

Today we talked about whatever we pack away in our hearts at night we wake up still carrying in the morning. The good or the bad, both return when we open our eyes and begin our day. This practice of focusing on God's presence is not a denial of life's pressures, but a refocusing on who holds our lives.

I became aware of how much this was affecting me when I couldn't settle down at night and rest. My heart and mind would be flooded not with God's peace, but with anxious burdens for the many needs that fell into my hands and heart throughout the day. I was operating at an over capacity mode that God did not intend for me to carry. So I began to off load these burdens in the Give Back program that God invited me to. It all started with the act of surrender.

The dictionary of etymology defines surrender this way:

Surrender, v. early 15 century, "to give (something) up," from Old French *surrendre* "give up, deliver over" from *sur-* "over" + *render-* "give back"

There it is, you need to write it for yourself:

Sur - _____ + Render - _____ = the Give Back

Read Lamentations 3:21-24 below: This passage expresses the power of remembering the goodness of God and the 'give back' exchange. Read through and underline the power points that speak to you:

Lamentations 3:21-24, NIV

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

Now let's look at Matthew 11:28-30 comparing two versions, The NIV and The Message. Read through and list three items in each one that are actions steps to draw us into the presence of God.

"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." Matthew 11:28-30, NIV

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." Matthew 11:28-30, MSG

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

There are only two things you need to do once you come to faith in Christ to begin the transformed life:

1. Be with God
2. Offer everything to God

In my spiritual transformation journal I have these notes written from one of our teaching sessions:

"The unfinished places of my soul come open in places of solitude. At that moment I can't go into self-fix mode – my number one job is to offer it up to God. He knows better than I do what needs to be done."

So we are right back at the 'Give Back' point. Give it up, Give it back, and Give it over again.

Deuteronomy 33:12, NIV "Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders."

I have always loved this verse and was drawn to it because I use to have pain in my neck and upper back, so I would read this that the Lord would give rest between his shoulders, meaning my knots in my back would find rest. I had to chuckle when I realized I had read it wrong, have you ever done that? What this means is that the one the Lord loves (YOU) rests between his shoulders. Have you ever seen a beloved child up on their Dad's shoulders being carried around so the view is better? That is what this is about; the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders. He desires to lift you up, carry the burden and change your view.

Your Turn:

We have talked a lot today about the Give Back. Before you lay your head down on your pillow tonight what should you be giving back to God? Take a moment to rest in His presence and offer up the burdens of your day, committing to trust the One who holds it all. Use the space below and put it in writing: