ANGELA THOMAS

brave

honest questions

women ask
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DEDICATION

For my Editor and Friend
Dale McCleskey

Thank you for your wisdom, direction, encouragement, and prayers.

About the Author

Angela Thomas is a popular national speaker and the best-selling author of 10 books and Bible studies. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina and Dallas Theological Seminary. Angela has been teaching the Bible for over 25 years using her unique gifts of entertaining storytelling and faithful biblical instruction. Every year she speaks to thousands of women across the United States and around the world. Angela, her husband, four children, and two crazy dogs live in North Carolina.
My sweet friends, welcome to Brave.

This study means so much to me personally. Most of my life I have not lived brave, but I have wanted to. Many years I allowed myself to be guided by my insecurities, fears, and what everyone else thought I should do. I have let common distractions deflect me from my goals. I have let others’ excuses become mine. I guess I just fell in line and most of the time did what the good, nice people around me were doing and saying.

I am certain God has more. With all my heart, I believe a woman who follows passionately after God can become a brave woman who lives according to His powerful Spirit.

I am even more certain that living brave begins with truth. In the weeks ahead, I hope you’ll turn every one of these pages with a longing for truth. I pray the Scriptures become your refuge and strength. I hope you’ll be able to say and write the truth of your own needs. Maybe you’ll even uncover deeper truths about who you are and how your personal struggles have shaped you.

More than anything, I’m praying you encounter the truths of our God. I long for His character to become glorious to you and a comfort in all that concerns you. In these weeks I pray God will overwhelm you with His goodness, His faithfulness, His enduring love, and His constant affection. Oh my friend, how He loves us. I am convinced He loves you and me. He desires that in His power we will live brave.

By His grace and mercy,
According to the work of the Holy Spirit,
Because of the life of Jesus Christ,
May we become the brave women of God.
With great love and tenderness for you.

Angela
WEEK 1

I AM WORN OUT
I had breakfast with my girlfriend yesterday, and she’s just worn out. Her kids aren’t babies anymore, but her exhaustion is completely understandable. Her family has been caught in the recession, like most of us, and they have found themselves with three houses, two of them for sale in a poor seller’s market. The renter of one just decided to walk away from her lease yesterday. We sat together over pancakes, and I told her I would pray for a miracle. An hour ago she texted, “When it rains, it pours. My college sophomore just lost half his financial aid for next semester. More prayers needed.”

Maybe you feel about the same. More prayers needed. Your mind is weary, and the answers are slow. Life just keeps coming.

Maybe you are exhausted, and some of your worn out is physical exhaustion. But for many of us, the heart is numb and the spirit is tired.

It’s interesting, when we’re just plain tired, like how you feel after a full day of yard work, most of us know what to do with that. Take a good, hot bath. Have a yummy snack. Whisper a tired amen; then go to bed early. But when the spirit and mind are worn out, it’s so much more difficult to know what to do.

Welcome to our first week of brave questions: God, do You know that I’m worn out? I’m praying that as we seek God together with the truth of our weariness, His character and His answers will become your guide.

As you begin this first day in the first week of our study together, please know that I have prayed for you. I will keep praying for you. God loves the worn-out women. I believe He wants to refresh your soul this week.

_Blessings, dear friend._
Today is Monday for me. Since it’s the first day of this study, maybe it’s Monday for you too. I have all the post-weekend symptoms. A full heart from traveling and speaking at a conference and then coming home to scurry around, putting together a combination birthday and Super Bowl party. We had 20 people for dinner and the celebration last night. I loved it all. All the people and the travel and cooking and cleanup. But today is Monday, and once again, doing all the things I love has left me worn out. My head was a little foggy and slow this morning. My jump-to-it attitude took half the day to engage.

Honestly, this is kind of a regular start to a new week. I can only imagine that you begin your Mondays in a similar way. Early this morning, snuggled in my robe and holding my third cup of coffee, I prayed to the Lord, “Oh God, do You know that I am worn out … again?”

As I have been preparing for our time together this week, I’ve decided we can experience worn out several ways, and I want us to address all of these in the next few days. Obviously physical weariness comes to us, but we can also become weary of our circumstances, emotionally worn out, and especially drained of spiritual strength.

In what ways do you struggle with feeling worn out?

To me worn out feels like:

Sometimes it literally feels like I have a huge weight pushing down on top of me. A heaviness follows me from room to room. Sometimes it’s physical. Sometimes emotional. Sometimes I am too numb to tell the difference.

I am quieter when I’m worn out. My family asks, “Are you OK, Mom?”
In the video this week I’ll tell about a question I posted to my Facebook friends. I asked how they’d complete the sentence, “I am worn out because. . . .” But let me ask you: How would you honestly complete these sentences?

I am **worn out** because:

Here’s what **worn out** makes me feel like:

This is how I usually act and react when I’m **worn out**:

Maybe after just writing these few responses, you are thinking to yourself, *I don’t have time for this Bible study. I’m pooped!* But I believe that this study has divinely found you at the right time, especially this week about worn out. Just so you won’t feel alone in your weariness, read with me Proverbs 30:1 in the margin.

The wisdom literature of the Bible declares we will all grow weary. Tired. Worn out. My uncle Donald used to say, “I’m too pooped to pop, just laying here a frying.” Maybe a season of “too pooped to pop” has come to you. Honestly, I don’t know anyone on this earth who can avoid the inevitable. In these bodies, on this earth, we will know exhaustion in all its varieties. We are the worn-out women.

**NO SUPERWOMEN**

Maybe some women are more organized. Maybe some live inside stronger bodies. But the truth of our humanity is that no superwomen exist on this earth. We each have been created by God, fully human and walking around with human needs and human frailties. Today my humanity reminds me of several things:

I can’t eat the way I used to—four pieces of white bread for an afternoon snack. Careless eating makes me feel bad. When I feel bad, worn out isn’t far behind. If I ate all that yummy bread today, I’d be doubled over with a stomachache the rest of the night. My humanity can be a drag.

I need about seven hours of sleep every night. Eight is even better. When I get to the lobby at 4 a.m. to make the first flight out of town, my body will require payback, somehow, some way. I call it “crazy tax.” I can make crazy choices and push myself to get more crammed into a few days. But crazy tax is always coming. I am human.

My brain turns off right about 8:00 in the evening. I tell you, it goes to mush.

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**Proverbs 30:1, ESV**

“The man declares, I am weary; O God; I am weary; O God, and worn out.”

I am **worn out** because:

Here’s what **worn out** makes me feel like:

This is how I usually act and react when I’m **worn out**:

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I take all kinds of vitamins trying to extend its daily reach, but nope, I can’t seem to force many brainwaves after 8:00 p.m.

Second, my limitations force me to prioritize. After my relationship with God, my order goes: Marriage, children, and ministry. That’s it. I truly have no room for anything else. I’d like to add lots of fun things such as cooking classes, gardening, and home design. But my humanity has forced me to choose what matters most. For now, in this season of life, I can give priority to my big three. Most everything else is pushed to a very distant fourth.

What would you list as your Big Three?

1.

2.

3.

Just for fun, what would you love to add to your life one day, when it’s time for your priorities to change?

How do you feel about having to sacrifice fun things because of responsibilities?

Facing my limitations and weakness forces me to do a few things. First, I have to put my faith in God. Again and again and again. He can take care of all that I cannot stay awake to worry about.

He is the One who meets every need. He is Lord and Sovereign in this universe. Oh, can I tell you how very thankful I am that He is God of all and I am not? I have squarely and firmly put my faith in His ability to run the planet. He is able.

Does finding yourself worn out tend to cause you to trust God more or to lose hope when your strength runs out?

“My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

—Philippians 4:19, hcsb

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Just for fun, what would you love to add to your life one day, when it’s time for your priorities to change?

How do you feel about having to sacrifice fun things because of responsibilities?
So, here we have it, our first day of being worn out together. Welcome to the club. Not a superwoman in the room. Just us, human, so very aware we are in over our heads. Asking God if He sees. I can tell you this at the very beginning: God is not mad. The Creator is very well acquainted with our design.

“For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.”

— Psalm 103:14

We are just beginning to consider the truth of our condition before God. I pray that today you know that you are not alone. My worn-out heart sighs from my truth, “Oh, how very much I need a Savior.”

Oh, Jesus, come be our Savior. Our Rescuer. Our Provider.
Our Friend. I know You see that I am worn and weary. So I am bringing my truth to You today. My weariness is laid on Your altar. I have nowhere else to go. No one else can save me. I’ve come to You with my great need. Teach me. Show me. Hold me.
Keep saving me. I love You. Very amen and amen.

This morning I’m flying from Cape Town to Johannesburg, South Africa. The Middle Eastern man sitting beside me was asleep before they even closed the door. I am smiling as I type because he had propped his sleepy head up with his hand, but his arm just fell down and his whole body jerked him back upright. Still dead asleep. I’ve done that.

What is interesting is that I’m on a plane with people from many nations. Most of us don’t speak the same language. I hear conversations all around me, and I can only understand a few words here and there. But as I look into the eyes of my fellow passengers, I see a universal language of the soul. You don’t need a translator to know the person in front of you is worn out, weary, and even discouraged. I don’t know their stories or how they came to such weariness, but their eyes and countenance say it all. People are weary and worn out the world over.

The Bible is very clear about these thoughts. We all will become tired in some way, in some season. No one is exempt. The Scripture gives several observations about our weariness. Let’s examine what God says about how we become so tired.

DAY 2
No big shock here. Whew, I’m so glad to know that the Bible says that work makes you tired.

“She has wearied herself with toil.”

Ezekiel 24:12, esv

This may sound a little crazy to you, but that actually gives me comfort. God knows that good work makes a good woman good and tired. Wiped out. Flat as a pancake. Work is supposed to make you tired. It’s how we’re supposed to feel when we’ve given all we have to take care of our families or to finish a big assignment or to get to the other side of final exams. We’re supposed to be tired.

Sometimes, just before I fall asleep, I will whisper to God: “This is how I’m supposed to feel when I’ve done good, hard work. Thank You for this good tired. Amen ... zzz.”

You see, we won’t ever get to some spiritual place where we balance just right and delegate just right and never experience weary or worn out again. Honestly, I think if you get there, you may be forsaking some really great work God is calling you to do.

So, where does your good tired come from these days?

For you, what distinguishes good-work tired from all the other ways we feel worn out?
ANXIOUS TOIL MAKES YOU EVEN MORE TIRED.

Good work differs from the kind of unscriptural exhaustion that comes from “anxious toil.” I bet you already know the difference in your heart.

What makes for “anxious toil” in your life, and how does it feel to you?

Solomon, the writer of Ecclesiastes, used the phrase “under the sun” to consider a life lived apart from God or apart from His leading. Maybe we could think of a life centered on God as a life that is looking above the sun. It’s a beautiful picture, don’t you think? The life underneath the sun can’t see like God sees. Doesn’t have the big picture. Only sees what’s underneath the clouds. Doesn’t ever factor in the sovereignty of God. I can picture that hunched over, fretful, “under the sun” woman right now. I’ve been that woman, so I actually know her intimately.

What if we learned to live “above the sun,” seeing as God sees, thinking more like He thinks?

Solomon said that when we live “under the sun,” everything is meaningless, toil is exhausting, and the striving is endless. His exact words actually go like this, “All is vanity.” (See Eccl. 1:2, NASB.) Ecclesiastes is 12 chapters woven with this same thread. Solomon wanted us to get it. If you are living “under the sun,” without a God-perspective and a God-focus, then really, life is just meaningless. Psalm 127 calls the kind of work that we do apart from God’s leading “anxious toil.”

“It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep” (Ps. 127:2, ESV).

Do any of these words apply to some part of your life? Circle your choice(s).

fretful    jumpy     worried    striving

tense    fearful    on edge    in a tizzy

overloaded    faithless    nervous

manipulating

Want to go a little deeper today? Have a little extra time? Read the whole Book of Ecclesiastes, and pay special attention to Solomon’s description of life “under the sun.” What if we learned to live above the sun, seeing as God sees, thinking more like He thinks? Where are you living?
In this very moment, what little step can you take to lay down a burden of anxious toil so that you might walk in the freedom promised—above the sun?

GRIEF EXHAUSTS THE BODY AND SOUL.

Almost everyone I know has experienced the pure exhaustion that comes to us from grief. The psalmist said: "I am worn out from sobbing. All night I flood my bed with weeping, drenching it with my tears. My vision is blurred by grief; my eyes are worn out" (Ps. 6:6-7, NLT).

We can know great sorrow over our losses, our circumstances, and even our own choices. The soul grieves for many reasons, but the Bible is so clear: Grief empties us of strength. It will completely wear us out.

A woman at my Bible study said to me last week, “Thanks for saying that. I lost my husband three months ago, and I have never...
been more exhausted in my life. I finally have the words to say what it is: ‘I am exhausted from my grief,’ and God knows that this awful grief has worn me out.’

SIN MAKES YOU TIRED.

The prophet Jeremiah said, “They weary themselves with sinning” (9:5). If you’ve ever watched people choosing blatant sin, you know it’s true—they wear themselves out. Maybe you keep living around your sin and trying to hide it. Maybe the prophet’s words ring loud in your soul and your head shouts a silent “Amen” because you know firsthand that sin does make you tired. Oh so very tired.

Honestly, if you are weary and worn out and you can’t exactly figure out why, here is the first place I would look. Is there sin in your life you’ve been trying to live with? Are there sin patterns you’ve been meaning to deal with?

A few years ago I encountered a woman who was caught in a web of lies. Almost every interaction with her involved yet another silly lie and stories she had to keep straight. Just 10 minutes with her wore me out. I believe that poor woman must surely be exhausted from her own sin patterns.

Here’s a little space for you to stop and consider. I don’t want you to keep reading or zoom past this small part of today’s study. But just for a moment ask God, “Am I clean?”

Close your eyes for a few minutes and sit with the question in front of God. “Am I clean?”

Grief makes you tired.
Rob you of strength. Wearies your heart, soul, and mind.

Tell me about the last time you felt exhausted because of grief.
I have never known God to speak to me from His wrath. He always prompts me toward purity with gentleness and love. Sit and listen to the gentle voice of God. He can tell you if there is sin that makes you tired.

I think we’re becoming friends by now. I am propped up on my hotel bed in Johannesburg praying for you right this minute.

Father, come with Your gentle presence to each one of my friends. Minister to the worn-out women who have just begun to seek You for their weariness. Teach each one of us where to turn and what to do with our weary. We love You so much. We need You so much.

So very amen and amen.

This world, oh my goodness, this world will tell you lies. Come here when you’re tired, and we’ll refresh your body. Do that when you are weary, and your heart will jump for joy. Buy that cream. Send away for those vitamins. Run to a bottle. Hide in the dark. Jump through the next hoop. Google™ for another answer. On and on it goes. The world shouts to each one of us its prescription for weariness. I have listened too many times to this lying world and counted on its answers. I bet you have too.

I believe the big question for us this week is this: “Where do you go with your weary?” Truly, where do you turn when you’re tired? your bed? a carton of ice cream? the gym? a bottle of wine? I am a girl who wears out in the normal, human being kinds of ways. I assume that you are too. I could run a million places or do a million things, but I’m certain no one and no thing can give what the heart truly craves. We need a rest that only God can give.
Hear me say something clearly: We can do great things in this world to live in strength, wisdom, and courage. Lord knows most of us are trying everything. But here is the big, hairy truth: Many of us are doing great worldly things to care for ourselves and yet not living with an inside strength to counter our soul weariness.

What’s a woman who loves God supposed to do? How about this?

Turn to God first.

Then do everything in wisdom to care for your body, soul, and mind.

I only say this because too many times I’ve reversed the order. I have tried to find the wisdom apart from God. I write about it today because I guess you’ve done the same thing too.

It is so very brave to turn with your weariness and to ask of God, “Do You know that I’m worn out?” My prayer is that you will begin to hear the Lord respond to your heart, “Do you know I am your God who does not grow weary?” Our God is not like us. Hal-le-lu-jah!

He does not become weary or wear out or fall flat or even need a nap.
He is not a big grandpa in the sky nodding off in His easy chair.
HE IS GOD!
And God, in His very nature, is different from you and me.
He does not need to be physically replenished.
He does not need anything from outside Himself to be a better, stronger God.
His character is self-sustaining.
Let’s stop for a minute and observe Isaiah 40:28-31. Take out your pen or highlighter, and for some of you colored-pen girls, here’s your place to really mark it up.

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORd is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORd will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isa. 40:28-31).

Did you find the transfer of God’s strength? Still not quite sure? OK, here’s your hint: The transfer happens right after the word “but.” Do you see it now? The holy transfer of God’s character happens when we come into His presence and put our “hope in the LORd.” Right there. Boom. That’s it. There’s your answer. Where do we run with our weary? The Scriptures tell us to run to God and put our hope in His promises.

I’ll get you started.

I will renew my strength.
I will soar on wings like eagles.
I will run.
I will ____________________.
I will ____________________.
I will ____________________.

Now list with me the benefits of placing your hope in God.
Isaiah said that those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. Other translations say “they who wait for the LORD” (ESV), which is an idea we see woven throughout Scripture. The Message paraphrases this another way:

“But those who wait upon GOD get fresh strength.”

ISAIAH 40:31

Today I want you to remember that God knows our propensity to become weary. It’s built into the very fabric of our humanity. But God has made a way for us to know fresh strength. He has provided a means to make a holy and mysterious transfer of His character to our souls when we come into His presence and place our hope in the truth of who He is.

My friend, here is where we go with our weary: to the only One who can transfer the strength of His character into our bodies and souls. Here is the truth you cannot miss: A hope firmly centered on the Lord renews our strength.

In this passage, the word “renew” means “to exchange,” like taking off old clothes and putting on new ones. When we put our hope in God, He is able to exchange our weakness for His power. Where is your hope today? Most of us know the right answer, but still, it’s easy to misplace our hope in the blur of living on this earth. I have mistakenly placed my hope in some of the following things:

As you read my list, note any way you have duplicated my “misplaces.” I’ve trusted ...

- myself or my skill set
- my determination or willpower
- my parents
- my children
- my husband
- my health
- calm circumstances
- financial contracts
- the real estate market
- the promises of the well-meaning
- my leaders
- my government

Do you have any more ideas that you could add to my false hope list?
Hey all you worn-out women, today I want to remind you of some really great news. You can trade your worn-out spirit for fresh, new strength. Your weary heart can be restored. Our God, who does not grow weary, has made a way for you and for me.

Your Creator gets you. He understands your crazy life. He knows that you work until exhaustion. He sees how many people need your time, your input, and your energy. He is completely aware of your design. God cares for His worn-out girls. Really and truly He does.

God’s compassion toward us is not only consistent and faithful but it is unfailing. Without interruption. Steady. Reliable. Promised and sure.

According to the Scriptures, God has made beautiful provisions for the worn out. He has always known our great need, and in His Word we learn how He makes a way for our help and restoration. I’m praying that today you will make some everyday life decisions based on the provisions of God for your body, soul, and mind.

I want us to walk through eight lessons concerning God’s provisions for the worn out. He is not mad about your weakness. He doesn’t keep His distance because you’ve grown tired. He’s not wringing His hands about your failings.

Our God has made a way to renew our strength. For the rest of today’s study, we’ll walk through several lessons of Scripture that have ministered to me. My list is not exhaustive (pun intended), but hopefully these thoughts will suggest a beginning toward understanding the heart of God toward the weary.
1. THE PRESENCE OF GOD RESTORES.

God obviously promises a physical rest for your weariness and a soul rest from your heavy burdens. But Jesus required an action on our part.

What do you sense God is saying to you from the verse?

Are you weary? In what everyday kind of way can you get to God today? Maybe you could choose one of these suggestions:

✿ Bow your head where you are.
✿ Push all your books aside, and physically just lie in the presence of God.
✿ Turn off every distraction until stillness surrounds you.

What one specific action could you choose to take to "come to" Him?

Which particular aspect of Matthew 11:28 gives you hope or encouragement?

What does this verse tell us to do?

What does the verse promise?

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

— Matthew 11:28
Have you seen God’s goodness through your own situation?

- yes  
- no  
- I’m not sure

If so, how long did you have to wait to see God’s goodness shine through, and how did you eventually see it?

During my separation and divorce I vividly remember long, long months filled with the blackest nights of waiting on God. No answers. No direction. All I knew was He was my only hope. People would say to me, “God is coming.” And I believed them, but in my spirit I could not sense any answers. The waiting seemed to last much longer than I felt I could endure and was darker than I ever imagined darkness could be.

Now I can testify to an amazing truth. God came. He came to rescue my soul from its darkest night. He came to carry my worn-out body and my worn-out kids. As a bonus, God continues to bring light from that time to give refreshment and strength I would not have known without the waiting.

Many times in Scripture we read about the one who drags himself into the presence of God and then waits. The psalmist said:

“We wait in hope for the LORD.”

Psalm 33:20

I don’t pretend to understand the details of God’s heart, but I do know that sometimes He desires that we wait in His presence until we receive His refreshment. We wait for strength. We wait for guidance. We wait for healing. Something powerful and life-giving comes through the waiting. This falls into the category of learning to trust our God of wonder and mystery.

Do you remember a time of waiting for God to renew your soul? Tell me about the circumstances.

2. MANY TIMES WE EXPERIENCE A DIVINE WAIT BEFORE REFRESHMENT.
To observe the Sabbath we should worship the Lord and rest from our work. I also believe the Sabbath should be kept every week, not just when we get around to it every few months.

My job is to study and read and to move words around, trying to communicate an ancient truth in a brand-new way. On the Sabbath I rest from my work and all the words and studying. To make dinner for my family is a joy for me. It restores me. I believe I have permission from God to enjoy what feels like rest for me.

From what do you sense God would have you rest so you can receive the gift of His Sabbath for your soul?

Hebrews 4 elevates the idea of Sabbath to proclaim our rest from dead works. Our entire walk with Christ is a Sabbath rest because He is our righteousness.

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.”

HEBREWS 4:9-10

When Moses asked for God’s name, God replied, I AM THAT I AM or I AM WHAT I AM—a title expressing God’s self-existence and His unchangeable character.

He always was what He is, He is what He was, He will ever be what He was and is. With Him there is no changing.

In this study, I pray you hear God asking the question back to you, “Do you know who I AM?” Do you know His unchanging character toward you? I pray you learn a little more every day about the great character of our God who is I AM.
4. 
**JESUS DID NOT HEAL EVERYONE OR GO TO EVERY TOWN.**

In our video session this week we’ll talk about Dr. Martin, who challenged me that Jesus did not heal every person who was sick or minister to everyone He saw. Dr. Martin said, “Jesus only did what His Father instructed Him to do, and so should you.”

Thank you, Dr. Martin, for a Scripture truth that gives boundaries to my purpose and a perspective to my abilities. Jesus didn’t do everything, and I can’t do everything, even if I give it my best shot. God is calling me to go only as He guides. Sweet words of restraint. Words of rest for your soul and mine. End your day with a moment of introspection. Without beating yourself up, how do you need to apply Dr. Martin’s words to your life?

What can you cut out of your life that’s making you tired? Even good things need to go if they are standing in the way of what God has called you to.
Let’s begin today in prayer. I’ll start. You close.

God, thank You for permission to consider my weakest places and truthfully bring them to You. I’ve told myself not to think about my weakness. Just cover it up and move on. But God, I truly need answers. I need to know what a worn-out woman is supposed to do. I want to know You. Hear from You. Follow You. I want to be brave. Lord, please show me Your promises for worn-out women like me.

Yesterday we looked at four of the provisions God has made in Scripture for the worn out. Let’s pick back up there today. God has made a way for us and here’s more.

**5. JESUS REQUIRED PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND EMOTIONAL REST.**

Keep the context in mind. Jesus, the Son of God, divine in nature, perfect in all His ways, without sin and without flaw. Even our divine Jesus, when He poured Himself into the confines and restrictions of our humanity, needed rest. Human beings require rest. Our Creator wove the need into our DNA. Many times the Scriptures note Jesus’ need for rest.

How does Jesus’ need for rest help you to recognize your own need for rest?

Sometimes we find ourselves trying to imitate a guest on a talk show or organize our lives around an article in a magazine. The Bible says we are called to be imitators of Christ.

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

1 Corinthians 11:1

“Then Jesus said, ‘Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.’ He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn’t even have time to eat.”

— Mark 6:31, nlt

Today, not tomorrow, how might you incorporate just a taste of this rest into your day?
Could you tell me about a time when you repented of something you hardly thought you could live without—or with—and God sent you a season of refreshing?

If so, describe how quickly or slowly the time of refreshing came.

I’m just thinking as I’m writing, Who really wants to write their sin on lines for anyone else to see? There is no need to do that. There will be no lines here. Just bow your head and receive God’s forgiveness and refreshment for every repentance.

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”
—Acts 3:19

Brave means that we act toward God with obedience, even on the worn-out days.
7.
IF YOU WALK IN THE GOOD WAY, YOUR SOUL WILL REST.

I know I’m gonna sound so old school here. It’s not really cool or hip to say what I’m going to say. But it turns out,

when you live good
and act good
and choose good,
rest for your soul results.

See, I told you being good is not cool. Cool is edgy, aloof, secretive, mysterious—you know, stuff like that. But the Bible says:

“Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.”

JEREMIAH 6:16, ESV

So what if we take good back? Redeem it. Make good cool again. There is rest in walking the good way. I want all the rest that a good life will bring!
When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth he said that his friends Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus “have refreshed my spirit and yours. You should recognize the value of people like these” (1 Cor. 16:18, NCV). Maybe in a lifetime we meet two or three people who refresh our souls. Paul said we should recognize the value of people like these. I think recognizing their value means that we do a few things.

- We carve out time for godly friendship, even when there is distance involved.
- We let them know in thoughtful ways how much they mean to us.
- We give to them as they have given to us by listening, remembering, laughing.

While we’re at it, as the Holy Spirit is really convicting me in the moment: Am I a soul refresher? for my husband? my children? the neighbor down the street? Oh may it be.

I pray that both of us will know friendships on this earth that restore and refresh the soul. I also pray that we will be able to give even more than we have received.
This week we’ve spent days bringing our weariness to God and learning that His character is so very different from ours. He is our God who does not grow weary. Not only does He never tire but also He makes so many beautiful provisions to us, the worn out, in the truths of Scripture. Maybe God has saved the best for last because the Bible promises that one day every person who follows Jesus Christ will step from this world into our final rest. Can I hear all the worn-out women shout “Hallelujah!”?

One day our setting will match our longing. We will live at peace, inside and out, forever and ever. Every time I teach this truth, my eyes fill with tears. It’s the same right now as I’m typing. I really think I’m content and blessed and living in the fullness of God’s peace for me on this earth, and yet, when I consider my final rest in heaven, I cry. My soul longs to go home.

Even though I love my life, those tears leak out and tell the truth of my soul. I was made for the presence of God. I was made for the rest He promises this weary soul. And as much as I love my family and this world, this woman will be so happy to get home. To finally be where I belong. I’m going home to heaven one day, and I will enjoy my rest there forever.

No truth speaks more powerfully to the worn out. We’re going home.

Until then, my fellow traveler, I pray we remember how great our God is and that the Bible makes a way for us, gives a grace to the weary. I pray that we take God at His word and begin to live everything we have learned this week.
If you have bravely asked God, “Do You know that I’m worn out?” I pray you hear His voice speak to you.

Do you know I AM your God who does not grow weary?

My worn-out daughter, lift up your eyes to the hills and see that your help comes from Me, the One who made you. I AM the Maker of heaven and earth. I AM He, the One who will not let your foot slip. I will watch over you, and I will not slumber while you sleep. No, I will neither slumber nor sleep whether you wake or sleep.

I will refresh your tired body, and I will restore your tired soul. Come and wait for Me so that I can give you fresh strength. I want you to run and not become weary, walk and not be faint.

Follow the model of My Son, Jesus. Learn to take time for your soul. Wear His yoke, not this world’s. Keep a Sabbath day to refresh your body, spirit, and soul.

You are my brave beloved, and I AM your God who does not grow weary.

Forever and ever, amen.

My very brave friend, I pray you find new rest in knowing our God who is I AM. And this very night, I hope you sleep sweet, tucked underneath the covering of our God who loves you dearly. This mama finds so much peace in knowing I am held, even in my weakness, by a God whose strength is everlasting.

Let us put our hope in Him.

Zzzzzz.