

THE RECEPTIVE LIFE

A SPIRITUAL TRAVELOGUE (AND FIELD GUIDE) TO
FINDING THE SOUL'S SACRED REST IN THE
TRIUNE GOD

THE RECEPTIVE LIFE SERIES



PAUL W ARNDT

SHADOW PAW PUBLICATION

The Receptive Life: A Spiritual Travelogue (and Field Guide) to Finding the Soul's Sacred Rest in the Triune God

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A Shadow Paw Publication

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*My soul rests in God alone.
My salvation is from him.*

*He alone is my rock, my salvation, and my fortress.
I will never be greatly shaken.*

— PSALM 62:1-2 (WEB)

This is what the Sovereign Lord , the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.

— ISAIAH 30:15 (NIV)

Come to me all you who labour and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

— MATTHEW 11:28-30 (WEB)

Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, "Rejoice!" Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made to known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

— PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7 (WEB)

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“Lord God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless (“unquiet”) until they find their rest in you.”

— SAINT AUGUSTINE, *CONFESSIONS*, BOOK 1

Sacred rest is not a spiritual state you achieve—it is a gift you receive.

The Triune God is the only One who can give it, and He gives it through His Word (in Jesus, in the Scripture, and in the Sacraments). We can only receive our soul’s rest through faith. As Augustine confessed, the Triune God made us for Himself and our hearts will be restless (“unquiet”) until they find their rest in Him.

If you’re like most people, you’ve felt the ache of a restless heart. Maybe it’s the endless striving for peace, the search for purpose, or the longing for something deeper that no amount of success, comfort, or self-help can satisfy. In a world filled with distractions, doubts, and relentless

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demands, our souls crave rest—true, sacred rest. But where do we find it?

Most of us think that our restless hearts will be quieted by external changes—more time, less stress, better circumstances. But the truth is that rest for an unquiet heart can only be found in the Triune God. Recognizing our restlessness is not a sign of failure but the first step toward sacred rest. And the good news is, this rest is not earned—it is received as a gift from the Triune God, through His Word, His promises, and His presence in Jesus Christ.

This ache for rest isn't just an abstract idea—it's a reality I've wrestled with in my own life, one that became particularly vivid as I approached a milestone birthday.

ALMOST SIXTY

The first day back from a two-month teaching deployment at the Lutheran School of Theology at the foot of the Ngong Hills in Kenya, I laced up my boots, put a thirty-pound cast iron plate in my backpack, strapped myself in for the five-mile hike through the local park, positioned my sunglasses, and headed out the front door.

My wife came around the corner, gave me a concerned look, and said, "Paul, you better be careful. You know you're almost sixty."

I lowered my sunglasses to the tip of my nose and fired back, "Almost sixty? What's that supposed to mean?"

"Well, it's true," she said. "You're not almost thirty, or forty, or even fifty ... you're almost sixty!"

I pushed my sunglasses back over my eyes, marched down the driveway, put a little extra vim and vigor in my step, and finished the five-mile hike in around ninety minutes. Not bad for someone who's almost sixty.

Don't feel sorry for me. Without her knowing it, my wife

gave me a great gift for the remaining days of my 59th year. She gave me the almost-sixty-get-out-of-doing-chores card. And I've been playing it every chance I get.

“Paul, we should really clean out the garage and get it ready for the winter.”

“Oh, I don't know if I can. I better be careful because, you know ... I'm almost sixty.”

“Can we at least ...?”

“I don't think I should. You know, I'm almost ...”

But my wife's words weren't just a free pass to avoid chores. They also prompted me to reflect on life's journey and the fleeting nature of time. As Psalm 90 reminds us: “The length of our days is seventy years, or eighty if we have the strength.”

This reflection on time and the fleeting nature of life reminded me that restlessness isn't just about a busy schedule or the ticking of the clock or the number of candles on a birthday cake—it's about the deeper longings of the heart.

And that's what inspired this book.

A BOOK ABOUT “THE RECEPTIVE LIFE”

There's an African proverb that says, *“When an old man dies, a library burns to the ground.”*

This reflection sparked a desire in me to write something useful—a book that could serve as a library of insights, a guide to help others number their days, and a map for finding and receiving the soul's sacred rest.

Augustine's famous confession frames this journey perfectly:

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“Lord God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless (“unquiet”) until they find their rest in you.”

— CONFESSIONS, BOOK 1

This book is my attempt to offer a spiritual travelogue—a field guide, map, and compass to help navigate the spiritual landscape of the unquiet heart and find the soul’s sacred rest in Jesus.

AN INVITATION

This book isn’t just a collection of ideas or stories—it’s a journey we’ll take together. It’s an invitation to explore your own restless heart and discover the sacred rest that can only be found in the Triune God.

Together, we’ll navigate the landscape of the “unquiet heart”. We’ll be guided by the promises of Scripture, walk the rhythms of the Divine Service, and plot a course charted by Martin Luther in his *Small and Large Catechisms*. These catechisms provide a framework for understanding God’s promises, defending against spiritual attacks, and shaping daily practices of prayer and meditation.

If you’re weary of striving and ready to receive the peace the Triune God promises, this book is for you. It will take you on a journey to understand your restlessness, equip you with practical tools, and help you to receive and live in God’s sacred rest every day.

By the end of this journey, you’ll not only understand your restless and “unquiet” heart but you’ll also learn how to receive the sacred rest that God offers every day.

As we walk this path together, you’ll find that this journey is more than an exercise in learning—it’s a lifeline to the

peace your soul longs for. And in a restless world, there's no better time to begin.

Here's how we'll walk this path together...

PART I: A SPIRITUAL TRAVELOGUE – THE JOURNEY OF THE RESTLESS HEART

In Part I, we'll explore the territory of the restless heart—what it is, how it feels, what it wants, where it wanders, what it's looking for, and where it ultimately finds its sacred rest. We'll navigate the spiritual wilderness, guided by God's Word and all the promises that we have in the person and work of Jesus.

This first section invites you to pause, reflect, and explore the landscape of your unquiet heart. Through stories, Scripture, and reflections, we'll uncover the deep roots of our restlessness and journey to a place where we receive our soul's sacred rest in Jesus.

PART II: A SPIRITUAL FIELD GUIDE – MAP, COMPASS, TOOLS AND GEAR

Part II equips you with practical tools, spiritual exercises, and step-by-step practices—daily and weekly spiritual rhythms, prayers, and resources—to help you receive and live in God's rest. These tools are drawn from the riches of Scripture, the pattern of the Divine Service and Martin Luther's *Small and Large Catechisms*,

The *Small and Large Catechisms* are not just doctrinal texts—they are practical tools for prayer, meditation, and daily renewal. They offer a simple yet profound framework for understanding and receiving God's gifts.

You'll learn a Lutheran spiritual formation process for receiving the Triune God's promises, resisting spiritual

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attacks, and building repeatable spiritual practices that get you to all the places that the Triune God has promised to give His gifts.

PART III: SPIRITUAL REST AND REFLECTIONS ALONG THE WAY

Finally, Part III offers a series of meditations designed to help you pause and reflect deeply as you journey. Think of these as rest stops along the way—moments to slow down, catch your breath, rest, and receive whatever gift the Triune God desires to give.

WHY THIS JOURNEY MATTERS

This is not a book you simply read and set aside—it's a book designed to be used. Like a trusted guide, it will walk with you step by step, helping you move from a place of striving and spiritual performance to a posture of receiving the soul's sacred rest that can only come from the Triune God.

In *The Receptive Life* you'll discover that the soul's sacred rest is not earned; it is a divine gift we receive through faith. And you'll learn how to:

Fight against the "unholy trinity" of the devil,
the world, and your sinful flesh.

Defend yourself with the promises of Jesus.

Fully receive the abundant gifts that only the
Triune God can give.

But no journey is meant to be taken alone. That's why this book also invites you into a community of fellow travelers—a place where we can share, grow, and encourage one another as we learn to rest in God's promises together.

MORE THAN A BOOK: JOIN THE JOURNEY

I've created a private online community where we can explore these truths together. You won't just read about sacred rest—you'll experience it alongside others. Together, we'll reflect, share, and encourage one another as we learn to receive God's peace.

Think of it as your place around a spiritual campfire—a space to connect with like-minded individuals, deepen your engagement with the book's themes, and encourage one another in the journey toward sacred rest.

To join the online community visit paulwarndt.com and look for the “The Receptive Life Book” link in the drop down menu.

WHY NOW? WHY THIS BOOK?

We live in a world that exhausts us—spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. The solutions the world offers are superficial and short-lived, leaving our hearts more restless than before. But God promises something better.

His sacred rest!

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

— MATTHEW 11:28-30 (NIV)

* * *

By the end of this journey, you'll move from spiritual exhaustion to a deep, abiding rest in the Triune God.

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If you're ready to leave behind the ceaseless striving and receive this rest for yourself, this book is your invitation. It's not a journey you take alone. We'll walk this path together. With Jesus as our guide, Scripture as our compass, and the catechisms as our gear, let's embark on this journey to the sacred rest your soul longs for.

Let's begin.

Paul

A SPIRITUAL TRAVELOGUE, FIELD GUIDE, AND MEDITATIONS ALONG THE WAY

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