

Reasons You Can't Find Rest

Jeremiah 6:16—“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls....”

I've heard many messages from this text that emphasize everything under the sun except “rest for your souls.” But that is the promise of the verse. Picture the prophet Jeremiah pleading with a rebellious nation to seek out the old paths of righteousness, put away their idolatry, and walk in truth. And then he promises what the result will be: “and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

Rest. Soul-deep rest. If we are following the “old paths,” why don't we have rest? Well, if “old paths” are anything less than hungering for God and righteousness and walking humbly with God, they won't lead to rest. In fact, when “old paths” stir any of the following in your heart, you will not find rest.

There Is No Rest When...

1. Your identity is found in _____—It is right to want to make a difference for the cause of Christ. It is wrong, however, to assume that the visible fruit of our efforts defines who we are. Our true identity is not in what we do, but in what Jesus did. We rejoice not in who we are, but that we are found “in Christ.” Our goal then, is not great accomplishments, but “that I may know Him” (Philippians 3:7–10).

2. Your worth is based on conforming to a _____—You've heard it said, “Your worth is based on your birth.” Growth in grace will include developing convictions, and it will include growing in the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29, 12:2). As long as you're trying to live up to the expectations placed on you by yourself and others, you will not find rest. But as long as you tie your personal worth to conformity—even to conformity to Christ Himself—you will not find rest.

3. You are trying to prove something to _____—That's where Paul (as Saul) started. In Philippians 3, he records that he was over-the-top zealous in every area for God. And that was *before* his conversion. After salvation, his zeal transferred to commitment in preaching the gospel, but it was no longer driven by a desire to prove himself to God. He did endure hardship, but it was as by the grace of God and because he knew he could rest in that grace (2 Corinthians 12:9–10).

4. You are trying to prove something to _____—When our motive for even the work of God is to please a mentor or prove something to a critic, we lose the peace of God. Rest comes when we take Christ's yoke (Matthew 11:28–30) and do all things heartily as unto the Lord, and not as unto men (Colossians 3:23–24).

Do you want “rest for your soul”? Turn from finding your identity or worth in what you do or who else approves of it and even from thinking you have to prove your worth to God.

In other words, turn from the path of pride onto the path of humility. Then you will find rest for your soul.

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?—Micah 6:8

