



Re-Create

[*Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 \(NIV\)*](#)

Third in a 9-part series titled: *Reset*

Pastor Matt Friend – July 1 & 4, 2021

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— OUTLINE —

Today's Big Idea:

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is have a hobby.

Today's Takeaway:

Find a hobby.

What kind? Here are a few suggestions:

- #1. Find a hobby to enjoy the body God gave you.
- #2. Find a hobby to enjoy the mind God gave you.
- #3. Find a hobby to enjoy the world God gave you.
- #4. Find a hobby to enjoy the people God gave you.
- #5. Find a hobby to enjoy God Himself.



Resource Recommendation

[*Reset: Living a Grace-Paced Life in a Burnout Culture*](#)

By David Murray



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– NOTES –

Introduction:

It was fall 2006 and President Bush’s “Mission Accomplished” was turning into “Mission Impossible” as the U.S. was slowly, yet surely, losing the Iraq War. General George Casey persisted in the bloody “handover” strategy, despite the engulfing disaster. Marine General Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was desperate. Looking for a new strategy, he invited retired Army General Jack Keane to a meeting and asked for his honest feedback.

Keane was blisteringly frank and direct, “I would give you a failing grade.” Visibly pained, Pace asked, “What do you think I should be doing?” Keane’s advice to Pace was startling. “You should tell General Casey to reduce his workload and take time off every day.” He went on: “George Casey is at this 24/7. He has nothing to nurture his life. He is completely immersed and isolated by one thing and only one thing: *this war*. It has completely captured everything he does. His capacity at times to see clearly is always going to be limited and defined by his day-in, day-out experience and the fatigue he suffers.”

Journalist Bob Woodward, who documented the encounter, writes in his book (*The War Within: A Secret White House History*), “Keane suggested that General Pace compare the current U.S. generals to World War II’s General Douglas MacArthur (who watched a movie every night) or to Army Chief of Staff George Marshall (who went home every night at a reasonable hour and rode a horse for crying out loud, and sometimes took a nap for an hour-and-a-half during the day). And these guys were doing big, important things. You know what our guys are like? They’re at their desks at 6:30 in the morning and they stay up till midnight.



The core issue was fresh, clear thinking about the tasks of war.”

Think of that! The advice of a four-star general and former Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army (and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient) was to take more time for recreation. In his opinion, recreation and hobbies are the only way to keep a sharp mind and win a war.

Assuming that’s true, let me ask, “How are you doing in the recreation/hobby department?” A better question might be, “How are you doing in the war of life? Are you as effective as you want to be? As sharp as you want to be? Are you growing like you want to grow?”

I need this message, and, most likely, you need this message. I believe the next few minutes are worth the price of your attention. I’m convinced Jesus is offering you a gift today—the gift of satisfaction, the gift of renewed joy, the gift of hope—if you’ll accept His invitation and follow in His steps.

Today’s Big Idea:

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is have a hobby.

Other ways to say the same thing:

- Hobbies are gifts from God meant to be enjoyed.
- Recreation is crucial for Christian renewal.
- Hobbies play a role in Christian growth just like Bible reading and prayer.

What is a hobby?

It’s something we pursue apart from our regular occupation that’s meant for our enjoyment, recreation, or relaxation.

A hobby might be art or astronomy, blogging or baseball, a craft or



cryptocurrency, dancing or decorating, fishing or furniture-making, genealogies or gymnastics, karaoke or kung fu, Legos or listening to music, mechanics or a musical instrument, painting or powerlifting, stamp-collecting or Sudoku, tennis or taxidermy, watching TV or woodcarving.

What are your hobbies?

Highlights from the Text:

Ecclesiastes 5:18 —

- The book of Ecclesiastes is a book of observation. It's part of the OT wisdom literature like Proverbs. It's not a book of promises as much as it's a book of observation. It's how life works *most of the time*.
- In this book the writer says (38x) that life is fleeting like a vapor or a puff of smoke. Like smoke, life appears solid, but when you try to grab onto it, there's nothing.
- Therefore, the inspired author thinks we spend too much of our time investing energy and emotion in things that have no lasting meaning, such as in wealth, pleasure, career, and status.
- On one hand, the writer encourages us to revere and obey the Lord in all we do: with our career, pleasure, status, wealth. We are to work hard in everything.
- On the other hand, the writer encourages us to stop and smell the roses, to enjoy the blessings of life, to see all of life as a gift from God—whether it be friendship, family, a good meal, or a sunny day. He encourages us to enjoy our life as we *experience*



it, not as we think it ought to be.

- In summary, Ecclesiastes is an invitation for us to see life as a gift, not gain.
- The happiest people are open-handed, open-hearted people who don't try to forcefully create their own life; instead, they receive each day as a gift and hold their plans loosely in case God has something better to give.
- Along the way, the *blessed ones* enjoy hobbies and recreation.
- This is “appropriate” (fitting, beautiful) in God's sight. See also [3:11](#).

Ecclesiastes 5:19 —

- Recreation and hobbies are gifts from God.
- “If we focus more on the gifts than on the Giver, we are guilty of idolatry. If we accept His gifts but complain about them, we are guilty of ingratitude. If we hoard His gifts and refuse to share them with others, we are guilty of indulgence. But if we yield to His will and use what He gives us for His glory, then we can enjoy life and be satisfied.” –Warren Wiersbe
- It's appropriate and right to enjoy and be happy when the physical blessings come!
- See also [1 Timothy 4:4](#); [6:17](#); [James 1:17](#)
- What good is having a boat if you never take time to enjoy it? A motorcycle, a kayak, a four-wheeler, a camper, a tent, a fire pit, a back porch, a beach house, or set of golf clubs?

Ecclesiastes 5:20 —

- The writer isn't advocating for an unreflective, *laissez-faire* attitude toward life. However, he's teaching us that truly contented people refuse to allow the darker realities of human existence to overshadow divinely bestowed blessings.
- When a person recognizes the goodness of God, he or she rejoices and doesn't dwell extensively on the troubles of life.
- “I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them.” –Andy Bernard, *The Office*



- In his book *Dangerous Wonder*, Michael Yaconelli says, “Play is an expression of God’s presence in the world. One clear sign of God’s absence in society is the absence of playfulness and laughter. Play is not an escape; it is the way to release the life-smothering grip of busyness, stress, and anxiety.”
- See also [Psalm 104:26](#); [Ecclesiastes 2:17-26](#); [3:12-13](#); [6:2-6](#); [8:15](#); [9:7-9](#); [Zechariah 8:5](#).

Today’s Take-Away:

Find a hobby.

What kind? Here are a few suggestions:

#1. Find a hobby to enjoy the body God gave you.

What kind of exercise is most life-giving to you?

#2. Find a hobby to enjoy the mind God gave you.

What do you enjoy creating?

#3. Find a hobby to enjoy the world God gave you.

What hobby allows you to enjoy nature the most?

#4. Find a hobby to enjoy the people God gave you.

Who has God placed in your life to enjoy hobbies together?

#5. Find a hobby to enjoy God Himself.

Where do you feel God’s pleasure the most?

Why find a hobby? Because...

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is have a hobby.