

DR. SAUNDRA DALTON-SMITH



**BEING
FULLY
KNOWN**

THE JOYFUL SATISFACTION OF
BEHOLDING, BECOMING, AND BELONGING



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Books for Courageous Women

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Chapter 1



THE UNKNOWN



Stillness. I can hear the water heating up in the coffeepot. The air purifier is humming in the next room, and my dog, Rosey, huffs at my feet. This isn't exactly stillness, but it will have to do.

My life is not still. There is usually something heating up, humming, or huffing. Is it possible to be still? Can the mind cease rehearsing? Can the will stop striving? Can the soul surrender to rest?

I try again. *Be still. Breathe. Stop. Relax. Sigh.* Life keeps moving. Try as I may, I can't manufacture stillness.

Years ago, achieving stillness might have been easier. Phones were attached to walls, not buzzing in your pocket. Work was confined to a specific location where you clocked in and out and rarely brought it home. Information had to be sought out in a *quiet* library, thumbing through a card catalog. Now you can have dozens of browser windows open at once, providing detailed information on any topic you desire. As a society, we excel at staying busy, taking on more and more. We have mastered the doing, but it has taken a toll. The constant doing has left us exhausted, overwhelmed, and heavyhearted as we process the

onslaught of negative news. We produce much, but sometimes with little satisfaction.

When your striving only leaves you feeling emptier, you've stepped into dangerous, soul-sickening territory. Money does not bring you happiness. Laughter does not come naturally. Peace is elusive. Joy has fled. When I found myself in this place of unrest, God met me there. I was burned out in every area of my personal and professional life. I was in uncharted territory with a soul-deep fatigue that carved me out and opened room for God to move. The only frequency I could tune into was rest. I craved it above all else.

One day, I found myself flat on my back on my foyer floor. I hadn't fallen. It was the first time I'd intentionally paused to reflect on the direction of my life. My time on the cold hardwood was needed therapy. I realized that though there was ample activity in my days, my pursuits were not leading me to a place of joy or satisfaction. I needed a deeper level of rest that could help me recover my life, renew my energy, and restore my sanity. When I finally stood from the floor, I was on a mission to uncover the science and biblical meaning of rest. That quest ultimately resulted in my book *Sacred Rest*.

I spent over ten years of my life learning how to rest well. I grew my knowledge in the field until I was invited to share on stages around the world about the practicality, principles, and biblical precepts of rest. I am blessed to know that thousands of people have broken free from burnout using my 7 Types of Rest Framework™ and online assessment at RestQuiz.com. I am awed by the doors God has opened. I love the work He has allowed me to do, training leaders within churches, non-profits, and corporations to honor His command to rest. I am equally

troubled by the missing pieces—the aspects of rest many struggle to embrace.

As I was signing books during one event, a young woman approached me and let out a long sigh. I didn't know if her prolonged exhale was a sign of relief or longing. She leaned over the high-top table and grabbed me by both forearms. Now, I'm a big-boned girl. I don't typically feel threatened in crowds. I've done enough kickboxing classes to believe I could uppercut my way out of most situations, but the force of this young woman's grip had me a little concerned. Before my panic alarms could go off, her first tear fell, hitting the cover of the book lying on the table between us. She wept with the desperation of a woman who had nothing to hide. Clinging to me, she cried, "I don't know how to stop *doing* when it all depends on me!"

The remaining women in the line took a collective step forward in response to her distress. The depth of the well of this woman's pain had force and pulled me in. Her statement held an honesty many could relate to in their own situations. Her words revealed a soul arrested by the truth of discontentment amid endless activity. My heart bent toward hers. I could have provided kind words, but the lump in my throat blocked all sound. Mute in the presence of a divine moment. Her eyes locked on a spot on the ground. She released her grasp on my arms abruptly and apologized. "I am so sorry. I don't know what came over me."

Emotional layers are a protective mechanism. They develop throughout our lives, helping us navigate the various feelings we encounter through our experiences. Outward layers can appear one way—confident, funny, stoic, reserved—while deep within, more

vulnerable feelings are hidden from view. I watched as the woman's emotional layers moved back into their assigned places. Self-protection, inauthenticity, and fearfulness arose. A wall was erected before me. Tears retreated. Composure came. The only evidence of the outpouring I had just witnessed were the tears merging with the waters pictured on the cover of *Sacred Rest*. She was ready to drop it and move on. I was not. It's hard to move on from a place where God is actively moving. We chatted for a few moments as I went through the formalities of signing her book. I have no idea what I wrote on those pages. My thoughts were swirling as she shared more of her story.

“Be still, and know that I am God.” This verse, Psalm 46:10, was the source of her lament. It's a seemingly impossible holy invitation. On the surface, it sounds like an invitation to rest. Underneath flows a depth that rivals the ocean. It's the DNA of a deeper relationship. When we let it replicate, it permeates everything. It's a call to fully understand who God is and who we become because of Him.

This calm isn't external but internal. Stillness is a “settledness” of the soul where questions lie down in the green pastures of trust and fears drown in the waters of love. It's where striving ceases, and the doing is done. You can simply be. This is the *being* of rest—the deeper work of resting well. Self-care and self-improvement will only get you so far. Stillness is the part that remains. Failure to understand both the being (still) and the knowing (He is God) will only achieve partial rest.

My lack of understanding is the part God is still revealing to me. I was raised to try hard at everything I did. For decades, I found comfort in the doing and the doing it well. I acclimated to a world where approval is attached to my performance and worth is allocated in direct

response to what I do. When there is no action, I feel unvaluable and left behind. I judge myself as failing at work and at home. I trade stillness for busyness and being known for convenience. In resting, I found ways to recover from the busyness. I discovered strategies for making the inconvenience of restorative practices tolerable. Yet the need to be and be known remains. There is still more I need to learn. The need to be free from the fear of what others think when they see me being free, open, vulnerable, and transparent. The need to be delivered from confusion and complacency. The need to be awakened to boldness and arise in confidence. The need to know my worth independent of my work. The need to be baptized in His love, bathed in His Word, and led by His wisdom.

These lessons result from the transformational work of physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, social, sensory, and creative rest. Through these forms of rest, the unknown is made known. A part of experiencing these concepts requires God to do inside of you what He can only accomplish when you choose to be still and know He is God. It is the rest of beholding God in all things, becoming like Jesus, and living from a place of belonging. No longer wondering if God is for you but realizing He is always with you. No longer trying to become someone but being who you already are. No longer searching for the places where you fit in but resting in the places where you fit.

Let It Be

Being and doing represent two distinct parallels of existence and engagement with the world. Each offers its own unique depth and significance. Each has value. *Being* invites you to embrace the present

moment. It welcomes times of mindfulness and self-reflection, allowing you to savor the beauty of life's experiences without the pressure of external expectations. Being makes room to see God at work in the splendor of everyday circumstances. Conversely, doing involves activity. It opens space for God to move through you, inviting you into contribution. *Doing* is the manifestation of gifts and the expression of talents.

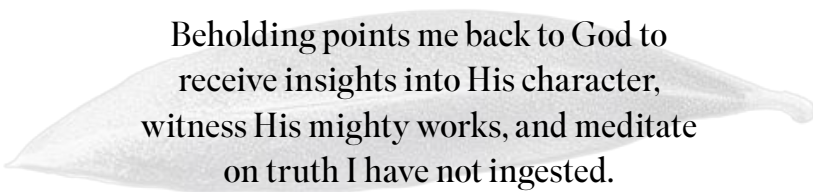
Striking a balance between being and doing is as impossible as finding a work-life balance. Balance neither exists, nor, I would come to realize, is it what I really desire. I don't want my doing and being on different sides of the pendulum. I prefer they exist in harmony with each other, where being and doing fellowship around the cross, enabling me to honor both my need for inner satisfaction and my desire to impact the world for Christ. Joyful satisfaction arises when we blend these two aspects of existence. And we can cultivate a sense of wholeness in our lives as we learn three key areas of being—beholding, becoming, and belonging.

The word *behold* appears over a thousand times in literal translations of the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments. It is used to draw attention to something important to see, gaze upon, perceive, or contemplate. Behold is an invitation to witness something you would otherwise miss without it being pointed out to you. It's a call to be still and take notice. Where Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still," I think it's helpful to consider the idea of beholding: *Behold* (look upon, reflect, take notice) "and know that I am God."

What do you behold? Between my social media feeds, the laptop, and the TV, there isn't much room left for beholding. It's easier to fill

my time with scrolling, searching, and watching than it is to look at how God is showing up in my life. Beholding points me back to God to receive insights into His character, witness His mighty works, and meditate on truth I have not ingested. Beholding illuminates His perspective. It elevates my ability to trust and rest, as beholding is the bridge between the two. I can only rest at the level of my trust in God. In beholding, I see God in multiple dimensions—alpha and omega, author and finisher, lion and lamb. By beholding God, I become aware of Him beholding me. And through this process, I begin to become what I behold.

Every day you are becoming. It is an outward expression of the inner work of what you behold. You are shaped by what has touched your life, your heart, your emotions, your motives, your aspirations, and your relationships. Becoming reflects what has captured your gaze. If your day-to-day is lacking satisfaction, you may have sacrificed *becoming* on the altar of routine, busyness, and comfort. Becoming is gloriously unpredictable. There are no schedules, time lines, or guidebooks. It has no map, and the only compass available is the Holy Spirit. You can't reason your way through because it's not a destination. It's a way of being where you are willing to be mentored from above.



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Beholding and becoming naturally lead you into belonging. Belonging quiets all lesser forms of acceptance. When the performing ends and you stop attempting to please others, joy bursts through the clouds. The darkness lifts, and with it, the reliance on your own abilities, your own strength, and your own independence. You can see where you have been graced and favored by God intentionally and strategically. The pieces of your life come into alignment with your circumstances to usher in the full realization that Christ in you is enough.

Unfortunately, at the time the young woman at my book table grabbed hold of me, I was so early in my own processing of Psalm 46:10 that I had little hope to offer her. Though it was years after I had written *Sacred Rest*, stillness remained elusive. I understood her struggle to put being still into practice because it was also my struggle. I knew how to rest but not how to be still. Stillness was the unknown missing part of my understanding.

There were many moments of refreshing and times of restoration, but life remained a whirlwind in motion. There was no solace for the relentless demands and ceaseless distractions that warred against the stillness prescribed by the verse. Yet, the Word of God promises there is still sanctuary amidst the chaos—a sacred space where we can retreat to behold, become, and belong. It's a reminder to turn away from the noise and bright lights and to put our attention on God. This stillness is not focused on the absence of movement but rather on who is moving. It highlights with steadfast assurance that God is at work while we rest.

We can't be still because we don't know who God is, who we are, and where we fit. Living out the wisdom of Psalm 46:10 isn't merely

about finding fleeting moments of respite. It's an ongoing practice of being over doing, where we can listen deeply to the whispers of our souls and attune ourselves to the gentle rhythms of grace. The fullness of joy is found in beholding God's power in the ordinary, becoming like Christ, and knowing you belong. True fulfillment arises not from our external achievements but from becoming what and who we behold—a gracious, compassionate Jesus whose yoke is light. God has made us for Himself, and we can never know rest and satisfaction until we know Him.

In the following pages, I reveal what I would now say to this young woman and others who:

- Find stillness impossible to practice.
- Lack confidence in their ability to wholly follow God.
- Value working and doing over resting and being.
- Question why their talents and gifts do not align with their current career and life.
- Jump from idea to idea but rarely stay with one to completion.
- Wrestle with confusion over the next right steps.
- Feel oppressed by the weight of past pain and trauma.
- Allow their voices to be silenced by fear but have much to say.
- Shrink back when placed in unfamiliar situations.
- Give God their yes but are hesitant to move at His pace.

The Beholding, Becoming, and Belonging sections of this book address each of these problems and more. There is a type of rest that yet remains. This is the rest of being fully known. It breaks down our walls of self-preservation and leaves us prostrate before the Lord. It bows our life to the one true God. Today is your opportunity to decide if you are willing to be still and know Him. To see His faithfulness in the mundane. To stand in awe of His grace transforming your greatest hurts, needs, and desires. To savor the experience of being welcomed and wanted. A life of joyful satisfaction is available to you!

Daily Unveiling

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

—2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV)

Each chapter concludes with opportunities for you to intentionally practice uncovering truth and discovering new aspects of who God is and who you are. These are thoughts to sit with as you go about your daily life to experience the gentle work of being over doing. I pray these moments of God-awareness, reflection, and self-discovery elevate your faith, break through mindset barriers, and spark curiosity.

1. Your layers serve a purpose, or they would not exist. What are the benefits of your emotional layers?

2. God sees beyond the layers to the heart of the matter. Ask Him to reveal to you what He sees.
3. Each layer is an opportunity to know God and yourself at a deeper level. How deep are you willing to go? Pray this simple prayer: “God, show me more of you today.”

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