REST AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Week #3 of a 3-Week Series, "Ignite Your Spirit"
(Rekindling the Theme That Has Guided Our Year)
Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2026
With Rev. Stacy Macris Ros

Well, we are in a three-week series. We're going to close it out tonight, but it's all about igniting your spirit. You'll see our banners have been up all year – "Igniting Your Spirit." So we brought it into Wednesday nights these last three weeks.

The first week, a couple weeks ago, Rev. Richard Maraj spoke about igniting your spirit and that divine spark that's within you. Last week I talked about igniting your spirit and your faith; how to ignite your faith even more so in the challenges of your life.

And tonight we're going to be talking about igniting your spirit through rest. I have to say: in my 30 plus years of speaking, I don't think I've ever spoken on this topic before. Rest as a spiritual practice. I think I've sprinkled it in from time to time. But an entire talk just on the spiritual practice of rest! So, I think that means I probably need to hear this, too, everybody. It's a good one!

Because if we don't rest, we're going to find, we can't do the work that we are here to do. And yet, we really don't want to rest, do we? Our society wants us to go, go, go. But do you ever feel like … So, when you're done with vacation, aren't you rejuvenated? And you feel so like, *"Ah! I had vacation! I'm refreshed; I'm rejuvenated."* No?

Everyone's like, *"No."* Well, sometimes we overschedule ourselves on vacation too, don't we? Yeah. The American way. But I will say that, this last summer/fall, when I was on that Alaskan cruise I've shared with you guys before, I felt so relaxed and just rejuvenated and peaceful, because I had so much time to rest and nap and eat and be in nature. And so, I was able to rest my body, my mind, my spirit, and just enjoy. And so, I came back just rejuvenated and able to just be able to throw myself in with so much renewed energy when I got back.

And so, that's really, you know, when we go on vacations. But again, I know our society says, go, go, go, do, do, do. And sometimes we go, go, go, and do, do, do, even on our vacations! And we feel guilty to stop and rest. Anyone feel guilty if you have to stop and rest for a while? Yeah! But here's the catch. Again, if we don't stop, then we can't do the work that's ours to do. We have to rest our bodies.

It's harder to show up as our divine selves -- our divine us -- if we're depleted; if we have nothing to give; if we're tired. We can't show up as the divine nature, the divine expressions that we are. That's why it's so important that we come apart for a while, that we have meditation and prayer and a day of rest. It's even written in the Bible, right? The seventh day was Sabbath -- that day of rest.

Sabbath means seventh. But looking at the metaphysical Bible dictionary, it also means restoration or wholeness, completion, at-one-ment. Atonement, right? At-one-ment.

Here's what else it says in the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary. You can follow along on the screen here. It says, *"The Sabbath is a very certain, definite thing. It is a state of mind that man enters or acquires when he goes into the silence of his own soul, into the realm of spirit. There he finds true rest and peace. The seventh day means the seventh or perfect stage of one's spiritual unfoldment."*

In other words, it's important that we have a day of rest: rest from our thoughts, rest from doing, from planning, from going -- all the busyness of our mind and body -- so that we have space for this spiritual connection, for our soul's restoration. To recharge our soul's battery. Just to have a day. To make sure we have a day just to learn -- to sit and contemplate spiritual ideas and practices. To really creating a day or more -- I'm going to say and more -- that's about meditation and communing with the Divine.

Jesus went to the mountaintop, right? We see that about nine times that it's recorded in the Bible -- that Jesus went to the mountaintop. After speaking to and feeding the crowd of 5,000 and performing a miracle, then he retreats. He makes time for spiritual renewal. And then he goes and walks on water after that, everybody. So, if that's not a story for go rest! Because then you can do another miracle afterwards. There you have it. Before he chooses his disciple, he takes time to go to the mountaintop and pray.

And it's interesting, because mountains really can symbolize that higher thought. To take your thoughts, your consciousness, your spiritual view higher.

Unity has a globe -- a winged globe Charles Fillmore created, originally our Unity founder/co-founder. Charles Fillmore. And really that Unity globe with the wings is all about going above the earthly or human view or perspective and seeing situations with your spiritual eyes, with a spiritual view. So again, to rise above, to go to the mountaintop.

And, of course, mountains also are nature. It's that connection to the earth. It's the connection to life itself -- to the Allness of life. So, to get back into nature again and that connection to realize you're part of something that's so big and grand and beautiful.

In other words, rest is not a reward. It's actually part of our spiritual work. Rest is part of our spiritual work!

Because there's also times, you'll recall, that Jesus cursed a fig tree that had no fruit because he was "hangry." He's leaving the town. He'd just gone to a temple the day before. And that fig tree didn't have any fruit, and he curses it.

So, we know what happens when we don't honor our bodies. We can get really not very nice, right? We're not expressing the best of us.

The other day I was driving back into my neighborhood and there was this bird resting on a cactus. Bird sitting on a cactus is a whole other talk for another night. I'm like, *"There is a lesson in that one."* But I was also thinking, he's resting/she's resting because birds can't keep flying all the time. If they just kept flying in the sky, they would drop out of the sky from exhaustion. Same thing with you. You can't keep moving your arms and your legs. You will drop from exhaustion. You've got to rest!

So, the call to action is really to schedule -- I hate to use that word schedule -- but to intentionally set aside time to create moments of rest into your day and into your week. Not just the month. Not just the one-hour massage once a month, but the daily little moments, the weekly moments to refill your inner cup. To refill your soul.

And to make sure that you don't feel guilty about it! To remember, if you start to feel guilty, maybe shift to remembering the health benefits -- mental, physical, spiritual health benefits -- of rest. Maybe reminding yourself that focusing on your health means that, after you take that break, you can come back to tasks refreshed. Seeing with new eyes. Renewed energy.

And if you do have a hard time resting … I know a few people who have a hard time resting. You know, if you're someone who has to stay busy -- you have to have every minute scheduled, or you have a hard time sitting still or staying still or not doing something -- then that's when it's a good idea to reflect and ask yourself, *"Okay, what am I trying to avoid? What am I avoiding? What thought, what feeling, what memory, what behavior am I avoiding by being so busy?"*

Because when we rest and we meditate, when we get quiet, that's when we have that opportunity to feel/to hear what our soul is wanting to speak to us. We don't have the opportunity to push it all down anymore. In that space, in that quiet, the feelings come up. The thoughts, remembering come up.

So, if you feel like, *"I have to stay busy every minute of every day – I can't rest!"* there's a good time of reflection there for you. What am I avoiding?

The avoidance is a message. It's a message that maybe there's some healing that needs to happen, some closure that needs to happen around an area of your life.

So, creating times of rest means making yourself a priority. And again, so I know for some perfectionists or people pleasers, in particular, it's hard to say no and to make yourself the priority. But it's important to do that. You've got to put your own mask on first if you want to be in everyone else's life and show up for everyone else.

And there's also, I think, that thought -- especially with us Americans, right? – that, *"I don't have any time."* There's no time. However, when we take breaks, maybe you've noticed this, when you take a break and you take time away, that time away, it does … You come back. The rest has sustained you, and it has enabled you to show up to be divinity on earth. To come back with, again, new, fresh creativity and ideas. With more energy.

There's a great Instagram account. It's called The Nap Ministry. How did I not found this? The Nap Ministry. The bio says, "*We examine the liberating power of naps."* I love that. But the account owner, her name's Tricia Hersey. And here's what she wrote in one of her posts here on the screen. She says, *"How can we access pleasure and joy and liberation if we're too tired to experience it?"*

And I would even add spiritual freedom to that list. How can we access pleasure and joy and liberation and spiritual freedom if we're too tired to experience it? And she also said rest will simply make us more human. Rest makes us more human.

There's a doctor -- her name is Sandra Dalton-Smith. She's the author of "Sacred Rest." Need to get this book: "Sacred Rest." And she writes, quote, *"Rest is the most underused, chemical-free, safe and effective alternative therapy available to us."*

Because rest is how our body repairs itself. Rest is how our nervous system returns to balance. Rest is what allowed Jesus -- and will allow you -- to be a loving, peaceful presence on earth.

So, Dr. Dalton Smith, she developed the concept of seven types of rest that our body and mind need to combat something called "chronic rest deficits." This is how much we're going, going, going, doing, doing, doing -- that we actually have a medical term called chronic rest deficit. So, the seven ways -- the seven areas that our body and minds need these areas of rest.

So, of course, the first one is **PHYSICAL REST** to combat our chronic rest deficit. Physical rest. Not surprising, because we're humans in a physical body, right? So, we need physical rest: sleep, relaxation, napping; they all fall under this category. But there's also active physical rest. That would be stretching, yoga, massage, doing those slow intentional exercises. That also can help restore our mind, body and spirit.

The second rest to help us combat our rest deficit is **MENTAL REST**. So, if you're someone who, as soon as you hit the pillow, your brain turns on, you might be struggling with mental rest deficit. Of course, caffeine, she mentions; caffeine can get in the way of our sleep, as well. So to, you know, be mindful of how much caffeine you have throughout the day. Because if you can't sleep at night, then you're not rested during the day.

But she encourages journaling before bedtime. Journal before bedtime -- just let all the thoughts out before you put your head down on the pillow. And short breaks throughout the workday. To take short breaks from work or projects, to let your mind rest.

And also, similar to our meditation, she says, actually set that intention to just observe your thoughts through the day. When you start your day, you know, *"Today I'm just going to let my thoughts flow through. I'm just going to let them gently pass. I'm not going to make any meaning out of them. I'm not going to make a story. I'm not going to hang on. I'm just going to let my thoughts flow through."* So, to be fully present to whatever moment you're in.

The third kind of rest is **SENSORY REST**. Because we live in a world that is full of stimulation, screens, conversations, lights, noise, music, pets, kids. Right? So, she says limiting sensory input helps us from being overstimulated. So, one thing -- going back to sleep -- is to allow yourself at least 45 minutes without screen time before bed. Is anyone doing that right now? Oh, there's a couple of you. Good for you!

This is my hardest one right here. And so I will also say, you know, maybe you don't just jump in trying to do 45 minutes right off the bat, but maybe, again, give yourself some grace. Ease into it. So maybe the first week it's, you know, 35 minutes before bedtime. Maybe the next week it's 25 minutes before bedtime that you have no screens. So, establishing a soothing bedtime routine increases your sleep quality, which is going to then help you be more rested during the day.

Another sensory rest practice, in addition to taking those breaks throughout your day, again, is to be fully present to every moment: to really observe colors, sounds, the items that are before you. Blue shirt, purple chairs, smiling faces. To be fully present. So, to take moments through our day to just stop and notice: to be present, take a breath.

The fourth kind of rest is **EMOTIONAL REST.** And emotional rest allows us that space to be authentic. So, if someone says, *"How are you doing today?"* A lot of times we just want to say, *"Oh, I'm fine,"* even though we may not be fine. And when we say we're fine when we're not fine, what we're doing is we're actually suppressing our feelings, and our nervous system registers that.

So, instead, she encourages us to be authentic; to actually say, you know, *"Actually, I'm feeling really sad about …"* or, *"I'm feeling worried about …"* or, *"I'm frustrated around this area."*

But authenticity allows our emotional circuit to more rested, because we're not holding on to all the feelings. And emotional rest can include therapy, spiritual counseling, and also -- to go back to the beginning -- those questions of: *"Why am I staying so busy? What am I staying so busy from? What am I avoiding? What do I not want to feel?"* To really get into the feelings underneath why am I staying so busy?

Emotional rest also means surrounding ourselves with people who allow us emotional peace. So, don't hang out with those folks who cause you chaos -- the chaos makers. But, instead, hang out with the people who provide you with emotional safety.

Because that leads to the fifth kind of rest, which is **SOCIAL REST**. To understand: "Am I an introvert or an extrovert? Do I gain energy from others or do I get drained from spending time with other people?" That's important to understand, because then you can understand: *"What's the limits of my social battery? When do I need to recharge?"*

So, knowing your social limits, and then again, don't feel guilty about having to say no or leaving early from the party. Don't feel guilty about thinking you're going to let other people down. Taking good care of yourself.

And there's a sixth rest called **CREATIVE REST**. And she says one way to have creative rest is to just surround yourself with beauty. Whether that's the beauty of nature, the beauty of art, photography -- whatever beauty you want to surround yourself in. But just to be in it and not have anything to do with it. Don't have like a mission, an intention, a goal with it, but just to be in it.

And there's another great sleep specialist who said it's important that we have this deep play. So really, it's what I would call a childlike play. To fully enjoy a hobby or an activity you love to do, but don't have a goal. Don't have to be perfect at it. It's okay to make mistakes. Just throw yourself in like you're a child and just have joy, enjoyment with the activity.

And creative rest can also look like stepping away from a problem or a project for some time to let your brain recharge. So again, you know, sometimes we get stuck on it. We're trying to get the answer. We're trying to get the solution. And then we walk away. We're like*, "Oh, I can't get to it. It's just not coming to*

me." And then, a day later, a week later, we may step back and suddenly we can clearly see the answer. That's what allowing ourselves that creative break -- that break from work or brainstorming -- can do for us. It can give us just the amount of space for our brains to be even more creative.

And then the seventh type of rest, of Dr. Dalton Smith's rest deficits, is **SPIRITUAL REST.** And she says our bodies and mind crave spiritual rest. Spiritual rest means connecting on a deeper level with something greater than ourselves. To be reminded that we're part of this expansive, creative, living universe. Spiritual rest, of course, includes regular prayer/meditation.

It also includes having a purpose in your life. What is my purpose? It could be volunteering. It could be work that fills your heart or fills other people's hearts. But to have a purpose in your life.

And I would also include in spiritual rest a gratitude practice, affirmations, breath work and, of course, time in nature. Going to the mountaintop. That can include going for a walk, spending time in nature to connect with something, again, bigger than yourself, and to see also that you are connected to and part of that beauty, the Allness of life.

She also encourages her clients to find a sense of spiritual community through groups and organizations that create acceptance and spiritual intention. So, I would say Unity of Phoenix does that well. We have a spiritual community that can be found here. So, you can sit in service, but also you can be part of small groups, whether that's our circle groups or our small hobby/interest groups, volunteering, classes. But to get together in spiritual community: in a loving, accepting atmosphere that allows us spiritual rest.

So, it's important that there's seven different types of rest, everybody, and how we can incorporate these into our lives.

Charles Fillmore -- he used to record his talks, and one of them was "Temple Talks." And he said this. I want to share it with you here on your screen. He said, *"You can, if you practice mental rest, come into a place in your consciousness where you stop personal effort and rest in spirit. Yet it is not the rest of inactivity, but the rest of divine energy. Instead of making any effort on your own account, the great universal makes the effort for you."*

Jesus and, really, all spiritual teachers knew/know that you can't work yourself to life. What's the saying? *"I worked myself to death."* But what if we changed that? What if we changed that to, *"I rest so I can do the work that is my life's purpose. I rest so I can be that piece of the Divine on earth. I rest so I can express kindness and compassion and grace. I rest so I can be the hands, the feet, the voice of God on earth."*

There's so much scientific research that's proven that prayer and meditation, along with spiritual community, helps reduce our anxiety, increases our feeling of trust and connection, which in turn then creates feelings of inner peace, wholeness, restfulness. And consistent mindfulness practices, gratitude practices, belonging to a positive supportive community … over time it rewires your brain. It actually rewires the neural pathways in your brain~

And so, with those practices, your focus and attention are activated, whereas your fear and stress -- those aspects/parts of your brain -- are calmed.

So, if you're so busy you can work, then it seems rest is the best way for your body to do the work that you want to do. God doesn't need a tired, stressed-out soul. God/Loving Presence needs calm, loving presence to show up in the world.

You're not a robot. You're a human being. And that means to refill your cup so that you can be all that you're meant to be and express. No one on their deathbed ever said, *"I wish I worked more."* Or, *"Hold on, I gotta go clean the kitchen one more time."* Right?

But they did say, *"I wish I had been more present with my family and friends. I wish I had taken that vacation instead of worked more."*

You are a spiritual being in a human body, and the body needs to rest in order to do the work that is yours to do from a place of wholeness and inner peace and joy.

I'm telling you, I've noticed that over the 11 years that we've had our dog: she rests a lot. She's resting all day long. And she has been known in both of our neighborhoods -- our neighborhood in California, our one here in Scottsdale -- as the friendliest dog. *"Oh, there's the friendliest dog. Oh, there's the neighborhood dog."*

So, I'm thinking she knows something about the benefits of rest. She rests all day, and then she allows that rest to show up happy, wagging her tail, going up to everyone and saying hello, extending her joy to everyone in the neighborhood. What we can learn from our pets!

Author and life coach Brad Stilberg -- we studied him earlier this year -- but he just posted this. It's so interesting. He said there's a new study of 273 competitive and elite athletes, and they evaluated all different types of recovery. So, ice baths, cryotherapy, electrical stimulation, compression and more. And the finding -- the main finding: in this different types of recovery, what was the best for these competitive and elite athletes? No modality is better than simply doing nothing.

This is what he concluded -- this post with here on your screen. He said, *"In a society that glorifies optimization and bright and shiny objects, it takes guts to simply rest."*

Rest is a spiritual practice. If Jesus did it, you can do it, too. Rest isn't simply stepping away from our spiritual work. It actually enables us to do our spiritual work! And it's not just about vacation time or, again, an hour on the weekend, but these micro practices that we can put into place of rest throughout the day.

So, one of the best ways that we can ignite our spirit is to do that which seems counterintuitive: rest. One of the best ways to experience joy and emotional/spiritual freedom in life -- to express what you came here to express; the divine ideas and creativity that are yours to express – is to incorporate rest in all of its many forms.

And so, that's my invitation to you, my friends. Rest as a spiritual practice to ignite your spirit. So happy resting and blessings to you all! Good night.

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