

## *The 23rd Psalm for Today's Woman*

Give me a Break!

Recently, a coworker and I were discussing how busy our schedules had become. I remember telling her that I would love to have a day with nothing on the calendar so I could just stay home in my pajamas all day. It was only a few weeks after that conversation when schools were closed and our Adult Education Classroom would be vacant and we would be “hunkered down” at home. We had no idea that the day was soon approaching when we would have totally free calendars for weeks on end. We never would have anticipated a quarantined environment where “pajama days” would be acceptable and seem almost normal.

While my heart breaks every day for those who are sick and, even dying, I have found a healing rest in my time at home. I remember writing in my journal at the first of the year, that 2020 would be a year of rest and a time to rekindle the fire toward the things of God. But rest doesn't come easy for us, does it. Often the Lord has to “make” us rest.

That's where we find David in Psalm 23, verse 2

“He makes me to lie down in green pastures” (AKJV)

I really like the Amplified Version of this scripture as well.

“He lets me lie down in green pastures” (AMP)

Isn't it true that, even when we have some free time, we don't *let* ourselves relax because we feel this inward “push” to get things done; things that could be done later, or not all. We feel like we are expected to be superwoman when God just wants us to be HIS woman.

Personally, I love a quiet bed and breakfast with antique beds, lots of pillows, and gauzy curtains tied back with lace and ribbons. Maybe there is an old fireplace tucked under a carved wooden mantle and a little side table with crocheted doilies and a plate of fresh home-baked cookies left by the proprietor.

Now that's my idea of a restful oasis. My husband is like most men. Give him a four-star hotel with a nice king bed, modern conveniences and a good restaurant nearby - any day of the week!

For some it's a beach condo, for others a mountain cabin. Whatever the location, we all have our idea of what makes a restful vacation from the stresses of life. The problem is taking the time to really take a break!

A [recent study](#) conducted by Expedica.com found that global vacation deprivation is on the rise, and that workers in the U.S. took the fewest number of vacation days in the world in 2018, alongside Japan and Thailand.

Why do people take their work so seriously? Studies have uncovered several reasons -- including guilt about taking time off, needing the extra wages, and fear of being replaced or of not getting promoted. The justification for this is that spending more time at work makes you a better, more productive employee. But research shows a different story.

I recently found this [pertinent information](#) on vacations and health:

- One 2005 study from the Marshfield Clinic in Wisconsin found that women who don't take regular vacations were two to three times more likely to be depressed compared to women who take regular vacations.
- Another study followed 12,338 men for nine years -- and found that men who didn't take annual vacations had 32% higher risk of death from [heart attack](#) and 21% higher risk of death from all causes.
- One study analyzed surveys completed by women enrolled in the 20-year Framingham [Heart](#) Study. Researchers found an eight times higher risk of [heart attack](#) and death among women who rarely took vacations (every six years or less) - - compared to women who took at least one vacation every two to five years.

The Lord made us to work and be productive. And, then He made us to rest.

“He makes me to lie down in green pastures”

We have the picture here of the flocks stretched out and resting. A loving shepherd knows when the sheep have gone far enough. He knows that sometimes they are just too dumb (excuse the word) to know that they are compromising themselves by not resting.

The scripture tells us on several occasions that Jesus got away from the crowd and rested! There is a physical rest, there is a mental rest, and most definitely there is a spiritual rest!

Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-29, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (NIV)

This does not necessarily indicate a cessation of labor, but the original intent of the word “rest” here means “an inner tranquility while performing necessary work.” Sometimes our schedules don’t let us stop, but our spirits can be at rest IN HIM as we allow Him to be the rest for our souls.

\*Have there been times when you feel the Lord had to make you rest? How did He do it? \*How can you have inner tranquility even when you are still doing your job?

\*When was your last vacation or when did you last take a few hours away from work to do something for yourself? Did you enjoy the time?

\*Is it hard for you to “quiet” your mind long enough to rest? Are you finding it difficult to focus on the Lord while you “shelter in place?”

Could you leave a comment and let us know what you struggle with right now? Or, maybe, you could encourage us by telling us how you are finding “rest” during this troubling time we are living in. I would love to hear from you!