Rhythms of Renewal

Trading Stress and Anxiety for a Life of Peace and Purpose

A PDF Companion to the Audiobook
TAKE INVENTORY

CHAPTER 1
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. DESCRIBE YOUR LIFE. WHAT IS WRONG, MISSING, OR CONFUSING IN YOUR LIFE?

2. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU’VE TAKEN INVENTORY OF YOUR LIFE? HAVE YOU EVER?

3. WRITE OUT A PLAN FOR HOW YOU CAN STEP AWAY, EVEN FOR HALF A DAY, AND TAKE INVENTORY.
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. HOW MUCH SOCIAL MEDIA DO YOU CONSUME IN A WEEK? DO YOU HAVE A SCREEN TIME TRACKER THAT RECORDS YOUR TIME? (THERE ARE A FEW GOOD ONES OUT THERE, INCLUDING THE TRACKERS BUILT INTO YOUR PHONE.)

2. TAKE A BREAK FROM ALL SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TWO WEEKS. AT THE END OF THAT TWO WEEKS, ASK YOURSELF: WHAT DO I MISS ABOUT IT? WHAT DON'T I MISS? WRITE OUT YOUR ANSWERS.

3. WHAT POSITIVES DO YOU ASSIGN TO THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR LIFE? WHAT NEGATIVES?
GET QUIET
CREATE SPACE AND LISTEN
CHAPTER 3
Reflection Questions

1. Carve out 15 minutes for quiet reflection. Take note of where your thoughts go when you are all alone, without any distractions.

2. When was the last time you sat in silence? List ways you might incorporate quiet into your weekly rhythms.

3. Where can you carve out thirty minutes to an hour of quiet in your daily rhythm, time to reflect (and breathe) without any distractions?
DO THE HEART WORK

EXAMINE AND CONFESSION

CHAPTER 4
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. ASK YOURSELF: WHAT DO I NEED TO CONFESSION? ARE THERE ACTIONS OR INACTIONS THAT I’VE AVOIDED EXAMINING, THINGS I’VE FAILED TO CONFESSION BECAUSE OF GUILT OR SHAME?

2. WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOU PRACTICED CONFESSION WITH A COUNSELOR, PASTOR, PRIEST, OR EVEN A FRIEND?

3. SIT IN A QUIET PLACE AND TAKE INVENTORY. WHAT CAUSES YOU GUILT, SHAME, STRESS, OR ANXIETY? RELEASE IT TO GOD AND ASK HIM TO BRING YOU PEACE.
COUNT SHEEP

ROUTINES FOR DEEP SLEEP

CHAPTER 5
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How many hours of sleep do you get a night? If it's less than seven, why?

2. What is your bedtime routine? How might you create a sense of calm before climbing into bed?

3. Commit to making sleep a priority. Write a list of things you'll do to make sure you're winding down before you crawl into bed. Then, choose your bedtime and wake-up time and stick with it.
MORNING ROUTINE

COFFEE, CANDLE, AND A PEN

CHAPTER 6
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. HOW DOES YOUR TYPICAL MORNING BEGIN? IS YOUR MORNING ROUTINE HURRIED AND HUSTLED, OR DOES IT BEGIN IN THE PEACE AND CALM OF TIME WITH GOD?

2. HOW DO YOU PRACTICE GRATITUDE? IF THIS ISN’T PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE, TAKE SOME TIME RIGHT NOW TO EXPRESS YOUR THANKS TO GOD.

3. IF YOU BELIEVED YOU COULD START EACH MORNING IN THE COMFORT OF GOD, HOW WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE YOUR TIME TO MAKE THAT A REALITY?
Rhythm into our annual calendar, we stay grounded in a plan that gives life to each member of our family. This practice of Sabbath rest is often neglected in this harried age. Yet if you want to maintain your emotional, physical, and spiritual health, it's important to reconnect with yourself, God, your family, and your community. But Sabbath—both on a particular day of the week and on a planned, multi-day basis—can allow us the space we need to understand our lives are not rooted in work, productivity, or acquisition. Our worth is found in the God who loves us, who created rest for our good.

Are you finding ways to practice Sabbath? If not, take a moment to plan how you’ll make space for Sabbath over the coming months. As you practice, ask yourself, “Is this rest freeing me from the typical anxieties of our bustling world?” If your experience is anything like mine, the results will speak for themselves.

**Reflection Questions**

1. **What keeps you from setting aside a particular day to Sabbath?**

2. **What are the barriers that keep you from a day of rest? Is it your work? The pressures of extracurricular obligations? Be specific.**

3. **How might practicing Sabbath be beneficial for you and your family?**
PERMISSION TO PLAY

GIVING UP CONTROL

CHAPTER 8
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU CARVE OUT EACH WEEK FOR PLAY?

2. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU TOOK AN INTENTIONAL BREAK FROM WORK TO PLAY SOMETHING—A GAME OF PICK-UP BASKETBALL, A BOARD GAME, ANYTHING? WHAT IMPACT DID PLAYING HAVE ON YOU?

3. DO YOU HAVE ANY TIMES OF PLAY SCHEDULED IN THE NEXT WEEK? IF NOT, CARVE OUT SOME TIME AND PICK A PLAY ACTIVITY TO ENGAGE IN. FOR BONUS POINTS, MAKE SURE IT’S COMPLETELY FRIVOLOUS.
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. WRITE DOWN THE FOODS YOU ATE IN THE LAST THREE MEALS AND NOTE HOW MANY FRESH VEGETABLES AND FRUIT YOU CONSUMED. HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR TYPICAL DIET?

2. WE ALL KNOW OUR DIETS COULD BE BETTER, BUT WHAT’S ONE CHANGE YOU COULD MAKE TO CREATE HEALTHIER PATTERNS OF EATING?

3. WHEN YOU EAT HEALTHIER, WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE IN HOW YOU FEEL PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY, AND MENTALLY?
Know Your Identity

Labels Don't Define You

Chapter 10
REFLECTION QUESTIONS


2. IN WHAT WAYS DOES GOD’S DESCRIPTION OF YOU DIFFER FROM THE LABELS YOU’VE TAKEN ON?

3. WHAT AREAS OF PAIN IN YOUR LIFE SHOW GLIMPSES OF PURPOSE? WRITE DOWN WAYS YOUR JOURNEY CAN BECOME AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO SOMEONE ELSE.
TAKE A WALK

CLEAR THE BRAIN FOG

CHAPTER 11
HOW CAN YOU ADD WALKING INTO YOUR DAILY RHYTHMS?
HOW CAN YOU MAKE IT A NATURAL PART OF YOUR LIFE?
If walking isn’t a part of your daily routine, you’re missing out on a key rhythm of restoration, one that can pull you from the doldrums, bring new insights, and kickstart your creativity. How can you add walking into your daily rhythms? How can you make it a natural part of your life? Ask yourself these questions, then do a little brainstorming. Where should you do that brainstorming? On a walk, of course. Give it a try. See what happens.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. ON A SCALE OF 1–10, 1 BEING A COUCH POTATO AND 10 BEING A DAILY WALKING COMMUTER, HOW WOULD YOU SCORE YOURSELF AS A WALKER?

2. WHERE CAN YOU GO TO TAKE A WALK? NAME A SPECIFIC PLACE LIKE A PARK, A GYM, OR AROUND YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

3. WALK FOR TEN MINUTES A DAY THIS WEEK, AND TAKE NOTE OF THE THOUGHTS THAT COME AS YOU WALK. AT THE END OF THE WEEK, REVIEW YOUR NOTES. WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR WEEK OF WALKING?
1. WHAT FEARS OR ANXIETIES DO YOU NEED TO OVERCOME? MAKE A LIST.

2. WHAT ARE SOME INTENTIONAL WAYS YOU CAN CREATE AN ADVENTURE THAT REQUIRES YOU TO FACE AND OVERCOME YOUR FEARS?

3. WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOU HAD AN ADVENTURE THAT INSPIRED CONFIDENCE OR FILLED YOU WITH COURAGE? DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DID AND HOW YOU FELT.
BREAK A SWEAT

USE THE WORKOUT PANTS

CHAPTER 13
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. DO YOU HAVE A REGULAR PRACTICE OF EXERCISE, ONE WHICH INVOLVES BREAKING A SWEAT A FEW TIMES A WEEK?

2. WHAT DISTRACTIONS DO YOU ALLOW TO HIJACK YOUR EXERCISE RHYTHMS?

3. IF YOU HAVEN’T EXERCISED IN A FEW MONTHS, GET OUTSIDE AND BREAK A SWEAT TODAY. WAIT THIRTY MINUTES, THEN ASK YOURSELF: HOW DO I FEEL? PHYSICALLY? EMOTIONALLY? MENTALLY?
PUSH YOURSELF

MOVE BEYOND YOUR COMFORT ZONE

CHAPTER 14
1. ARE YOU THE KIND OF PERSON WHO ALWAYS PLAYS IT SAFE, OR ARE YOU THE SORT WHO WILL TAKE A RISK AND PUSH YOURSELF IN THAT TASK? EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER.

2. WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOU PUSHED YOURSELF INTO SOME NEW ENDEAVOR? DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED.

3. WHAT IS ONE WAY YOU CAN PUSH YOURSELF THIS WEEK, EVEN IN SOME ACTIVITY YOU'RE ALREADY DOING?
BE THE FRIEND YOU WISH TO HAVE

INITIATE FRIENDSHIP

CHAPTER 15
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. DO YOU FEEL ANXIETY, STRESS, OR PRESSURE WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT FRIENDSHIPS? WHY?

2. DO YOU HAVE A GROUP OF FRIENDS YOU CAN LAUGH, CRY, AND SHARE EVEN YOUR DARKEST OR SADDEST MOMENTS WITH? IF NOT, WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO THAT KIND OF FRIENDSHIP?

3. WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF YOUR IDEAL FRIEND? HOW COULD YOU BE THIS FRIEND TO ANOTHER?
LEAD WITH VULNERABILITY
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. JOURNAL ABOUT THE LAST TIME YOU SHARED VULNERABLY WITH ANOTHER PERSON. HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTER YOU SHARED?

2. WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT KEEP YOU FROM BEING VULNERABLE WITH OTHERS?

3. WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU’D RATHER NOT SHARE WITH ANYONE, THE THING THAT, IF YOU SHARED IT, WOULD BRING YOU FREEDOM? WHO COULD YOU SHARE IT WITH?
OPEN-PORCH POLICY

POTLUCK OVER PERFECT

CHAPTER 17
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. WHO IS THE MOST HOSPITABLE PERSON YOU KNOW? WHAT CHARACTERISTICS OF HOSPITALITY DO THEY EXUDE?

2. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU OPENED YOUR HOME TO FRIENDS OR FAMILY?

3. HOW MIGHT YOU EXTEND HOSPITALITY TO SOMEONE THIS MONTH?
BEAR EACH OTHER’S BURDENS

CARRY THE LOAD

CHAPTER 18
1. WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOU CRIED TEARS OF SORROW?

2. WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOU SHARED YOUR SORROW WITH OTHERS?

3. THINK OF THE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE. WHO HAS A BURDEN YOU CAN HELP SHOULDER? WRITE THEIR NAME DOWN AND COMMIT TO REACHING OUT TO THEM THIS WEEK.
HUGS ALL AROUND

THE POWER OF PHYSICAL TOUCH

CHAPTER 19
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED WAY TO USE PHYSICAL TOUCH TO CONNECT WITH A FRIEND? A HUG, A HIGH FIVE, OR A PAT ON THE BACK?

2. HOW DID THE LAST LONG, MEANINGFUL HUG YOU RECEIVED MAKE YOU FEEL?

3. WHO IN YOUR LIFE NEEDS PHYSICAL TOUCH TODAY? FIND THEM. OFFER THEM ENCOURAGEMENT WITH A HIGH FIVE, OR A WARM EMBRACE.
MARRIAGE RETREAT

LOVE THE ONE YOU’RE WITH

CHAPTER 20
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. WHEN YOU SHARE YOUR EMOTIONS WITH YOUR SPOUSE, DOES IT HELP YOU OFFLOAD STRESS AND ANXIETY, OR DOES IT INCREASE IT? EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER.

2. HOW DO YOU DEMONSTRATE LOVE AND RESPECT TO YOUR SPOUSE?

3. IF YOUR MARRIAGE IS A STRESS AND ANXIETY PRODUCER INSTEAD OF A STRESS RELIEVER, WHAT STEP(S) CAN YOU TAKE TO TURN THE TIDE?
APOLOGIZE FIRST
1. IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP IN YOUR LIFE THAT NEEDS REPAIR? WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO MENDING THAT CONNECTION?

2. JOURNAL ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU EXPERIENCED THE FORGIVENESS OF ANOTHER. HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTERWARD?

3. EVERY APOLOGY DESERVES A FAIR SHOT. IS THERE ANYONE YOU’RE REFUSING TO FORGIVE, EVEN THOUGH THEY’VE APOLOGIZED FOR A WRONG? HOW MUCH ANXIETY AND STRESS DOES THAT BROKEN RELATIONSHIP CAUSE YOU?
DREAM AGAIN

THE ROAD TO MEANING

CHAPTER 22
The act of creating doesn't come from nowhere. It begins with a dream, and when we tap into our dreams, when we walk forward in them, God gives us renewed meaning and purpose. Knowing God's meaning and purpose for our lives frees us from stress and anxiety, but it can also bring freedom to the world.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. IF WE WERE RIDING AN ELEVATOR TOGETHER, AND I GAVE YOU TWO MINUTES TO DESCRIBE YOUR DREAMS TO ME, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

2. WHAT DREAMS OR PASSIONS DID YOU HAVE AS A CHILD?

3. IF YOU AREN’T PURSUING YOUR DREAMS OR PASSIONS, WHY NOT?
RECOVER YOUR PASSION

CHAPTER 23
REFLECTION QUESTIONS


2. WHAT DISTRACTIONS ARE CHOKING YOUR PASSIONS, YOUR ENERGY TO CREATE?

3. HOW WILL YOU EMPLOY YOUR PASSION TO CREATE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL WITH GOD?
WORK WITH YOUR HANDS

A PATTERN AND A PLAN

CHAPTER 24
A cheap, twin memory foam mattress on clearance and a dozen bottles of puffy paint. When we got home, she got after it, cutting the mattress into different shapes and painting those shapes. She created squishies (foam objects meant to be squeezed for stress relief) all weekend, maybe enough to give one to every sixth grader in town, and by the end of the weekend, her stress and anxiety had dissipated.

Using our hands, employing our God-given creativity to make something new, is good medicine for the soul. It helps us to focus on something other than ourselves and use our strategic problem-solving skills to create something that brings beauty and builds our confidence as creators. It fills us with a sense of accomplishment and often allows us to offer the world a gift. Today, make a plan to make something. Gather the materials, carve out the time, and enjoy it.

**Reflection Questions**

1. When is the last time you made something with your hands?

2. When you were finished, how did you feel?

3. What’s one thing you’ve always wanted to create with your hands? What steps will you take in the next month to start creating?
LEARN SOMETHING NEW

TAKE A CLASS

CHAPTER 25
L E A R N  S O M E T H I N G  N E W

Feeling helpless in the face of these emotions, we self-soothe with a bag of popcorn, a warm furry blanket, and the latest episode of our favorite series on Hulu. We want to do anything but learn something new! But this is an essential practice if we are going to live lives of peace and purpose.

During that first year in Manhattan, God knew that making it through those anxious days and panic-stricken moments required, in part, an expanding vision of what I was capable of doing. But that expanded vision would never have come without the courage that came with learning something new.

If you are in a dreary season and barely putting one foot in front of the other, you’re not alone. I know how it feels. The last thing you want to hear is that you need to take on one more thing. But trust me, if you take the courageous step to learn something new, you’ll find new pathways to freedom, pathways that lead you to become who you were meant to be.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. ARE YOU THE KIND OF PERSON WHO TRIES NEW THINGS, OR DO YOU STICK WITH WHAT YOU KNOW? WHEN’S THE LAST TIME YOU ENROLLED IN A CLASS, PICKED UP A NEW HOBBY, OR TRIED SOME NEW ACTIVITY? WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

2. HOW DID IT MAKE YOU FEEL?

3. PLAN AN ARTIST DATE IN THE NEXT MONTH. WHAT WILL IT BE? JOURNAL YOUR IDEA.
1. Reflect on your activities over the last few months. Are you making creative, imaginative memories with your family or friends? If not, what are some changes you could make to ensure you nurture imagination and play, in yourself and in your family and friends?

2. What are some of the creative things you have done with family or friends that have become lasting memories? What about those experiences made them so memorable?

3. Carve out time this Friday or Saturday night. Sit around the table and ask your family, “How can we make a creative, lasting memory?” See if the conversation doesn’t develop into hilarity.
TAKE CARE OF SOMETHING

BE RESPONSIBLE

CHAPTER 27
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES MOTIVATE YOU?

2. LIST THE MEANING BEHIND EACH OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES NOTED ABOVE. HOW CAN YOU MAXIMIZE THAT PURPOSE AND MEANING?

3. WHAT NEW AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY CAN YOU PUSH INTO, AREAS THAT MIGHT GIVE YOU A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT, CONFIDENCE, AND JOY?
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. LIST THE WAYS YOU MIGHT TAKE A RISK TO PARTNER WITH GOD. IS THERE A RISK YOU KNOW YOU NEED TO ACT ON IMMEDIATELY?

2. HAS GOD ASKED YOU TO TAKE A RISK THAT YOU ARE NOT WILLING TO TAKE? WHY ARE YOU SO CLOSED TO IT?

3. TO TAKE A HOLY RISK, WE HAVE TO TRUST THAT GOD HAS A SPECIFIC PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES. WHAT DOES THAT STATEMENT MEAN TO YOU?