

8: TRAINING

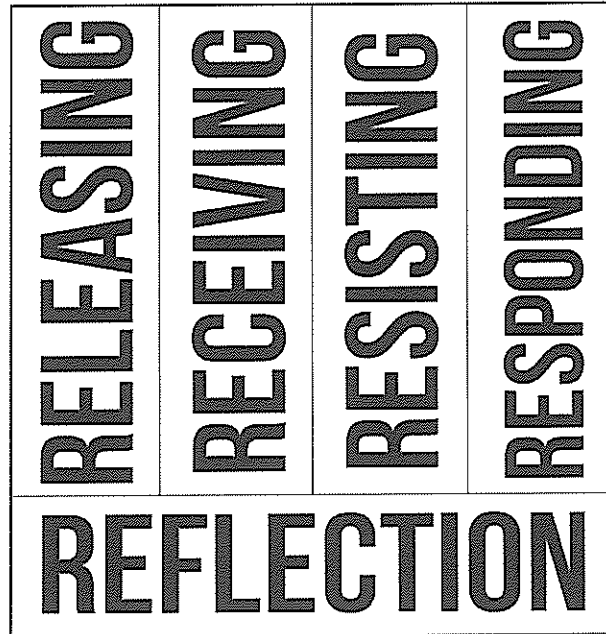
In previous chapters we've looked at the foundations of what Jesus believed. He believed in an involved Trinitarian God, a war between two kingdoms, three aggressive enemies, and promises from God for life. Now we'll look at how those beliefs shaped His practices. As discussed in the chapter on organics, a direct connection exists between what Jesus believed and what He practiced. What did Jesus do in light of what He believed? What were His responsibilities in His relationship with God? Did He do things in certain ways that we need to learn?

It's helpful to see that Jesus *trains* His disciples to walk with Him. Many of us are *taught* things we never use. How often in school did you think, "I'm never going to use this in my life"? Jesus never taught His disciples anything He did not intend for them to use. In His day, to teach was to train. Jesus trained His disciples. He equipped them with specific beliefs and practices for them to effectively use.

So what were His practices?

In the Way of Rest, we focus on five categories of disciplines. Throughout His life, Jesus practiced reflection, releasing, receiving, resisting, and responding. In these practices Jesus experienced deep intimacy with His Father and the Holy Spirit, learned God's word for His life, stood against any temptation to disobedience, and faithfully followed God's will. Then He trained His disciples to do the same. His disciples' writings to the next generation of followers contain very specific techniques in each of these categories. The next generation began to learn them and was charged with training a new generation. Disciples were making disciples.

Let's work through each discipline, explaining each and giving specific techniques.



REFLECTION

Reflection is the foundation of all Jesus' disciplines. Reflection is being continuously, consciously engaged in a relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Marriage provides a great analogy for reflection. A spouse lives throughout the day easily aware that he or she is married. Fluidly, without having to manufacture anything, a husband or wife thinks about their spouse during the day. Their relationship is always present. Furthermore, their marriage shapes every decision they make: financial, career, time, family, vacation, or other. This is reflective living.

Jesus' relationship with God was always present. Jesus *never* forgot that He was the Son of God. Jesus *never* lost sight of His Father's faithfulness. He always lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. And every decision He made in His life was determined by His relationship with God. Can you see the power of reflective living? Can you imagine how your life would change if you lived every moment aware that you're a child of God who is eternally faithful to you in all things? That's intense!

The goal of reflection is intimacy. The various techniques of reflection all serve to cultivate intimacy with God. Reflection is never about the technique; it's always about love and connection with the Lord. Being is more important than doing. We reflect on who He is and who we are. In reflection, we are not concerned about what He has for us.

A little boy wakes up in the morning, runs to his dad, and jumps in his lap. The boy asks, "Daddy, what do you want me to do today? What do you have?" The dad looks at his son with the warmest eyes and replies, "Son, all I want you to do right now is sit in my lap and let me love you. Be my son. There will be things to do but, for now, sit with me." This is reflection—just being in the presence of God.

THE WAY OF REST:

One God

Two Kingdoms

Three Enemies

Four Promises

**Five Disciplines: Reflection, Releasing, Receiving
Resisting, and Responding**

Jesus trains His disciples to abide, His language for reflecting. "I am the Vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). We looked at this in organics: abiding is a natural practice for one who identifies themselves as a branch to Jesus' vine. The branch rests in its connection to the vine. Abiding (reflecting) is the default position of the branch. Abiding is the posture the branch was created to live in!

Look at the specificity of training in reflection Paul gives the disciples at Philippi: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, *dwell* on these things" (Philippians 4:8, emphasis added). Peter trains us in 1 Peter 1:13, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, *fix your hope* completely on

the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (emphasis added). These men trained disciples to reflect deeply on all things in their relationships with God.

You may also think of reflecting as soaking. Early in my marriage my wife showed me the power of soaking dishes. I would scrub a plate hard to remove every food stain. She showed me that if I will simply let the dish soak in water, all the food stains will just fall off. Soaking is the power of reflecting! You soak in the love, faithfulness, grace, and mercy of God. Just be in Him.

Abiding, dwelling, fixing, and soaking are all different ways of describing the discipline of reflection. Let’s work through some specific techniques.

REFLECTING TECHNIQUES

PRAYER

Jesus used prayer as a means of reflecting on His Father. In the opening of the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus trains His disciples to pray, “Our Father, who is in Heaven.” He wants His disciples to reflect on the nature of who God is and who they are. He is their Father who lovingly adopted them. They are His children. He sent His Spirit into their hearts crying, “Abba, Father!” He is responsible for providing and leading them. He is their Father who is in Heaven. He reigns over all creation. Reflect on the magnitude of who your Father is. In the beginning, your Father created the heavens and the earth.

In reflective prayer we take very specific attributes of God and soak in them. You may reflect on His love or His mercy, His faithfulness or His judgment. In reflective prayer you are not rushed for time or hurrying to get to another part of your prayer. You sit in His presence. You can also soak in what He says about you. Fix your mind on the reality that you are a child of God. You are no longer whoever you used to be. Again, the goal in reflective prayer is intimacy.

Reflective prayer is something you do every day. Pray in the morning, spending time with God by yourself. As part of your prayer, reflect. Soak in different aspects of God's love and faithfulness. Then, use reflective prayer throughout the day. As you look at the list of things you have to accomplish, reflect on God's wisdom and power. If you have children, reflect on God's favor in blessing you with them. As you review your finances, reflect on the longtime faithfulness of God. Your prayer does not have to be long. You will be blessed by how small reflections during the day serve to keep you walking in the way of Jesus.

BIBLE-READING

Spending time in God's word for the purposes of reflecting is powerful. As you read the Scriptures, a verse, story, image or feeling may move you. Stop what you're doing and soak in it. Reflect and allow the Holy Spirit to take what He is giving you deeper and deeper in you. Do not be in a hurry to move on.

Bible-reading is something you do daily. As your new relationship with God shapes your days, you change how you spend your time and create space in the morning to pray and read the Word. While there are different ways to read the Bible, I always train people to start at the beginning of a book and read it through to the end. Let that be your main technique of Bible-reading. Devotionals and Bible studies are great, but there's no substitute for starting at the beginning of a book and reading. Move from one genre to another, from the poetry of Psalms to the letters of Paul. Move from the Old Testament to the New Testament. If what you're reading is getting "dry," don't quit reading, just move on to a different book.

Be careful with Bible-reading plans that you do not move away from what God is doing in you just to stay up with your reading plan. As you grow in your faith, develop more sophisticated reading techniques. Move from reading to using book outlines, historical studies, and word studies that will continue to deepen your relationship with the Lord. Always be aware of the danger of knowledge!

JOURNALING

Writing down what you're experiencing is a very helpful way to reflect. If you think about the wonders of God as a series of beautiful locations on a map, journaling will help you see how one location leads to another. For example, if you're reflecting on the faithfulness of God in Joseph's life, you'll take in everything that location has to offer. In a corner of that location, you'll notice a path you hadn't seen before. As you walk down that path, you'll discover the strength Joseph had because of God's faithfulness in his life. You'll see how active Joseph's faith was even while unjustly imprisoned. Journaling will allow you to see what one "location" has and how it connects to another.

BREATHING

This one may sound odd, but it's a powerful technique for every category in the Way of Rest. The actual word for the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word, "Breath." The Holy Spirit is likened to the breath of God. Job 33:4 says, "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."

In reflection you learn to breathe deeply. You want your breath to be in rhythm with God's breath, the Holy Spirit. As you take in deep breaths and release them, you will feel yourself relax. Your mind will slow down. You'll be able to focus on specific things. Breathing is a great technique you can use throughout the day. Before you pick up the kids, have a difficult conversation with a spouse, walk into a meeting, or follow the Lord and forgive someone, take a few deep breaths while reflecting on the love of your Father and watch what happens! Breathing is also effective as you draw away to be alone with the Lord. Take as many deep breaths as you'd like. Each time you may feel like you've reached the point the Lord has for you. Then you breathe again and discover there is more!

MUSIC

Songs are recorded from Genesis to Revelation (See Exodus 15:1–18 and Revelation 4:5–11). Music was a powerful tool for people to remember who God is and what He has done. Listening to songs that describe various attributes of God can be an intense way of reflecting on the Lord. And this can be done all through the day. Depending on your work, you can even do this while you're working. Be careful that people aren't around when you break out into song! These are some of the reflecting techniques Jesus and His disciples used. Notice that these are specific techniques that can be learned, mastered, and taught to others. I encourage you to practice and grow in all of them.

RELEASING

Releasing is the discipline of surrendering specific issues to the Lord. The key in releasing is to properly identify the issues within. Paul trains his disciples in Philippians 4:6–7 when he states, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Paul exhorts disciples to be anxious about nothing. Anxiety reveals a lack of trust in God's faithfulness. In releasing, you identify those sources of anxiety and surrender them to the Lord, believing He is faithful in them. (For that matter, you also release sources of fear, jealousy, greed, and other forms of darkness). If you release properly, you may come into prayer with anxiety, but you will leave with the peace of God.

Paul's practice is built on Jesus' training. In Matthew 6:25–34, Jesus teaches through a list of areas that can cause anxiety, like food, clothing, and drink. Throughout this passage, Jesus tells His followers not to worry about these things. He specifies areas that can cause negativity in

a person's life. He frees people from anxiety by directing them to focus on the faithfulness of their Father to provide.

“For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:32-33).

Releasing happens throughout the day, all day, every day. By releasing, you will learn to take responsibility for your thoughts and emotions and better understand how to control them. Specific issues you hold on to are identified so that you can turn them over to the Lord. Let's work through some releasing techniques.

RELEASING TECHNIQUES

LISTENING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

All releasing is listening to the Holy Spirit. In the other releasing techniques we'll work through, the Holy Spirit speaks through different means. In this technique, the Holy Spirit speaks directly to you to make known issues you need to surrender.

As you pray, ask the Lord to show you issues you're holding on to. Allow the Spirit to show you what He wants to show you. Then, take what He shows you and surrender to the Lord. “Father, in the name of Jesus, I release my fear/anxiety/guilt about _____ to you. I declare that you are faithful in _____. Amen.”

BIBLE STUDY

Through your study of the Word, the Holy Spirit will show you a root issue. When the issue is exposed, take authority over each issue and release it to the Lord in the prayer just given.

DISCIPLESHIP

The Holy Spirit will regularly use other people to speak into your life to help you identify areas in which you need to surrender. Surrounding yourself with trusted brothers and sisters in the Lord who are veterans in the Way is a wise move. God has made us to need each other. Receiving the benefit of others' insight is a valuable way of discovering issues within. When issues are exposed, take authority over each issue and release it according to the prayer above.

JOURNALING

Journaling is another powerful tool of clarity. Through journaling, what seems like a jumbled mess of thoughts or feelings will take form. The Holy Spirit always works to help you through your issues. When you start, your journaling may look like a train wreck. Let it be a mess. Get it all out. Then let the Spirit begin to bring the clarity you need. As He identifies root issues then surrender them to the Lord.

Notice again in Paul's training from Philippians 4:6–7 that you will come into prayer with anxiety yet leave with peace. You'll know that you have released the issues causing your instability when you have peace. Paul defines this peace as something you will not be able to explain—it surpasses all understanding. The peace will come from God and will guard your heart and your mind. Why does the peace of God need to guard anything, let alone your heart and mind? Because you live at war! And the enemies of your life actively attack your peace in the Lord. Two of their access points are your thoughts and emotions. In releasing, you actively clean out your heart and mind while God posts His peace at your gates. If you don't have peace, there's more to release!

RECEIVING

Jesus was not a manufacturer; He was a distributor. He did not give out of what He created. He gave out of what He received. Therefore, He had no pressure to create, to perform, or to produce. Jesus continuously gave out of what He received. “Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner” (John 5:19). “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4). “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor” (Luke 4:18). Jesus did not create or manufacture anything in His life. His Kingdom recipe, the Way of Rest, is a life of being and giving out of what is received.

Scripture uses three images that illustrate this receiving life. Disciples are called sheep and the Lord is the Shepherd (Psalm 23, John 10:1–18). Disciples are called branches and the Lord is the Vine (John 15:1–5). And disciples are called clay and the Lord is the Potter (Isaiah 29:16, Romans 9:19–26). All of these images illustrate the dependent nature of the relationship between God and man. Notice that God *wants* to be your supply! That is the position He loves to have (and is the only position He will have). Look at Paul’s confidence in God’s supply for you: “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). You need to stand on this and declare it!

Therefore, as followers of Jesus in the Way of Rest, you are not responsible for being great spouses, parents, friends, employees, employers, or children of God. You do not manufacture your efforts in any area of life. You are freed from performing. You become who God is leading you to be and do what God is leading you to do. You live receiving, not producing.

The glory of God is seen in that He supplies you with greater material than you could ever create. God will make you a greater spouse, parent, friend, employee, or employer than you could ever

be on your own. By letting Him supply, you will experience the wonder of His presence, wisdom, transformation, love, power, and leading in every area of your life. Now you are a God-filled mom or dad, a God-filled spouse, and a God-filled friend. This is the glory of branch-living!

The key to receiving is living in a state of need. Unfortunately, being dependent is often equated with weakness. I have walked many people through John 15:5. They love the portion that says, “I am the Vine and you are the branches.” That sounds good. But they bristle at the end of the verse: “Apart from Me you can do nothing.” Here comes the pushback and the struggle. People are good with the positive aspect of being a branch: Jesus supplies. But they don’t like the negative aspect of it: apart from the vine you can do nothing. Jesus does not hide from this requirement of receiving. To receive is to be dependent on someone else’s supply. As you practice the discipline of reflection and meditate on God’s love and faithfulness, your belief about dependence will change and you will learn the great joy of looking to the Lord in all things.

Understanding that an attitude of dependence is most important in receiving, let’s work through some specific techniques.

RECEIVING TECHNIQUES

PRAYER

All receiving is a work of the Holy Spirit. Supplying you is His responsibility. In prayer, the Holy Spirit speaks directly to you and supplied whatever He wants you to have. As you pray, make sure you create space to listen. Do not let your prayer be filled with your talking. Learn to be silent. When you find your mind racing with other thoughts, practice releasing. Identify each thought swirling around and release them to the Lord. Now, be still. Ask the Lord to speak. It’s helpful to ask as specifically as you can. Do not ask, “Lord, what do I need to do for you to bless me?” Ask,

“Father, I need to know how to talk to my spouse about this issue we’re having. Will you give me direction?” Or, “Father, we need your wisdom in parenting our child through this issue. Give us direction in what we should do.” Ask specifically. Be still. Let Him speak.

Acts 10:9–16 details a time when Peter was praying and the Holy Spirit gave him a dream, showing him God’s will for a specific situation. In your prayers the Holy Spirit can use imagery, passages of Scripture, memories, and whatever else He wants in order to speak to you. Be open, ask, and listen.

BIBLE STUDY

The Bible is a powerful way to receive from the Lord. God has given His Word to you so that you can receive from Him. It’s a long book—He’s given plenty to receive through it! As you study, God will give you His direction. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16–17, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, *equipped for every good work*” (emphasis added).

In addition to regular time in the Scripture, there are almost an unlimited amount of Bible studies available on every topic imaginable. Be careful in what studies you do as not all studies are good, and none are inspired in the way Scripture is. Use these studies to supplement your Scripture-reading, not to take its place.

DISCIPLESHIP

Allowing veterans in the Lord to speak into your life provides deep reservoirs of wisdom that will greatly benefit you. There is nothing you’re enduring or need direction in that other brothers and sisters have not walked in and through. God is so beautifully faithful to bring others into our journeys. Seek them out. If you do not see any such veterans where you are, pray that God will bring them into your life. Seek their wisdom. Receive from the Holy Spirit through them.

While God has stopped writing Scripture, He continues to speak in many different ways to many different people. As followers of Jesus, we cultivate the ability to receive from the Lord when we learn to depend on Him, to listen to Him, and to walk in specifics.

Learning to hear and discern the voice of the Lord can be challenging. I remember learning the sound of my wife's voice before we were married. She had a roommate whose voice sounded just like hers! However, the longer we dated the easier it was to distinguish the two. As you spend time with God in His Word and in prayer, it will become easier to distinguish His voice. So far we have worked through the disciplines of reflection, releasing, and receiving. All three of these can be seen in Psalm 94:17-19:

If the Lord had not been my help, my soul would soon have dwelt in the abode of silence. If I should say, 'My foot has slipped,' Your loving-kindness, O Lord, will hold me up. When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul.

After receiving God's Word we must learn how to resist the forces of sin, the world, and Satan that actively war against our faithfulness.

RESISTING

You have to see this. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve walked with God in the cool of the day. They saw God as no other has, except Jesus. God gave them His word for their lives. They had it all! Then the enemy came, the master deceiver, and led them away. They sinned. They did the one thing God told them not to do. They immediately experienced the consequences of their sin. Naked and ashamed, they hid from God.

ARGH! What happened? How did they fall so badly?

They were in relationship with God. They knew His word for their lives. So how did they fall so far so fast?

They didn't fight. They did not stand firm in their faith and resist the attacks of the enemy.

There's no possible or negotiable way to live in the way of Jesus' rest unless you learn to resist sin, the world, and Satan. Jesus fought. His disciples fought. Their disciples fought. Everyone who perseveres in the Lord fights. Resisting is the discipline of fighting against your sin, the world, and Satan so that you can obey the words you have received.¹⁷

Genesis 4:1–8 tells the story of Cain and Abel. Both brothers brought an offering to God. He was pleased with Abel's but not with Cain's. Cain was furious. Maybe the enemy put images in his mind of Abel having "favorite" status. Maybe the enemy was not involved at all, and Cain seethed with jealousy all on his own. Nevertheless, God knew Cain's heart and warned him in verse 7, "If you do not do well (in handling your jealousy), sin is crouching at the door, and its desire is for you, *but you must master it*" (emphasis added). God was training Cain to fight. Cain failed. He gave in and murdered his brother. He didn't fight!

Satan came to tempt Jesus in Luke 4:1–13. He tempted Jesus with three different, very specific lies. Jesus resisted each one by declaring specific, appropriate truth. Luke 4:13 says, "When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time." Paul trains disciples in Ephesians 6:10–11: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."

He writes in Colossians 2:8, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ." James 4:7 states, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Every New Testament letter has content on training disci-

ples how to fight against sin, the world, and Satan. Many, many Christians suffer unnecessarily because they do not know how to fight.

Remember that God has promised you power. As you walk intimately with Him, you will know that you have been raised and seated with Christ far above all rule and principality. His authority is your authority. His power is your power. Resisting is all about exercising your Christ-given authority and power against the lies of sin, the world, and Satan.

In each of the disciplines we have stressed the importance of specifics. Resisting is no different. In the middle of your day the enemy may introduce an image of you with a body shape that's more "culturally attractive." Sin is at your door. You may feel depression try to access your heart. Instead of giving in to the temptation, you turn into it, just like Jesus turned into the storm on the boat in Mark 4:31–35. You turn into that lie. You do not receive it. You resist it in the name of Jesus, declaring, "I am a child of the Living God who loves me. I reject this lie in the name of Jesus." That lie falls to the ground and dies. Instead of giving in and suffering depression because you don't think you look like what's culturally accepted, you experience great joy in the love and approval of the God of All Creation.

Jesus trains His disciples in Matthew 5:21–47 on how to deal with the specific sins of anger, adultery, divorce, lying, revenge, and favoritism. These are specific areas in which we can be attacked.

This same scenario of attack-resist can happen many times throughout a day. The presence or absence of attacks is secondary. What's primary is intimacy with God. If the enemy cannot trip you on a specific attack, he will try to wear you down by getting you to focus on the fight. Remember, the goal of the enemy is to get your eyes off of the love and faithfulness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Resisting works when you stand against everything that pulls you away from intimacy with God.

RESISTANCE TECHNIQUES

BE PREPARED.

If you're not prepared to fight, you've already lost. If you believe that you're not under attack or that somehow you will be able to handle whatever may come up on your own, you're done. It's just a matter of time. At times, the New Testament authors scream, "BE READY!" Paul says in Ephesians 6:10–11, "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." Peter trains in 1 Peter 1:13, "Prepare your minds for action." Jude says in Jude 1:3, "Contend earnestly for the faith." Walking in Jesus' Kingdom way is a call to arms! When Jesus trains His disciples to daily pray, "Your kingdom come," He's training them to be awake and prepared for the war.

While we're not called to be fixated on the war, we are called to be fixed on Jesus, and to be aware and ready to fight. Every day you get up, part of your time with the Lord should be spent preparing yourself for the reality of war. Therefore, when the attacks come you're not caught off guard, whining, or being a victim.

REJECT SPECIFICALLY.

This is the core of resistance. Reject specific lies with specific truth in the authority of Jesus. Now, resistance comes after reflection, releasing, and receiving, so it's predicated on walking in the Spirit. Paul trains in Galatians 5:16, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the misdeeds of the flesh." The reason you will not carry out the misdeeds of the flesh is because in the Spirit you are empowered to strike them down as you are tempted. As we have seen, James equips disciples in James 4:10, "Submit yourself to the Lord, resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Submission to the Lord is the discipline of releasing. In releasing you're

continuously submitting very specific areas of your life to the Lord. Therefore, when the fiery dart comes, you're able to resist the devil and he must flee from you.

Your ability to successfully resist will develop as you become increasingly aware of the subtlety of the lies you believe. Cultural lies can be difficult to see because you've grown up them. Generational lies can be challenging because no one in the family may be willing to talk about them. Demonic lies can be the most subtle as the enemy is a master at what he does.

DISCIPLESHIP AND THE PRAYERS OF OTHERS

There are going to be many times when your ability to resist will come from the prayers of other brothers and sisters in Christ. "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called Today, so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 4:13). Do not miss the blessing and relief that comes from asking brothers and sisters to stand and pray for you!

Your ability to resist will also increase as you grow in the Scriptures. Knowing God's Word will allow you to identify lies more easily and quickly. Biblical knowledge will also arm you with specific truth with which you can slice through lies. When wielded correctly, the Word of God contains great power. Paul calls the Scriptures the "sword of the Spirit" in Ephesians 6:17. As you learn to rightly handle the sword, your ability to identify specific lies and reject them with specific truth will increase.

By exercising the discipline of resistance, we stand firm in our faith, coming against initial lies and dealing with them immediately. In this way, these lies are not given room to do further damage. No matter the source of the attack in our lives, when we turn into the lie with the truth of Jesus in the power of the Spirit, the lie will fall off of us without damaging us. We cannot live faithfully to the Lord in the Way of Rest without becoming skilled in resisting temptation.

RESPONDING

This is what we have been working toward. Responding is simply obeying what God has given you to do. Responding is the posture of a person ready to go as God leads. After receiving direction from the Lord and resisting sin, the world, and Satan, you will respond faithfully to God's word. This gets you where God wants you: trusting Him to lead you. Everything we've built in the Way of Rest leads to obedience. This is where your belief is proved. It's easy to say, "I believe." It's much harder to follow.

We can have so many different attitudes toward obedience. It's weakness, or obligation. It's overbearing. It stifles uniqueness. It's not fun or pleasurable. However, Jesus says that obedience is the natural product of love. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). The one who loves Jesus loves doing what Jesus says to do. By obeying the Lord you will get to see the wonders of the Lord. The only reason Israel got to experience God's power in parting the Red Sea is because they followed God. The only reason Joshua saw the walls of Jericho fall, or David slew Goliath, or Peter walked on water, or Paul was delivered from his spiritual blindness is because they all followed where God led them. Obedience will lead you to treasure chests of God's power and life. It should be no surprise to you that the enemy attacks attitudes toward obedience.

In addition to being a product of love, obedience is a mark of being a disciple. In His Great Commission, Jesus charges His disciples by saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I commanded you*; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19–20, emphasis added).

Hebrews 11 lists seventeen individuals who followed God's direction in their lives, like Noah, Abraham, and Moses. These men and women have incredible life stories that go in many dif-

ferent directions, with some even ending in death. The commonality in all of them is that they followed where God led. While their obedience was not perfect and they wrestled with God's faithfulness, they stayed the course.

Take notice of the five disciplines in each of their lives:

1. They reflected on the faithfulness of God.
2. They released their anxiety or issues.
3. They received direction from the Lord.
4. They resisted sin, the world, and Satan.
5. They responded faithfully.

This is the recipe of the Way of Rest at work.

Building on the examples of Hebrews 11, Hebrews 12:1–2 exhorts us to run God's race without allowing anything to hinder our faithfulness:

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We are called to throw away everything that keeps us from running the race God has for us. This is the discipline of responding. This is the discipline of living continuously faithful to the leading of God for our lives.

THE GREAT TRAINING SUMMARY:

1 PETER 5:6–11

I want you to see all five disciplines together in one place. 1 Peter 5:6–11 is one of the great training summaries in all the Bible. I've inserted the names of the five disciplines in the Way of Rest so you can see these all together.

Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time (*reflecting*), casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you (*releasing, receiving*). Be of sober spirit, be on the alert, your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world (*resisting*). After you have suffered for a little while the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen (*responding*)."

The five disciplines of the Way of Rest are reflection, releasing, receiving, resisting, and responding. Reflection is the foundation of the rest. We are always consciously aware of our love relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Every discipline has specific techniques that can be learned.

There are other techniques in each category that we did not cover. Fasting, for example, is a very powerful technique in the Lord. However, detailing all the available techniques in Scripture is beyond the scope of this book.¹⁹ As you develop these practices in your faith, you will experience more of God's presence and promises in your life. None of these will keep you from the war, but they will equip you in how to deal with it as Jesus did.

CONCLUSION

Now, instead of Jesus on the boat in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, it's you. You're not on the Sea with the disciples. Rather, you're with family or co-workers. You all receive threatening news that seems catastrophic. Everyone else is running scared, as the fear of the unknown and the panic of being out-of-control begins to choke them. One at a time they notice that you're not responding like they are.

"Don't you care?" One demands. "What's wrong with you?" another blasts.

While those around you fall apart, you walk through the same storm at rest in the love and faithfulness of the Almighty God. Full of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus, and according to the will of the Father, you speak peace and life into a "death" situation. They see it. Their angry questions change to interested questions: "How do you stay calm?" "What's different about you?" Doors open for the Gospel that have been shut for a long time.

This is the Way of Rest. This is Jesus' Kingdom recipe for living in the promises of God. This is what it looks like to be a disciple. Paul writes in Philippians 4:9, "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." And he says in Philippians 3:17, "Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the same pattern (recipe) you have in us."

May you enjoy intimacy with your Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. May you be filled with grace, mercy, love, and strength. May you take on the yoke of Jesus and continue to learn from Him. May you excel as a warrior. And as you walk in the fullness of Jesus, may you go with passion to train others as you have been trained.

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all." — 2 Corinthians 13:14*

TRAINING: CHAPTER WORK

Start this work by reflecting on the role your Father has for you in relationship with Him. He is always initiating, you are always responding. Bless Him for His initiating love for you. Thank Him for all the clarity He's bringing you. Allow yourself to hear encouraging words from Him for your faithfulness to get to this point. Write anything that you think and/or feel here.

To finish, you're going to walk through each of the disciplines to get practice in each.

1. Spend time reflecting on God's wisdom for your life. Soak in Him and the glory of His divine leading in every area of life.

2. Identify the areas of your life that are causing you anxiety. Release each one specifically to the Lord, declaring His faithfulness over each one.

3. Ask the Lord to give you clear direction in an area of your life where you have need.

4. Begin to resist whatever hesitation you may be having. Take every word, feeling, or image captive that may be coming up that threatens your obedience.

5. Go! Faithfully follow whatever God has given you.

That is the Way of Rest in action. Continue to work the Eph 1. Observe all five ingredients in the diagram. Walk in the presence and promises of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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THE WAY OF REST