

Topical bible study: Refresh

[Note: This Bible study on the topic of “Refresh” was generated from a memory-care resident’s request. It is included here to show how you can take a topic and turn it into a scripture study with appropriate texts. This covers several passages, so you can choose to focus on one, two, or as many as you like.]



Main point: God intentionally and regularly refreshes us, and uses us to refresh others.

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Genesis 18:1-5, 10: The Lord appears to Abraham

¹ And the Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as Abraham sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² Abraham ... ran from the tent door to meet [the Lord] and bowed himself to the earth ³ and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵ while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” ... ¹⁰ The Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.”

1. In this passage, the Lord himself sits with Abraham at the tent door, “in the heat of the day.”
Why do you think the Lord did this? Was the Lord actually tired?
 - a. This is a simple, intimate, direct act of God’s love and desire for relationship. God allows Abraham to bring him refreshment!
2. *What is Abraham’s reaction?*
 - a. He is eager to be with God! The Lord is not an unwelcome guest. Shares a common meal in his own home.
3. *What happens after they share a meal?*
 - a. The Lord reaffirms his covenant promise with Abraham and gives Abraham the miraculous news that his wife, Sarah, will bear a son by next year.
4. *Who is really receiving refreshment here?*

Exodus 23:12 – The Sabbath law (also Deuteronomy 5:12ff)

Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.

1. *Why does God make this commandment?*
 - a. To set aside time to rest, to be refreshed
2. *Who is this commandment for?*
 - a. For everyone, the worker, animals, family, and servants
3. Let’s unpack the word “refreshed.” “Re” means to repeat something, do it again, duplicate it. “Fresh” means something is alive, new, living, ready, like a fresh flower or a fresh orange or a fresh piece of paper.
 - a. *How does a day of rest refresh you? What is it like after working hard and then having some time off? What is a vacation like?*
4. *What does a day of rest do for us?*
 - a. Refreshes! Re-fills us with energy and enthusiasm

- b. Affirms that our work is not the most important or necessary thing in the world; God is sovereign and will provide

[The following passages could be part of one study; all are written by the apostle Paul (St. Paul).]

Romans 15:30-33 – While imprisoned, St. Paul writes to the Roman church:

³⁰I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, ³¹that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea... ³²so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.

1. *What does Paul ask the Roman believers to do?*
 - a. "Pray earnestly for me"
2. *Why does Paul want to be released from prison?*
 - a. "So I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company."
3. *What is it like to be back among friends after a hard and trying time?*

1 Corinthians 16:18

¹⁷I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence, ¹⁸for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such people.

1. *Who came to visit Paul from the church in Corinth? What did they do for Paul?*
 - a. Made up for the absence of the entire church; represented the prayers and support of fellow believers, from whom Paul was separated
2. *How do you think these three men may have refreshed Paul?*
3. *Why does Paul encourage his readers to "give recognition" to those friends?*
 - a. These three friends are a good example for others! Follow their lead; refresh the spirits of those who are downtrodden.

2 Timothy 1:16

¹⁶May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, ¹⁷but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me.

1. *To Paul, what was especially helpful about Onesiphorus?*
 - a. "often" tried to help Paul
 - b. was not ashamed of Paul's imprisonment, visiting him in prison
 - c. "searched earnestly" until he found Paul in prison – how easy might that have been in ancient Rome??
2. *Why are these actions refreshing to Paul?*
 - a. tells him that he's not alone or forgotten

Philemon 7

⁴I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. ⁷For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

1. *Usually Paul writes to larger church groups, but who is he writing to this time?*
 - a. "My brother"
 - b. Written (again from prison) to a single person, Philemon, a leader of the Colossian church

2. *In this case, what gives Paul “much joy and comfort”?*
 - a. Paul has heard how Philemon loves and refreshes the hearts of other believers, “the hearts of the saints”
3. *So is Philemon refreshing or caring for Paul directly?*
 - a. No; but Philemon’s love for others whom Paul loves gives great joy and comfort to Paul.

Summarize: How does God use us to refresh fellow believers? What can we do to refresh others?

- Pray for others
 - Keep others company; make an effort to visit
 - Don’t be being ashamed of or embarrassed by others’ troubles
 - Don’t forget people in their distress
 - Love those around you
1. Ask for any prayer requests for today.
 2. Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
 3. End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

Genesis 18:1-5

¹ And the Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as Abraham sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

² Abraham ... ran from the tent door to meet [the Lord] and bowed himself to the earth ³ and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.”

Exodus 23:12 – The Sabbath law

Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.

New Testament Writings from the Apostle Paul (St. Paul):

Romans 15:30-33

³⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, ³¹ that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea... ³² so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.

1 Corinthians 16:18

¹⁷ I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence, ¹⁸ for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such people.

2 Timothy 1:16

¹⁶ May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, ¹⁷ but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me.

Philemon 7

⁴ I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶ and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. ⁷ For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.