

THE RHYTHMS OF RESTORATION



...For I'm trained in the secret of overcoming all things, whether in fullness or in hunger. And I find that the strength of Christ's explosive power infuses me to conquer every difficulty. —Paul. Philippians 4:12-13 [The Passion Translation].

Introduction: A Little Warning about Rhythms.

I have on multiple occasions experienced a myriad of emotions, opinions, conjecture and outright negative responses related the ministry of spiritual formation and soul care/renovation. One person said in a more positive constructive setting... “The only reason I share my junk with you is because you’re not some monkish spiritual formation guy,” and he went on to say... “I can’t relate to the contemplative spiritual direction types.” Truth be known... My story runs rhythmically congruent and symbiotic with the stories of those who have had the most influence guiding me in Spiritual direction!

At some point the words of this individual may have resonated with you. I know that they did so with me at one time!

I'm a class A Type Adventurer who has been in recovery for many years. Driven to explore and discover new things with intensity comes natural for me. My wife and a close friends often tell me that my presence to the things around me look like I'm on Safari somewhere else. So I know what it's like to be an Adventure Type leader.

But, If you're anything like me, you know the dangers even good things can present. For me, The Rhythms of an Adventure along with the exploration of Spiritual disciplines and ministry projects can turn into drugs that get us high but leave us disconnected from relationships—including our friendship with Christ.

We can all relate to losing sight of Jesus while serving Jesus. And when our doing for Jesus outweighs our being with Jesus, we might be serving our own ego more than we realize.

I want to challenge us a little further with 1. You never have to impress anyone with your spirituality at a fireside challenge. 2. There is always a very present danger of growing weary in well doing, and becoming disengaged from the presence of Jesus and others. I have had it sneak up on me multiple times and didn't see it coming as a leader in my own life, my family, and community.

There was a time where I was more present to ministry than to my two small children, who needed time and emotional attentiveness from their Daddy. My wife has lived off and on, over many seasons, feeling frazzled and drained to the breaking point.

Thankfully God pierced my heart! (*This is the purpose behind Fireside Challenges*).

I would love to tell you that it came to me through a Bible revelation or a time of repentant solitude. But Holy Spirit is the one who got my attention through my wife's emotional meltdowns over my addiction to adventure, success in ministry, and my own insatiable spiritual pride.

Jaci would watch me give the best of myself to adventures, (escape) pastoral ministry, building a church, multiple churches, any church! And then devote the rest of my energy to my "free time." Doing the things that I wanted to do apart from my time with her and the kids. Meanwhile, she was the nurturer of a young boy and a younger girl in this family of four.

Sadly, an inner sense of inadequacy and shame fueled my spiritual pride and left my priorities in shambles. My attention always centered on my own selfish desires and a sin nature that would go unattended for years.

The realization of being stuck in my own cesspool became more obvious and admittedly very slowly. She began to confront me with the invitation to be a lovingly devoted family man and more present in the lives of our two children with her. *(I had deceived myself into thinking that I was a Super-Hero dad and Jack of all Trades. After all, I was Adventurous! This struggle is ever present in Type 7 and 8 Enneagram personalities. I have come a long way yet, I have much further to go!)*

Over time, God arrested my heart and upended everything that was a representation of me and not of Him. I found myself no longer in ministry, or teaching scripture. I stopped the adventures all as an act of self denial and applied my own performance as a self discipline of pseudo obedience to God.

Against the ambitions of my flesh God took me to “rock bottom.” I spiraled into a dark abyss of depression and felt empty without the attention brought by my spiritual pride and ministry validations. It seemed like my dreams had died. And all of this spilled into a representation of who I really was! Then it happened! I sank deeply into the cesspool that I had cultivated as my own private swimming hole and fell morally!

I felt like a zero. I was suicidal, alone, isolated, weak. And this was exactly the medicine my soul needed.

Whenever we hit a wall in life, ministry, or relationships, Jesus extends a hidden invitation to healing and wholeness. He draws out our wounded emotions and unseen sin so we can get honest with him and ourselves about our needs. He places the right people in our inner circle of community and friendship who will nurture and guide our soul back into an easy yoke with Jesus.

It took a while, but I finally learned to really rest my body and soul in Christ. My joy started to come from loving Jesus and the people around me and receiving love and empathy from those folks He had placed around me.

That's when God began to renovate and repair our family bringing restoration to our lives and fashioning wounded healers out of the rhythms of our story.

Thankfully, our Good Shepherd doesn't hold our failures and flaws over our heads. Instead, he leads us down right paths to find rest for our souls (Psalm 23:3) and brings purified and powerful seasons of Spirit-filled ministry out of us and to us through the stories of others! (Here is Paul's Example).

Paul as a Wounded Healer and the Rhythms of Restoration in his life.

I "was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Confessing to One Another Heals Us

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (James 5:16).

Challenge: What is the rhythm of Jesus in your story?

S *wimming in doubt fighting for my sanity flopping about. Risking all I have trying to have a plan Praying as a man I don't choke Leading my house feeling like I'm So broke.*

Heartbroke feeling like I'm solo running in the dark chasing down the fears of the unknown grinding through the days staring at these lies all full blown.

Scales over eyes and the blind leading the blind hearts crashing rapidly driven to hopelessness by a spirit of depravity. Each step is so hard fighting against this gravity.

Refusing to yield my life to this monstrosity. Fighting the confusion, fighting with my baser instincts. losing my strength praying for a light to see.

Nightmares so real giving cold sweats, hearts racing in the darkness. Feeling so lost, Fear raging through my faith like a bullet through an old glass. It shatters my heart making things even worse yet.

All the while trying a closed door, all the while I'm blinded with grief and lies and damage worse than Mordor.

Reason and logic are playing like a fantasy wrestling this spirit trying to steal all my destiny. Lost in the dark fog of my eternal enemy. Searching for the Light-bringer lamp of the Eternal King .

Throwing out my arms as I fall into pierced Hands, pleading His blood over all things. Gripping the words of His majesty. Surrendering all things to His plans . Giving up mine for the will of Jehovah King.

Resting in peace bathed in His majesty. soaking in renewal like floating in a hot Spring. A Spa to my soul pulling out impurities. Washing off the rot and the stench of the old me. Words from his lips they cover me. Under his banner I am free indeed.

~Brian Waddell~

What is the Holy Spirit Speaking to you?

Discussion: What resonates with you as we just considered the work of Jesus in another mans life?

For further consideration of developing deeper intimacy with God through Jesus, download our e-book called the Rhythms of Pause along with other books at: <https://www.johnfairrington.com/books.html> Small Donations Appreciated!