

Sometimes it is hard to slow down. The busyness of daily schedules and constant demands of things that seem to require our attention appear almost unending. With the bombarding of external pressures onto our brains, it seems at times, difficult to relax. Even for someone like me who is blessed to be living in the Ojai Valley, daily enjoying some of God's most beautiful nature and many of His wonderful people all around me, it can be challenging. When we leave town, it is usually to jot over to our gorgeous neighboring communities such as Ventura, Carpinteria, or Santa Barbara. I do stop to appreciate the blessings and express gratitude for my wonderful life. And still, I have discovered there can be a difference between taking a moment or an hour out of one's busyness and taking a true vacation from it all.

I am on vacation right now, I think. I am writing to you from my mom's house in Oregon. She has a beautiful home on five acres with tall trees of all kinds, lush vegetation, and a pasture turned playground for my four children and their cousins. We have been taking turns riding one of the horses. The children help with the chickens, feeding them and bringing the eggs in for breakfast. They have long visits with the neighbor's donkey named Jack. The goat apparently didn't have a name so he is now affectionately known as Flopsy. When all of the animals have been properly loved and cared for, the kids proceed to run the field and forest with games of tag and ditch'em. Yes I am describing a child's paradise, memories that they will hold dear forever to be sure. I am glad that they are oblivious to the concerns and details that swarm in the minds of their parents. But we too must learn to "vacate while on vacation".

On some level we must learn to relax and enjoy. Doctors tell us that improper rest, and yes, recreation, leads to sickness. The Bible teaches us the same thing. Throughout the scriptures you see God dealing with overworked, stressed out people. From the very beginning He made a rule requiring rest one day per week whether you wanted to keep working or not. God knows our need better than we do; He made us. He understands our physical needs, our emotional needs, and our spiritual needs. There is another need that goes beyond the physical need of rest and the emotional need of recreation, there is a spiritual rest for those whose lives remain unsettled. Jesus said, "Come unto me all who are weary and heavy laden (hearted) and I will give you rest". Jesus was not referring to being our advocate for expanded lunch breaks at work or code enforcement of labor laws. He was referring to something much deeper. He was speaking to a spiritual need that is in all of us;

our basic need for purpose and meaning to our lives; to be connected to our Creator. (Romans 1) Jesus knows our needs and His answer was simple, "Come unto Me". I believe that today, the answer is still the same. Come unto Jesus and there we find spiritual rest. No longer needing to fret or worry about things because, as He said, the Father knows what we need before we even ask.

This time of year many families have vacation plans on their minds. How about you? Will you be able to rest, relax, and enjoy? What about your spiritual need? Is your cup filled up in Jesus? He said, "drink from me the water that I give and you will never thirst again".

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. This article was published in 2005. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443  
Ojai, CA 93024  
**(805) 640-9498**  
[www.calvaryojai.org](http://www.calvaryojai.org)

**Sunday Worship:**

**9:00 & 10:30am**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave, Oak View

**Mid-Week Study:**

**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View