

BIG IDEA

Jesus invites us to live with a playful, joyful heart.

KEY VERSE

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. (Matthew 11:28 MSG)

SUMMARY

Our life moves at a fast pace. We need to find refreshment in a chaotic world, live free and stay healthy, and rest after a busy season! In other words, we need to take a break, before we break. We do that through living with a playful attitude, having a sense of awe and wonder, and joy.

KEY POINTS

1. **Playing is simply enjoying our life.** Sometimes we believe we need a break from life. But, really, we need breaks for our life. We need to check in to what Jesus is speaking to us and our relationships instead of checking out. To be playful means to be present.

Where is God inviting you to be present and enjoy your life?

2. **Playing as if/then statements.** As adults, we see play as a reward. If we work hard, then we can play hard. If we get enough retirement, then we can relax. We don't have time for play and see it as only something kids do. Jesus has time for children and he shares that with his disciples (**Matthew 19:13**). All the riches, and hope, and joy of Heaven belongs to people who are like children (**Matthew 19:14**). We are those children.

What do you feel has to be done before you can play? Where do you need to change your perspective about how you view playfulness?

3. **The kingdom of Heaven is a worry-free, stress-free, and hope-filled zone.** The kingdom of heaven is in us which means we can approach life with joy, wonder, and the playfulness of a child (**Colossians 1:27**). In Jesus, we are righteous, we have His peace, and we release joy to the world around us (**Romans 14:17**). When we see children who are worried, stressed, or hopeless, our heart breaks. The same is true of us because in Christ, we are His children. We don't stop playing because we don't have enough time, we stop playing because we don't have enough trust.

Is your life full of righteousness, peace, and joy or of worry, stress, and hopelessness? Where is God asking you to trust Him in this season?

4. **Playfulness and laughter are by-products of a kingdom reality.** We've heard it said that laughter is the best medicine (**Proverbs 17:22**). People who don't live with joy want to mock those who do (**Matthew 21:14-15**). Laughter is good and joy is contagious. Both are spiritual acts of worship (**Matthew 21:16**) and spiritual warfare (**Psalms 8:2**). A playful and joyful heart can defeat the enemies in our minds.

Share a time when someone else's fun and joy frustrated you. How did you handle it? What is God revealing in your heart about play?

5. **Practical ways to play.** Host a game night at your house, invite people over with no agenda, schedule time in a park to wonder and wander in God's creation, choose to be playful with the people around you, and look for laughter in the little things.

What is one thing you can do this Spring Break season that is playful?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Children play because they feel loved, secure, and are creative. In Jesus we are forgiven, we are loved, and everything is possible. That means it's okay to rest, to laugh, to enjoy life, and it's okay to play. In this season, let's give ourselves permission to rest and play as we choose to trust in Him.

(Other Scripture References: Zechariah 8:5, Ephesians 5:4)