

*Inspirations for a Slower, Simpler  
& More Soulful Life*

# sand between your toes



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& More Soulful Life*

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*by Anna Kettle*



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*Sand Between Your Toes: Inspirations for a Slower, Simpler, and More Soulful Life*

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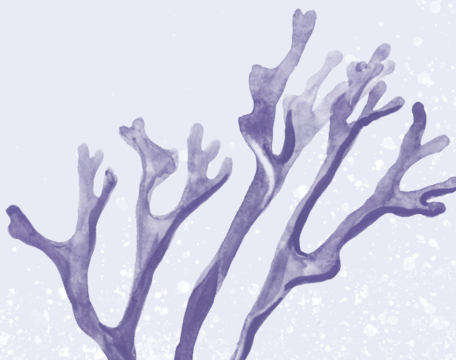
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*Have you never heard?  
Have you never understood?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of all the earth.  
He never grows weak or weary.  
No one can measure the depths  
of his understanding.  
He gives power to the weak  
and strength to the powerless.*

ISAIAH 40:28-29

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# Anchored in Love

*Surely your goodness and unfailing love  
will pursue me all the days of my life.*

PSALM 23:6

I love this verse because it's such a sure promise these days when certainty doesn't seem like a very common currency.

We live in times of political, social, and economic instability, not to mention rapid technological change. All those factors can leave us longing for some constancy in our lives.

Some people search for that sense of stability by believing that we need to go back to the good old days. Others simply try to control their present reality in equally unhealthy ways.

But the truth is that we can't go back and recreate what has already been; we can only go forward into our future. The good news is we can do it with hopeful hearts that are laid wide open to God's love.

His goodness and unfailing love are undisputed certainties. They have remained

unchanged throughout the ages, truly standing the test of time. And they aren't hidden away or hard to find either.

The Bible says that his goodness and love are actively pursuing us; pursuing us in the same way that a man pursues a woman or a treasure hunter chases clues—proactively, passionately, and urgently. What an incredible thought!

I desperately want a life that is overflowing with God's goodness and love, don't you? When we commit ourselves to him, he promises to give us just that.

### ❧ Pause and Sift ❧

*How confident are you of God's goodness and love? Spend a few minutes reflecting on some of the different ways you've experienced him pursuing you throughout your life.*

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Lord, today I am opening my heart afresh to experiencing your goodness and your love.

Please fill me to overflowing so they can impact every aspect of my life.





# Still Yourself

*Be still, and know that I am God!*

PSALM 46:10

Being still is so countercultural in a world that is always moving, isn't it? And it's also really hard to do!

I grew up in a Christian family and was taught from a young age the importance of regularly setting aside time to spend with God. But even now, at forty, I struggle with being still before him.

Because I'm such a doer, "being still" has always sounded, well . . . a little bit boring to me. But these days, I find myself craving more stillness.

I'm a full-time working mom with a busy schedule. I juggle the responsibilities of parenthood and running a household alongside the pressures of a career, and I try to keep some semblance of a social life. Sometimes the expectations of modern life can feel relentless, can't they?

What about you? Are you frequently exhausted

and longing to slow down, yet discovering that it's difficult to create any margin for rest in your life? Do you often find yourself mentally harassed by all the things that need to be checked off while struggling to relax, feeling that you should be doing something more productive?

I love today's verse because it reminds me that we're not human robots designed for ever-greater levels of efficiency; we're human beings created to be in relationship with our Maker and called to live in his love.

So let's connect with God in stillness today, remembering who he is.

### ~ Pause and Sift ~

*Take a few moments to sit quietly in God's presence.*

*Turn off your phone and push aside all other distractions. Simply focus on who he is and let that truth begin to change your perspective.*

---

Lord, I know that I often move through life at a pace that isn't good for my soul. Help me learn how to still myself before you.





# Ask for Help

*He gives grace generously.*

JAMES 4:6

Are you stretched to the limit, pulled in too many directions, and overwhelmed by a myriad of tasks? Do you frequently find yourself struggling to slow down for fear of dropping the ball?

Me too. And yet if I'm honest, more often than not I choose to keep relying on my own strength rather than asking for the help that I need. Does that sound familiar?

This verse assures us that we don't need to run ourselves ragged and work ourselves to the bone, because God freely and generously offers us his grace.

Grace means not having to do all things and know all things and be all things, all the time, and yet still knowing that you are held in his love.

All you need to do to receive this gift of grace is to humbly ask for it. Grace doesn't run out—it isn't rationed and is never in short supply. You

can't use up your quota for the day. There is always more available!

Even when God gives an outrageously generous amount to someone else, it doesn't hamper his ability to abundantly give grace to you too. His grace reserves are infinite. There is more than enough to go around.

So ask him for his grace today. Take as much as you need. And then take some extra, just in case.

### ❧ Pause and Sift ❧

*Try praying on the go throughout your day. Invite God into each of your full-on, crazy moments, even as they're happening, and simply ask him to give you his grace.*

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Lord, I'm sorry for the times when I insist on relying solely on my own strength rather than humbling myself and asking for your grace. I need it, moment by moment and day by day.





# Practice Self-Care

*Don't you realize that your body  
is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives  
in you and was given to you by God?*

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19

What do you think of when you hear the word *self-care*? Does it seem like a luxury, an indulgence, or just something that's reserved for people with plenty of money and spare time?

Incredibly, there's an \$11 billion self-care industry in the United States today, dedicated to promoting practices such as eating better, being active, sleeping well, reducing stress, and prioritizing “me time.”

But the idea of practicing good self-care is really nothing new. It's age-old wisdom that's encouraged in the Bible too.

As important as it is to maintain our spiritual health, today's verse reminds us that our bodies and minds are just as important.

What we put into our bodies matters. We need

to eat good, nourishing food that gives us energy and strength.

Regular exercise matters too. We need to get on our feet and be active to help reduce the risk of developing health problems.

But that's not all. What we *think* also matters. We need to fill our minds with thoughts that are good, pure, and true.

Caring for every part of ourselves is a spiritual matter because as followers of Jesus, each one of us is a temple of the Holy Spirit. We have been bought at a very high price—the life of God's only Son. Do you know how valuable that makes each one of us?

### ❧ Pause and Sift ❧

*Make one small lifestyle change today that supports better self-care. Share your goal with someone you trust and ask that person to keep you accountable.*

---

Lord, I choose to honor my body, mind, and spirit today by practicing good self-care, remembering how much my life cost you and how much you value me.



# Say No

*Yes, my soul, find rest in God;  
my hope comes from him.*

PSALM 62:5, NIV

Our culture is obsessed with *more*: more work, more money, more achievements, more success, more influence, more stuff.

*More* can also sound like the most spiritual or selfless option, can't it? More commitment, more activity, more self-sacrifice, more service.

But sometimes less is more. Less rushing around, less cramming things in, less spreading yourself too thin, and less pushing yourself so hard can be much more beneficial.

In fact, sometimes saying no is the single most spiritual thing we can do. Too often when we take on more, we are actually people-pleasing—trying to impress others rather than accomplishing what God wants us to do.

It can be so easy to slip into believing that saying yes is always the better option, because yes is

the word that makes things happen. If we don't do it, who will?

Often we end up putting the needs of everyone else—our families and friends—before our own. But saying no when you already feel over-stretched and overloaded in order to prioritize the health of your own soul is not selfish; it's necessary. And it's also the right thing to do, both for you and for those around you.

You simply can't give what you don't have, and you can't care for others well if you don't care for yourself.

Turn down a project. Drop some commitments. Put your hope in God, not in how much you can do, and discover deeper rest for your soul.

### ~ Pause and Sift ~

*Practice saying no to a few of the things you have always said yes to. Let some of the less important stuff slide.*

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Lord, I tend to choose more things instead of the right things. Would you give me greater clarity about when to say yes and when to say no?

