

Tired of Being Tired by Jess Connolly

Read Chapter 5: Spiritual Exhaustion - "I just need to get through the next few weeks."

Meditate on Romans 8:22-28

What word or phrase stands out to you in this passage?

What do you observe about God in this passage?

What do you observe about us (God's children) in this passage?

Meditate on Psalm 62:1-2

What word or phrase stands out to you in this passage?

Symptoms of Spiritual Exhaustion In Our Lives:

- Striving
- Fear that you'll disappoint God or step out of His will
- A distorted or unclear view of the gospel
- Feeling fear or dread about the afterlife
- An inability to receive compassion or give it
- A defeatist mindset about your own life or future

Do you feel like you are struggling with any of these? Can you think of specific examples?

Quotes from Chapter 5 to reflect on:

I cannot imagine He wants us to live at a pace that leaves us so exhausted that our only option is getting through.

Why are we buying the lie that our lives are not meant to be abundant, whole, and free but instead exhausted, overextended, and desperate for relief? At its core, the fact that we're tired of being tired is a spiritual issue, and we need renewal in the form of spiritual revival as much as we need a nap, a day off, or a smaller to-do list.

Knowing our place, here on earth, will look like acknowledging our limitations and boundaries so that we can cultivate a sustainable pace rather than running forward at breakneck speed. We need to know our place, and we need to know where we're going.

When we forget about death, we forget about heaven, and when we forget how we get to heaven, we forget the gospel. And when we forget the gospel, we live under the exhausting weight of the lie that we have to be good enough to have good things happen to us. When we forget the gospel, we'll strive and spin until we're so tired we can't stand. When we forget the gospel, we'll forget our purpose and begin acting as if God's love is something we can earn.

If we live in a reality where this is all there is, where we have to work as hard as possible to be as good as we can, and where everything is all death and decay, we'll just keep trying to get through the next few weeks.

C. S. Lewis says that it's the people who have thought a lot about heaven who have done the most for this world.

Reflection Questions for Chapter 5:

How often do you feel or say that you just need to get through the next few weeks?

If you're being honest, what are the main tensions that make you feel this way?

How often do you think about death, heaven, and eternity? How does this kind of thinking make you feel?

What would it look like for you to live in abundance and freedom now?

Read Chapter 6: Spiritual Exhaustion - "God is with me and for me"

Meditate on Acts 3:19-20

What word or phrase stands out to you in this passage?

Even if you feel most exhausted physically, emotionally, or mentally, there's a spiritual component to your fatigue. If you could tell God anything about how you feel spiritually right now, especially as it pertains to tiredness, what would you tell him?

Spend some time thinking about what you think is expected of you spiritually. List some of those expectations. Who is placing those expectations on you?

Quotes from Chapter 6 to reflect on:

You're His daughter and He created you in love, called you in love, redeemed you in love, and longs to keep giving love to you. Not only is it OK for you to need that love, it gives Him glory when you willingly receive it.

Spiritual exhaustion grows when we begin trading God's care for our obligation, trading God's grace for earning our love, and trading God's abundance for just getting through the day.

Knowing our place in the kingdom is the antidote to spiritual exhaustion because daughters don't have to work to earn their place, strive to stay relevant, or work for their rest. When I say that if we're tired we need to remember our place, I'm speaking of our freedom, wholeness, abundance, and intrinsic identity as daughters of the one true God.

Knowing our place as daughters of God means that we can trade the spiritual exhaustion that comes from constantly fearing we won't have insight for the confidence of asking and believing we'll receive. We can be humble and admit that we don't have all the information or knowledge we need at a given moment while trusting that God will give us what we need.

You and I will continue to live exhausted if we believe that every battle in front of us depends entirely on our energy, execution, and engagement. Praying, watching, and waiting on God is not our last-ditch effort. It gets to be our first response. And then, when we're called to action, we'll be sure we're fighting where and what we're meant to, in the name of Jesus.

Being brutally honest with God and ourselves is the beginning of fighting exhaustion. If it's real rest we want, then we need to get real with God first. Our Father is with you and for you. He created you with care, love, intention, and wild vision. Our Savior and Friend, Jesus, purchased your freedom and abundance on the cross and rose with your healing and resurrection in hand. The Spirit that raised Him from the grave rests on us and works within us to help us see the kingdom of God come in our time. We are not alone. We are not on the hook or needing to fend for ourselves. God is with us and for us. And this is life-changing news.

Flip the Script on Spiritual Exhaustion:

"Serving God means meeting the needs of all those around me."

"If I miss reading my Bible or prayer, I'm disappointing God."

"I need to prove my worth with my spiritual disciplines."

"I'm not 'doing enough' for God"

"I don't deserve God's compassion or forgiveness."

I feel guilt and shame for not wanting to spend time with God."

Do any of these resonate with you? Spend some time flipping the script. How can you reframe these lies into life-giving truths? Read Psalm 62:1 and process what the Lord might be saying to you.

Tips for Spiritual Low Power Mode

- Rethink or retool your time with God: If it currently feels like a "have to," switch it up. If it's an intense study time, try reading something a little lighter. If you always feel guilty about not praying longer, try listening to worship music instead. Go on a walk with God.
- Begin a gratitude practice to fight striving about your season.
- Practice saying you're sorry and don't let guilt steal your humility.
- Confess to others to fight shame.

Do any of these resonate with you or can you think of your own? Make a plan to practice this in the coming week.

Prayer for Spiritual Exhaustion

God of Renewal, Our spirits are tired. We want to honor You. We want to proclaim Your name, live according to Your truth, and bless the world the way You have blessed us. We confess that sometimes these desires become disconnected from the truth of who You are and how You made us. Sometimes we want to take the world by storm more than we want You to calm the storms inside of us. We repent of taking beautiful things You have given us and treating them as invitations to strive and prove ourselves rather than gifts to steward and enjoy. Help us, even as we stumble, to make our way to the green pastures You have given us, that we might lie down in them.

Amen

Read Chapter 7: Physical Exhaustion - 'I just can't quit'

Meditate on Proverbs 3:24

What word or phrase stands out to you in this passage?

Meditate on Matthew 8:14-27

What does Jesus' response in these verses convey to the disciples?

Quotes from Chapter 7 to reflect on:

When did we decide to be reachable twenty-four hours a day by anyone with something to say? When did we consent? When did we agree to be more "connected" electronically and less connected to our souls?

You and I might not be able to quit everything, to stop showing up in all the areas of our lives, but we can set limits and draw boundaries. We've been given that capacity and authority in our own lives.

You no longer believe the lie that you have to be constantly accessible to be a great leader or friend. Instead, you know that soaking up God's goodness in your life and being loved well by Him equips you to be who He made you when you do lead, serve, and love others. Allowing ourselves to be loved by God will have a domino effect in our lives, catapulting us into a consistent craving for His love and comfort.

We need a pace that helps us see what God is doing and hear what He's speaking. The pace of our culture tells us to keep our heads down and press in. The pace of the kingdom says, "Look up and listen!"

There's a difference between loving people and wanting to seem like you're loving. The pace of Jesus involves withdrawing when needed, resting and living inside the physical limitations of an earthly body, occasionally saying no to people in need, and prioritizing intimacy with God and others. Does that mean that He wasn't loving? Of course not. So, we can only conclude that by honoring boundaries and physically resting, Jesus was enabled to love people well.

Reflection Questions for Chapter 7:

How do you feel about your current pace?

Is it sustainable, life-giving, or exhausting?

What are the main factors influencing your current pace of life?

What are the main barriers keeping you from shifting your pace?

What would it look like to invite God to speak into your pace?

Symptoms of Physical Exhaustion In Our Lives:

- Yawning, headaches, dizziness, sore muscles
- Saying yes because no one else will
- Always arriving early or staying late out of obligation
- Sleep sabotage: staying up later than is wise to get time for yourself
- Moodiness or irritability
- Feeling like you can't be fully present

Do you feel like you are struggling with any of these? How can you combat these?

Read Chapter 8: Physical Exhaustion - "My limitations are not a liability."

Meditate on Psalm 127:1-2

What word or phrase from the passage stands out to you?

Tips for Physical Low Power Mode

- Pause before saying yes to anything, no matter how simple it seems. Truly pray about the decision if you need to, and ask, If I say yes to this, what is my reason for doing so?
- Prioritize going to sleep well, not just waking up well (rest before work for your body).
- Normalize participation over performance. When you show up somewhere, pay attention to ways you may be trying to perform (your physical appearance, being early, being eager, trying to affect others' perception of you).
- Save your mental energy and rewrite the narrative when you talk about your physical limitations (your need for sleep, time off, quiet, etc.). Try not to apologize, explain, or talk negatively about your basic physical needs.

Do any of these resonate with you or can you think of your own? Make a plan to practice this in the coming week.

Flip the Script on Physical Exhaustion:

We don't like to say no because we don't want to disappoint people, or we don't want to miss out, or we think if we don't do it, no one will, but these are not good excuses to plow through our physical limits.

Meditate on Galatians 1:10 and give yourself some language to bow out gracefully, try these statements below:

"Thank you for asking me, but I am unable to make it." (You have plans... plans to rest)

"I'm honored that you asked, but I don't have bandwidth for adding another thing to my plate right now."

"I can't commit to that in this season, but thanks for thinking of me."

"I want to spend time with you, but can't do it this week. Let's look for a time soon to do that."

Quotes from Chapter 8 to reflect on:

No one was taking or demanding my authority or freedom, but I'd willingly given it up because I thought that was what loving others required of me. And in my situation, no one was necessarily bulldozing over my personal borders—no one but me.

Over time, I reestablished my body's beautiful God-given boundaries and borders of autonomy. I began to listen to my body's cues about fatigue, hunger, fear, and overwhelm. I started to make wise decisions about my capacity before I felt exhausted, leaving margin and space to rest first.

A significant shift came for me when I realized that, from a kingdom perspective, autonomy is agreeing with the authority God has given me to steward the life He has given me. He's given me the capacity to care for my own spirit, mind, and relationships—and also my body. No one else can do it for me. And when I care for my body by nourishing it, resting it, and recognizing my limits, I do the will of God.

Reconnecting with our bodies, with Holy Spirit as a guide, will deepen our spiritual life and help us fight exhaustion. Reembracing our limitations and relearning the boundaries and borders of our bodies is not even slightly selfish. It's God-glorifying. And it will enable us to serve, love, and lead well for the long haul.

We need trial and error to determine how our bodies get the renewal they need so we can first rest and then love, serve, lead, and enjoy life.

Reflection Questions for Chapter 8:

How much sleep is optimal for you in this season?

Can you begin setting a standard bedtime routine and hour to honor the biblical principle of evening and then morning, rest then work?

What food and exercise practices leave you feeling renewed?

Where do you most need quiet and time to regroup in your day? How can you work that in?

Where can you build in rhythmic rest weekly, quarterly, and yearly?

Prayer for Physical Exhaustion

God of Replenishing, On the seventh day you rested. We so easily forget that we need rest, busying ourselves every moment. Help us to remember that You, a perfect God with endless supply, chose to rest. Help us to pattern our lives after the model You set in creation and through Jesus, who healed hearts and bodies, then slept through a storm. Teach us to say no when our bodies are telling us we need rest. Teach us to rely on Your strength when we need to be present but feel desperately tired. Give us discernment to see the times when we need to work, rest, play or pause, help us know what we need in order to be replenished.

Amen