

Summer Singles Part 2: The First Day Off - 06.10.12

Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:1-3 NIV / **Video:** "1 Outta 7"

Ask: Do you suffer from the disease of hurry sickness?

The symptoms:

- Not enough hours in the day, week, month.
- Sign up for even more - more is better than less
- Loss of wonder and amazement
- Schedule is in charge of me (not the other way around)
- Tempers flare; tension heavy
- Wake up with dread instead of excitement
- Relationships weaken -
 - ✓ with myself
 - ✓ with my family
 - ✓ with God

Big Idea: I work best when I REST ON THE SABBATH.

We need to hear that it's ok *to rest*. We need to know that the Bible *commands us* to rest. We have a special word we learn today: Sabbath. From Hebrew "Shabbath," literally means "day of rest." Today I want to teach you 4 important concepts about this Sabbath and then 7 hints on how to rest well on the Sabbath. Here we go...

Sabbath Concept #1: God MODELED IT.

We often think about the LORD God at work. But how often do we think about our God at rest? The very first place we read about rest is not as it applies to man, but as it applies to God in creation:

"By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work." Genesis 2:2 NIV

Stop and think about this for just a minute. Does God NEED rest? Does He become tired? Does He wear out? It's hard to conceive of the Almighty All-Powerful as having to rest. But it is possible to understand that God is also All-Wise! That He understands the balance between working and resting, producing and enjoying the fruits of His labor, creating and imagining even more in rest!

There's one more reason WHY God modeled the Sabbath...

"In six days I, the Lord, made the earth, the sky, the sea, and everything in them, but on the seventh day, I rested. That is why I, the Lord, blessed the Sabbath and made it holy." Exodus 20:11 GNT

It's hard to overstate the importance of this. This is in the context of the 10 commandments. We know it as the 4th - to remember to keep the Sabbath holy. Holy means set apart. We are to set apart one day of rest in every six. *This is the only commandment where God says first "I did it... you do it too. If it's good enough for me. It's good enough for you!"*

Sabbath Concept #2: God DESIGNED ME FOR IT.

Last weekend we talked about being created in the image of God. We learned that this doesn't mean we look like God or He like us, but there are likenesses in other ways. One way is in this idea of Sabbath - one day of rest after 6 days of work.

"It's useless to rise early and go to bed late, and work your worried fingers to the bone. Don't you know he enjoys giving rest to those he loves?" Psalm 127:2 The Message

Sometimes I feel guilty about taking time off from work. But the Bible teaches us that we will actually work better, we work harder, more productively... *GET MORE DONE...* if we honor the concept of Sabbath. If we rest one day in seven. We should NOT feel guilty. We should enjoy the Sabbath to the max. Why? Because God *enjoys giving rest to those He loves!*

This verse goes to the heart of why we think this way. Because we worry. *“Work your worried fingers to the bone.”* We’ve talked about this truth before - that we cannot worry and pray at the same time. *The Sabbath is your opportunity to auto-correct worry by praying...*

Sabbath Concept #3: It’s my chance to CONNECT WITH GOD.

The Sabbath is more than just a “*day off.*” In fact it would be better for us to think of the Sabbath more as our “*day on!*” It’s our special day to connect with God. *The psalmist tells us that...*
“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10 ESV

There is a profound connection to the two verbs in this psalm. “Be still” is needed to “know” God. When we are in a hurry... when we misuse the Sabbath to get caught up with work, or to get personal chores done, or even just to fill our days with fun activities that we love to do... we miss out on the opportunity to “be still.” I don’t know if you’ve ever thought about it or not, but it takes effort for most of us to “be still.” We have to work at it. We have to schedule it. We have to be purposeful about it. (More in the hints...)

This is one of the reasons why we are so intentional about the evening service at CR and the quiet moments of communion in the middle of the worship. Many contemporary churches program every moment in the service for your full engagement. We break rules here at CR by stopping everything right in the middle and getting quiet. Even if just for 15 minutes of communion and prayer. So at least once in the week you have the stillness you need to know the Presence of God. But this doesn’t have to be just at church. Because we meet on Sunday nights, Sunday morning becomes your chance to be quiet before God. *You should be connecting with God on Sunday mornings, and then on Sunday nights at CR...*

Sabbath Concept #4: It’s my chance to CONNECT WITH CHRISTIANS.

Your Christian health depends on being connected to God and other people who believe, honor and serve God. Prioritize! Don’t give up!
“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”
Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV

You never know (a) how much you need this connection to others sometimes to be connected to God, and (b) how much you may influence others for God’s glory. By not showing up may actually be hurting someone else who needed your encouragement this week!

These are the principles of Sabbath. Now let’s get practical!

7 Hints for How to Rest Well on the Sabbath:

1. *Don't use this as time to get caught up or get ahead.* Actually this is one "hint" that the Bible is most explicit about. Read Exodus 16 and the manna. Double manna on the sixth day. No manna on the seventh. We misuse the Sabbath to our own peril. Instead of getting more done, we do less, because we don't use the Sabbath in the right way. We grow dependent on the "catch-up" day and miss the "connection" with God altogether.
2. *This is not a time to disengage the mind* - Don't use this as time to just watch TV all day. Satan will attempt to redirect us. Instead of feasting on the great things God has to encourage us, rally us, revive us... we're left with the emptiness of mind numbness.
3. *Work on my attitude of rest* - sometimes the most spiritual thing I can do is sleep. The attitude is that rest is a good and necessary and Godly thing to do.
4. *Day of rest doesn't necessarily mean doing nothing.* What can I do to most engage with God? Gardening? Going for a walk? The idea is that I don't do my ordinary work. For some of us, some level of bodily, physical exercise can help us to engage with God.
5. *Family time is important* - We must teach our children importance of devotions, sabbath and solitude. How will they learn if they don't see us doing it?
6. *This is a practice that takes preparation.* I have to plan ahead of time to engage and protect this solitude. To get the most out of it, I need to think about it ahead of time. There are some things I can do that lessen the work load of my Sabbath (food prep ahead of time). Other things help me to have resources available (like a good book that helps me to engage with God.)
7. *Everything in this world is aimed against this practice. Expect resistance.* The world is focused on a "day off." If anything, you should be thinking about this being a "day on." This is the day when you will be most connected to God, to other people, and to yourself. People can understand getting away for yourself, or with your loved one. But to get away alone with God - to be purposefully silent so you can better hear from God - is not something that comes automatically. Remember you are swimming upstream. You can't expect this to be easy to do. Ironic... but in this world, you'll have to work a little harder to receive the rest you need!

Conclusion: People get all messed up on this idea of Sabbath. In my prep I googled "Sabbath" and found all kinds of legalist ideas about a particular day (7th or 1st) or what kinds of work are allowed or not. Sunrise to sunrise or sunset to sunset. Nothing new. [Read Matthew 12. Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath and even he gets criticized by the religious leaders of the day. In fact the Bible says they "went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus." \(Matt. 12:14\) I guess they thought it was unlawful to heal on the Sabbath but it was ok to plot murder on the Sabbath!](#) My prayer for you today is that you won't be legalist, but rather opportunistic about the Sabbath. How much better might you be if you followed the owners manual - command #4 - with a Sabbath?

Let's pray.