

Our capacity to love others is an overflow of the relationship we have with God. What undesirable actions and attitudes towards others can result when you are lacking sufficient rest?

This may be the time to reshape your attitudes and habits about sabbath. Try this exercise:

*List some of your activities and commitments, then identify
-which do I really not need to do because someone else could do it
-which do I need not to do because I don't have the gifting, it's not the right time or it is overwhelming me*

Share your responses and identify one thing on your list to let go of, then agree to partner with someone to support your choice through prayer and encouragement.

When you create space in your life for a sabbath's rest, you will find that the time of rest allows you to connect more deeply with God through prayer, scripture study, worship, and creative expressions that refresh your soul and renew your joy.

WRAP-UP

Don't be seduced by the world's promise that working harder, doing more and carrying greater responsibilities will increase your value and your happiness. God created you for a rhythm that includes a sabbath's rest with Him. When you fail to rest, you sacrifice not only your physical health, but your spiritual health as well. Embrace Jesus' example, withdraw often to commune with God and He will renew our strength and give you peace.

MEMORY VERSE

*"Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
- Exodus 20:8 NLT*

*Challenge-
Give yourself permission to observe a sabbath's rest this week.
Devote yourself to resting in the presence of God and allow Him to renew your soul.*

Sabbath Rest – Living at the Right Pace Flourish Week 10

INTRODUCTION

Our current sermon series is based on an agricultural parable. We have considered the parallels between tilling, cultivating, weeding, tending, pruning, and waiting. But even in the rhythms of farming we find a time set aside to rest. The prudent farmer allows his field to sit fallow, giving it an opportunity to replenish its moisture and nutrients. God has woven rest into creation and given it to us as the gift of the Sabbath. What has formed our opinions about rest? Do we really need to observe a sabbath?

Ice Breaker

Describe the last vacation you took in terms of how restful it was.

Key Passage

8 "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 You have six days each week for your ordinary work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you.

- Exodus 20:8-10 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is Sabbath?

1 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. 2 On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

- Genesis 2:1-3 NLT

The word sabbath essentially means “cease”. The concept of ceasing from work on the 7th day reflects the first week of creation. The commandment for us to “remember the sabbath” was given to Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex 20:8-10). But at some point, we seem to have forgotten the sense of holiness and importance that God gave to the sabbath.

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The verse above not only tells us what we are not to do on the sabbath, it also tells us the purpose of the sabbath. What is this time of rest intended to be for? What is the common understanding of what we should do to observe the sabbath?

2. Shifting our mindset

Our culture promotes the value of productivity over spirituality. We have come to accept that the more we work, the better person we are. A true sabbath can be uncomfortable to those of us formed in the Protestant work ethic. But this might be a subtle expression of our belief that we can earn God’s approval by working tirelessly and doing more. But as Samuel told Saul, “Obedience is better than sacrifice.”

Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath. - Mark 2:27 NLT

Do you feel guilty when you take time off from working for a sabbath rest? If so, who do you think you are disappointing, God or people?

At the time the people received the 10 Commandments, working was equated with survival. If they ceased working, that meant they had to trust God for their daily provision.

It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones. - Psalm 127:2 NLT

Take a few moments to reflect on Psalm 127. What message or invitation do you find in it for you? Have you fully accepted the gift of rest God wants to give you? Is your sabbath observed by spending 2 hours at church and the rest of the days catching up on chores? What would it look like for you to spend a sabbath day resting in God’s presence?

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need. 2 He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. 3 He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. - Psalm 23:1-3 NLT

In Psalm 23 the Good Shepherd provides all you need and gives you rest and peace and strength before he leads you along the journey down the path of righteousness. Rest precedes the journey and provides us the strength we need to complete the course.

How often and under what circumstances do you allow yourself to be led by still waters, lie in green pastures and have your soul restored? Where are your “green pastures” those places, relationships or activities that offer you true spiritual nourishment?

3. Damage to you and others

God created you and He knows your limitations. You may have many roles in life and various commitments that you struggle to meet. But there are times you need to get away. Even Jesus grew tired and withdrew to be alone with God.

*But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.
- Luke 5:16 NLT*

When Jesus withdrew to the wilderness He spent time with God in prayer. He strengthened His relationship with His Father and that nourished His soul. The same is true of us. If we don’t rest and commune with God, we damage ourselves physically and spiritually and our relationships with God and others suffer.

Finish each sentence below:

I enjoy life most when _____

I am most at peace when _____

I am aware of God’s presence _____