is the mantra of our age. But is this really the problem? Or is the problem that we've really lost "the rest of God—the rest God bestows—and with it, that part of himself we can know only through stillness."

Sabbath was made for man. It was something God prepared long ago, inscribed into the very order of creation: a day when all the other days loosed their grip. And it was a day that God intended to fuss over us, not we over it. It was designed to protect us, pay tribute to us, coddle us, in all our created frailty and God-imprinted beauty and hard-won liberty, in our status as men and women whom God made in his own image and freed by his own hand and his own blood. It is a father's gift to indulge his children. Another thing about Sabbath is that it is as essential to your well-being as food and water—and feels as good to your heart and soul as a wood fire on a cold day. I hope to tune your ears to better hear and gladly accept, Jesus' invitation: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28 NASB).

In one of my other books, I tell the story about the time Phillip Melanchthon turned to Martin Luther and announced, "Today, you and I shall discuss the governance of the universe." Luther looked at Melanchthon and said, "No. Today you and I shall go fishing and leave the governance of the universe to God." **Ah, the rest of God!**

Excerpted from *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath*, copyright 2006, by Mark Buchanan, published by Thomas Nelson, Nashville, TN. Mark has pastored for years in British Columbia. He was educated at the University of British Columbia and Regent College.

A HYMN STORY FOR SABBATH

by William J. Peterson

In 1901, J. Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, kept getting messages of his missionaries being assassinated by Chinese terrorists. His mission had nearly one thousand missionaries in the country, and one by one they were being killed in the Boxer Rebellion. A total of 189 Protestant missionaries were killed.

There wasn't anything Taylor could do, except pray and sing. Sing? Yes, day after day his coworkers heard Taylor singing softly the words to this, his favorite hymn "Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art."

It isn't easy to rest in the midst of disaster, but as we do, Jesus gives an inner peace and satisfaction, and we will, as the hymn says, find out the greatness of His loving heart.

RESTING IN THE JOY OF JESUS

Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art;
I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart.
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, And Thy beauty fills my soul,
For by Thy transforming power, Thou hast made me whole.

-REFRAIN-

***Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art;
I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart.***

O, how great Thy loving-kindness, vaster, broader than the sea!
O, how marvelous Thy goodness, lavished all on me!
Yes, I rest in Thee, Beloved, know what wealth of grace is Thine,
Know Thy certainty of promise, and have made it mine.

Ever lift Thy face upon me as I work and wait for Thee;
Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus, Earth's dark shadows flee.
Brightness of my Father's glory, sunshine of my Father's face,
Keep me ever trusting, resting, fill me with Thy grace.

JEAN SOPHIA PIGOTT (1845-1882)

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