



I See The Lord, Seated On The Throne ... Exhausted!

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If this description applies to you—a creative, passion-driven musician who works in ministry—we share a common problem: we need to take some time off.

God has blessed us greatly by allowing us to do what we love for a living. So many people in this world work at jobs they outright hate or at the very least they find tedious and unfulfilling. God has allowed us to earn a living playing music. Stop right now and thank God for such an incredible blessing.

When I was a kid, I lived and breathed music every day. It was just about all I ever thought about. I'd listen to jazz records all day, hang out with my musician friends and play my instrument at every opportunity. I never dreamed of being a star or making records, all I wanted to do was play. Early on I made a decision that I was going to pursue music even if it meant living in my car. (Thankfully, I never had to do that, especially since I made that decision long before I could even afford a car!) I was determined that this was what I wanted to do with my life and pursued every opportunity to do so. I started playing in jazz clubs and hanging out there when I wasn't working. I started recording whenever I could scrape some extra money together. When I became a Christian I simply added music ministry to one of my many pursuits. My life has always been about music. It went from being my hobby to being my profession. And therein lies the problem.

When Work Is Your Rest

What do you do when what you do for a living is also what you do to unwind? Now, on the surface, this may seem more like a blessing than a curse, and in many ways, it is. But, being newly mar-

ried, I also have to start looking at the issue from my wife's perspective. I spend much of my days working on music ministry related projects. Several nights a week I'm out playing in jazz clubs. I think it came as something of a shock to her to learn that when I am not working and want to relax and unwind, the first thing I do is go to my piano, grab a guitar or start working in my studio.

I guess I had never thought of it before, but when I look at it through her eyes, I can understand how odd that must appear. After all, how many accountants spend all day working then come home and balance ledger books for fun? How many construction workers like to unwind by pounding wood?

Sometimes it is incredibly hard to not think about music or about creative projects I'm working on. That passion is a gift from God, but He has also given us the responsibility to rest from our work. And, for those of us who are married, we need to take breaks not only for our own sakes but for our spouse's and, if applicable, our children's as well. They need our time and attention and should never have to compete with what is essentially an individual pursuit in our lives. I'm learning that my wife needs me to be able to "turn it off" and focus on her, sometimes for short periods each day, sometimes all day. No one wants to spend the day with someone whose mind is elsewhere.

God's Example

Who is the most creative person you know? (That's a trick question—I'm referring to God.) What is it that God loves most? His creation! He loved the process of creating the universe and us and constantly delights in His creation. He probably loved just thinking about creating

before He actually did it. But even God knew that He needed a break—remember what He did on the seventh day of creation? He rested. And He saw such value in resting that, in the Ten Commandments, He instructed us to rest: "Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the ploughing season and harvest you must rest" (Exodus 34:21 NIV).

Later, Jesus, who obviously loved His ministry, gathered His disciples for a brief escape from the duties of their work: "Then because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, He said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest'" (Mark 6:31 NIV).

Rest to Recharge

I know you love what you do, and I understand firsthand how hard it is to "turn it off." But I am also learning that there is great refreshment that can happen when you take time off from your ministry. Resting can revitalize and recharge you for when you get back to it. I am learning to take full days off without any work projects and just spend the day relaxing or pursuing an activity that is unrelated to work.

We need to be sure and honor God's own decision to rest and His call for us to rest, too. He gave you the passion, and He gave you the opportunity to pursue it and make a living from it. Now, use the gift wisely and start resting!



Tony Guerrero is a music director at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, CA, as well as being an internationally recognized jazz musician. www.tonyguerrero.com