



# LIFT

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INSPIRING OUR READERS TO GIVE THEMSELVES FULLY TO GOD



## Rhythm of Life

I WILL *LIFT* UP THE CUP OF SALVATION AND CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD. PSALM 116

# Dancing *with* God

## EMBRACING HIS RHYTHM FOR YOUR LIFE

by Major Boglin

When I was a graduate student, working on a degree in religious education, I was blessed to participate in a two-year internship at the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas under the watchful eyes of David Wray. I sat at his feet much like Paul with Gamaliel; soaking up the pearls of wisdom that flowed so effortlessly from his lips. One day as I was working feverishly to complete a church project, this gentle giant called me into his office and said, "Major, don't get to a point in life where you would rather stay at the office and be a god rather than go home and be a man." I guess he thought he saw the makings of a human doing in his young protégé.

A human doing is the term Mike Breen uses in his book, *Passionate Life*, to describe Christians who build their identities and self-worth around their activities or accomplishments. As a result they fail to operate in the natural rhythm of life established by God for his creation's well-being and fruitfulness. It is as if work becomes their steroid. They work more to produce more: sacrificing rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation.

The opposite of a human doing is a human being. Human beings, God's creation, try to conform to their maker's pattern of life instead of their own. Their success is not found in how much they produce, but in how closely they reproduce God's rhythm in their lives. This natural or God given rhythm of life is found in Jesus' parable of the vine and the branches in John 15:4-5, where Jesus is quoted as saying,

*"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."*

The parable is not about being productive; it is about being in the God ordained rhythm of life that produces fruit because it is attached to the source of power and nourishment. Jesus knew that his disciples then and



now would fall prey to Satan's trap of becoming human doings engaged in a plethora of activities designed to prove our worth. Jesus was seeking to set his disciples on a path of becoming more fully human beings; connected to the true vine that strengthens and vitalizes the soul.

In spite of David's warning, five years later I was a train wreck looking for a place to derail. I had become a human doing.

After my father's death in 1993, I became more determined to be successful and I worked even harder.

Everything was fine, at least  
I thought

so, until later that year when I ruptured my patella tendon and required reconstructive surgery. I had hit the wall, and crashed into rest. I was an empty shell. There I was broken and powerless, reduced to sitting on the couch eating bon bons and watching Oprah. That kairos event invited me into the learning circle and I had no choice but to go along for the ride. I would learn a valuable lesson from sitting on my couch, ironically enough the same lesson that David had tried to teach me five years earlier.

My time on the couch gave me a front row seat to view a real life human being operating from God's natural rhythm of life. For the first time in my short marriage, I was home long enough to see Bern's routine and recognize it as an example of Jesus' analogy of the vine and the branches. She would arise early in the morning and spend 2 hours each day in reading the Bible, meditation, and prayer before engaging in her daily tasks. If you have not figured it out,

Bernadette is an introvert and being alone energizes her. She was choosing to be alone with God before being connected to others. Her two hours in the morning was her abiding time; it was her way of staying connected to the branch in order that she might grow and God's fruit might be produced in season.

I am not suggesting that your rhythm has to mirror my wife's; understand that her style works for me because I too am an introvert. However, I am suggesting that if you want to grow and bear fruit then you will have to find your way into God's rhythm for success. His rhythm of abiding in Christ and working from rest is the most effective way for human beings to live. If you are an extrovert, then you might find your rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation in being with others. There is nothing wrong with finding rest in the company of others. Just learn to operate from rest to work the way you were intended to function. So, I encourage you to take Jesus' challenge and you will find your best life.

The challenge you ask? *"If you abide in me and my word abides in you, then you may ask what you will and it shall be given to you."* Take Jesus at his word and embrace the rhythm of life that will bring you blessed peace, a solid self-esteem, and a fruitful life. ☺

Read more of Major's story at [www.Lift2006.com](http://www.Lift2006.com).



**The Boglins:**  
Major and his wife,  
Bernadette, with their  
two children, Berkley  
and Alex.

## PSALM 62:1-8 (NIV)

- 1 My soul finds rest in God alone;  
my salvation comes from him
- 2 He alone is my rock and my  
salvation;  
he is my fortress, I will never be  
shaken.
- 3 How long will you assault a man?  
Would all of you throw him down—  
this leaning wall, this tottering  
fence?
- 4 They fully intend to topple him  
from his lofty place;  
they take delight in lies.  
With their mouths they bless,  
but in their hearts they curse. *Selah*
- 5 Find rest, O my soul, in God alone;  
my hope comes from him.
- 6 He alone is my rock and my  
salvation;  
he is my fortress, I will not be  
shaken.
- 7 My salvation and my honor depend  
on God;  
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
- 8 Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your hearts to him,  
for God is our refuge. *Selah*

## PSALM 63:1-5 (NIV)

- 1 O God, you are my God,  
earnestly I seek you;  
my soul thirsts for you,  
my body longs for you,  
in a dry and weary land  
where there is no water.
- 2 I have seen you in the sanctuary  
and beheld your power and your  
glory.
- 3 Because your love is better than life,  
my lips will glorify you.
- 4 I will praise you as long as I live,  
and in your name I will lift up my  
hands.
- 5 My soul will be satisfied as with the  
richest of foods;  
with singing lips my mouth will  
praise you.

## THERE IS A PLACE OF QUIET REST

CCLI 184877a

There is a place of quiet rest,  
Near to the heart of God.  
A place where sin cannot molest,  
Near to the heart of God.

Chorus

O Jesus, blest Redeemer,  
Sent from the heart of God,  
Hold us who wait before Thee  
Near to the heart of God.

There is a place of comfort sweet,  
Near to the heart of God.  
A place where we our Savior meet,  
Near to the heart of God. (chorus)

There is a place of full release,  
Near to the heart of God.  
A place where all is joy and peace,  
Near to the heart of God. (chorus)

# REFLECTION

JOURNAL

## *on your* “UP” RELATIONSHIP

*After reflecting on this issue of LIFT, record your personal response to these study questions.*

How would you describe relaxation? \_\_\_\_\_

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Where is your favorite place to relax? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you do to relax? \_\_\_\_\_

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Would you ever think of work as relaxation? If yes, under what circumstances? \_\_\_\_\_

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Does it seem difficult for you to relax? What role might your personality play in your ability to relax? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you like to relax with others or by yourself? How can you better blend your relaxation and personality? \_\_\_\_\_

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How does our spiritual condition influence our ability to relax? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Rhythm of Rest & Work

by Sandra Mackey

**H**arry Chapin recorded the hit single "Cat's in the Cradle" in 1974. This very familiar song tells the very familiar story of a young father who is always working — never having time to spend with his son. The son, who wants to grow up to be just like his dad, learns to walk and throw a ball while his dad is away on business. And, as the boy grows up and goes off to college and gets a job and starts his family — he becomes just like his dad — a workaholic — with no time for his dad or anyone else.

It's been over thirty years since this song was recorded, and it is apparent that the "Cat's in the Cradle" sons have become just like their fathers.

Consider Henry. His dad was a workaholic. So is Henry. He just can't stop working. Whether he is in the office, at home, in bed, or socializing, he cannot stop working or thinking about work. He measures himself (and others) by accomplishments attained and luxuries owned. His past has taught him that these are the things that bring approval, acceptance and respect. His unhealthy work patterns have been established with unrealistic expectations and the overwhelming need to perform flawlessly. Henry has come to believe that his worth (and the worth of others) is based, solely, on performance and accomplishment.

"Overwork is this decade's cocaine,

the problem without a name," states psychotherapist Bryan Robinson, author of *Chained to the Desk* (New York University Press, 1998).

"Workaholism," Robinson says, is "an obsessive-compulsive disorder that manifests itself through self-imposed demands, an inability to regulate work habits, and an over-indulgence in work to the exclusion of most other life activities." The clearest indication, he argues, is simply the inability to turn work off. Robinson suggests that as many as 25% of us qualify as workaholics — which makes this by far the country's most common addiction.

Have you given any thought lately to the balance you've struck between your work-life and the other aspects of your life? A generation ago, people left work at the workplace and went home at the end of the day. Today, technology has blurred the boundaries between work and home. The original goal of technology was to reduce the work week by at least one full day. Instead, people are getting more work done in less time but working more hours.

It is no coincidence that one of the ten commandments is to "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy...On it you shall not do any work...so that (you) may rest." The command to rest is not just some arbitrary command God has given us. Rest is something we really need. Just as we were created to

(continued on back cover)



# STORIES OF FAITH

JENNY AND I MET WHEN I WAS A “SEEKER” AND STUDYING THE Bible with some brothers. During our dating relationship, Jenny and I often talked about God.



The Mangans: Evan, Jenny, Tyler, Tim, and Patrick

She influenced me to become a Christian, but because we married young, we needed guidance and direction in how to have a good marriage. God showed us through seeking advice, getting marriage counseling, and learning to admit when we are at fault, that we will have seasons of growth, victories and struggles in our marriage, in our relationship with Him, and with our parenting and professional skills. I have been learning to allow God to work through me to bring Him glory. I made a wise choice early in my Christian journey to pursue relationships with other brothers and to cultivate a mentoring relationship with a wise and faithful older man. These pursuits have made a big impact in my life. It's not easy to manage your time with God, wife, children, work, church and friends; but it is essential to strike a healthy balance for an abiding life in Christ. And that's what I desire.

*Tim Mangan*

GOD HAS BEEN A PART OF MY LIFE FOR A LONG TIME. As a young girl I prayed that He would provide for me a godly man. I was very specific and He blessed me with

Tim. He has a true heart for God and is the spiritual leader in our family. We have a wonderful marriage, but it has not always been so. There were some difficult years. I remember thinking that if life as a Christian was this hard, I wanted no part of it. But where else could I go? Certainly not back where I came from because that life had also been hard. Yet, I knew in my heart that God is faithful. He would not leave me nor forsake me.

“He knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I shall come forth as gold,” Job 23:10.

Trying to abide in the Lord is not always easy, but whatever positive qualities or gifts I possess are totally from Him. God has made me whole. He desires ultimate victory in our lives. In Beth Moore's “Breaking Free” bible study, she states “God sees our potential and gives us the experiences necessary to reach our destinies.” My desire is for a victorious life in Him.

*Jenny Mangan*

*(continued from page 6)*

work, we were created for rest. The rhythm of rest and work is an essential part of being human. We ignore it at our peril. We humans are marvelous creations capable of incredible achievements. But, we are also fragile and easily damaged by misuse and abuse. To ignore God's intended rhythm of rest and work is like ignoring the manufacturer's instructions for a piece of fine machinery. God created us with certain tolerances and limitations. We need to live our lives according to the Manufacturer's design. Rest is essential to our physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

The key to balancing rest and work lies in thoughtful self-examination and recognizing some potential warning signs in yourself and your family. Take the quiz below, answering each statement with either "True" or "False".

- You are working when you should be sleeping.
- You have trouble sleeping because you can't stop thinking about work.

- You don't take days off; it's been years since you've had a vacation.
- You don't take breaks; you skip lunch or eat at your desk.
- Your spouse and family complain you don't spend time with them.
- Kids' homework and family time feels like an intrusion.

If you answered "True" to one or more of these statements, then you need to make some changes. Discuss your rest/work rhythm with someone who seems to have the ability to manage this balance more successfully. Perhaps you could create space in your life for some downtime. If not, the work accomplishments you are so passionate about may begin to suffer, too. If you find yourself waiting on the next big promotion or the six-figure salary before you stop working so many hours to spend more time at home, you are setting yourself up for burnout at work and alienation from your family. Make a positive plan to begin today to break the "Cat's in the Cradle" cycle. ☺



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