

Running Rabid

Balancing the passion to pursue with the pressure to produce.

The Power of Rest

Learning to rest, relax, and recover in a crazy fast-paced world

Reminding ourselves that the title of this series is “Running Rabid”, there is no doubt that many of us live fast-paced and hectic lives. Our electronic devices and connections contribute significantly to our feelings of being overwhelmed and not being able to escape. It seems to me that many Americans, including those of us who follow Jesus, are subject to an incapacitating fear that we are going to “miss out” on life if we fail to experience life at a break-neck speed. Many of us have our children involved in sports, music, and a myriad of other activities, along with the rigors of daily schoolwork and participating in activities at church. On top of this we tell our children they need to do well in school so they can go on to get a good education and solid job in order to become productive members of society. In a recent “intense” discussion with my elder daughter I found myself forcing this concept on her life and wondering if my words reflected God’s perspective, or mine, for her life. Unfortunately, I have learned that my thoughts are not always lined up with God’s thoughts!

In the back of my mind I hear 1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV) playing over and over; a verse that was taught to me at an early age and used to motivate me to do better in whatever I did by my parents and church.

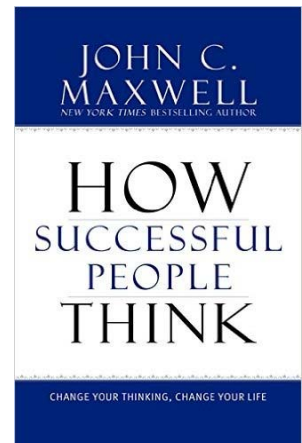
So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, *do it all for the glory of God.* (emphasis added)

The title of this lesson is “The Power of Rest.” For the sake of argument I am assuming many of us are less “rested” than we could be (I am actually yawning as I write this because it is 11 PM on Wednesday evening and I got up at 4:15 AM this morning – makes me wonder why I am writing this lesson!). As I consider the message associated with the above verse my eyes are naturally drawn to “do it all.” Unfortunately, or fortunately as the case might be, there are additional words behind “do it all” that include “for the glory of God.” Hence, what Paul is not saying is that whatever I am doing I am doing for the glory of me, rather his message is that whatever we do it must be done for the glory of God. If I leave off the latter part of this passage, it is easy for me to become selfish and think that all of my efforts are done for me. We would all agree that this is a destructive pattern, although it is so easy to do.

As some of you might know, I love acronyms. One of the guys in my group at Stress Engineering recently said that he had one for me: AAA – *Another Alexander Acronym*. I thought that was pretty funny. For today’s lesson I thought that our subject “R E S T” made a good acronym as reflected below.

- **Remember the Sabbath:** *it’s not only Biblical; if we follow Jesus we need to make Sundays a priority day in our lives and schedule, and that includes church attendance*
- **Exit:** *we need time when we “exit” from the daily routine in order to focus on both God’s work in our lives, but also ways to improve ourselves and think strategically*
- **Sleep:** *most of us don’t sleep enough (including me!), but our bodies need time to rejuvenate and recover*
- **Time with God:** *He is the ultimate “battery charger”, nothing can compare to the power that comes when we pray, study, and meditate on His Word*

In John Maxwell’s *How Successful People Think* he discusses how important it is for us to get away from the daily grind in order to think. About 3 years ago I started staying home one day per week (typically, Wednesdays). I did this after reading Maxwell’s book because I realized I needed time to think deeply about life, work



on specific projects related to work, and think strategically. I also used this time to help complete my book, *Be the Beans*. I realize that not everyone can do this, but if you are a senior level person in a company (or aspire to be) allocating time in your life to “get away” can be wonderful. It took a while for my group at work to get used to my being away from the office one day per week, but now no one even thinks twice about my being away on Wednesdays. I even have clients who know I am out of the office on Wednesdays! I am a better boss, husband, and father because I have made time to “get away” from the daily grind.

In *How Successful People Think* John Maxwell states the following on “reflective thinking” (p. 71):

The pace of our society does not encourage reflective thinking. Most people would rather act than think. Now don't get me wrong. I'm a person of action. I have very high energy and I like to see things accomplished. But I'm also a reflective thinker. Reflective thinking is like the Crock Pot of the mind. It encouraged your thoughts to simmer until they're done. As I go through this process, my goal is to reflect so that I might learn from my successes and mistakes, discover what I should try to repeat, and determine what I should change. It is always a valuable exercise. By mentally visiting past situations, you can think with greater understanding.

I do want to be clear that absent God's involvement in our lives the above advice is merely secular self-help (John Maxwell is a great follower of Jesus and would echo this statement for those of us following the Lord). When you and I practice “reflective thinking” with God's involvement tremendous things will happen. Listed below are five steps provided in *How Successful People Think* for HOW TO EMBRACE THE LESSON OF REFLECTIVE THINKING in your life (pp. 75-79). As you review these, consider how you can use this time for building God's Kingdom using the skills, resources, and talents He has given you.

1. Set aside time for reflection.
2. Remove yourself from distraction.
3. Regularly review your calendar or journal.
4. Ask the right questions, especially with regards to values, relationships, and experiences.
5. Cement your learning through action.

In closing, consider the following quote from Jules Henri Poincaré who was a French mathematician, theoretical physicist, engineer, and a philosopher of science (1854 – 1912).

*To doubt everything, or, to believe everything, are two equally convenient solutions;
both dispense with the necessity of reflection*

Questions for the Week

1. Growing up what did your family do on Sundays? How did your experience growing up impact what you do today on Sundays?
2. Do you enjoy being by yourself and thinking? Why or who not?
3. Describe a time when you felt the Lord really communicating with you during a period of reflection.
4. **Food for Further Thought** – explore Psalm 46:10 (NIV). What does it mean to “Be still, and know that I am God”?

He says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”