

Dear Younger Self-

I got away this past weekend. Away from the pressures of work, motherhood and life in general. It was a chance to stop and be silent. Literally. From Thursday evening until Sunday afternoon, I was silent. No phone. No computer. No iPad. No Wi-Fi. Even my trusty Apple watch was useless for anything but telling time. Silent and surrounded by the beautiful stillness that comes from somewhere other than myself. And, in the silence and stillness, I found something I had forgotten I needed...rest.

I will admit, the stillness and silence were not what I considered beautiful at first. Immediately, my mind began to wander to all the things that I needed to do, the things that I left hanging before I left, the things that would be waiting on me when I came back. And, once that list was finished fear, uncertainty and anxiety set in. But then, something beautiful happened. As the noise in my head broke the silence I sought, I stopped and prayed. Prayed for His peace. Prayed for His rest. Prayed for the understanding. And, as I allowed myself to settle into the silence, I found so much more. I began to hear His word louder than I have before. The words in my Bible were not just words I was reading, but words that spoke to me. Words that spoke to my heart in ways I had long forgotten.

You see, when there's nothing left but silence, there's nothing left to do but surrender. Surrender...to finding yourself again...to allowing yourself to just be still...to discovering love. Not the romantic hearts and flowers kind of love, but the all-consuming kind. The kind of love that reminds you why you wake up each morning and push on. The all-consuming, unwavering, unconditional love that can only come from the Father.

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus says *"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."*

Younger Self, I know there are so many things you want to achieve. I know there are demands coming at you from so many places. I know there are days when you don't know where to start. Days when you'd much rather stay in bed and hit the reset button. And, I want you to know that it's OK to do that. To stop. To regroup and refocus your attention. To be silent. Be still. To take time to return to Him and listen.

Finding rest isn't just about sleep. It's not just about downtime. Finding rest means learning to drown out the noise from outside and within. It means allowing yourself to be still. Be silent. Will it be hard? Yes. Because it means letting your guard down. It means offering yourself wholly, completely. It means allowing yourself to be vulnerable. And it means letting go of control. But, for all you are giving up, you will gain so much more. Things you can only find when you let go, stop and listen. Things you can only find when you place yourself at the hands and heart of Jesus. So, Younger Self, please rest and allow yourself to surrender. Surrender to the things you know and those that you don't. Surrender to realizing there's beauty, comfort, hope and peace – yes, even peace – to be found in uncertainty.

With Joy,
Michele