

An Unexpected Sabbath with an eye toward Delight.

Week 7

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.” —Mark 2:27

God’s laws are not a restriction upon human freedom. They are a guide to achieving the full potential of life.

1. Life is busy, desire is infinite, and the result is _____.

“Our heart is restless until it rests in you.” —Saint Augustine

What is the answer to this restlessness?

2. The Sabbath means to _____.

Don’t you want to enter God’s rest? Have a break from working, wanting, and worrying. Just stop. It’s a way of just being and abiding. Sabbath creates restfulness. Let’s be “free from a try harder, do more religion.”

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from His.” —Hebrews 4: 9-11

God built a rhythm of rest into the DNA of creation. God filled the earth with His presence on the 7th day. The Father’s heart is behind the command to slow down one day a week. To stop and enjoy what we have instead of always wanting or doing more. Be content on the Sabbath.

Jesus on the Sabbath

3. What is the greatest commandment?_____.

For the Pharisees, the ten commandments provided great restrictions punishable by death. For Jesus, the Law outlined great freedoms that led to real life.

There are over 600 laws in the Old Testament that all had their purpose in the greatest commandment. Jesus told us “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments—Love God and Love People.” Let this guide your Sabbath.

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We don't want a misdirected zeal — The Pharisees turned the observance of the Sabbath into a legalistic ritual rather than a loving service toward God and others. We want to be about our Father's business not just ours. We are not called to look good on the outside but the inside, known for our mercy and love. Rules should not get in the way of loving. God says "Mercy is more important than sacrifice." When we look at Jesus, like that old book *What Would Jesus Do*, we learn what's most important. "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow." — Isaiah 1:17

Though God rested after creation, He did not cease to be active in love and mercy.

We may love God, but we may not know how to sit with Him anymore and listen to His voice. Jesus dealt with pressing concerns but over and over in scripture it says, "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." If Jesus needed this, how much more do we?

The fallacies of not resting

Rest provides tremendous blessing. We need the Sabbath to be present, come back to what is important and even to be effective. Just as our bodies need sleep our minds need space to think and create. To gain perspective and have room to hear God's voice.

4. Sabbath also means to _____.

"If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a **delight** and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. — Isaiah 58: 13-14

The Sabbath is an invitation to enter delight. God rested on the 7th day. He set aside an entire day just to delight in His world. Do you delight in yours? What could you do for twenty-four hours that would fill your soul with a deep throbbing joy? That brings wonder, awe, gratitude, and praise? The Sabbath is how we fill our souls back up with life.

Many of us need to get this message more than any other today.

5. A Sabbath to the Lord can also be translated as _____.

How is your Sabbath different from the rest of the week? How do you devote time to God differently? What about church? God invented church, it is for His purposes.

Exodus 20: 8-11 — “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord **blessed** the Sabbath day and made it **holy**.

God blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.

Remember on the Sabbath, **we get to Rest and Worship.**

Notice how easy, free and spacious, and non-legalistic this command is.

6. The Sabbath is _____.

Plenty of room for interpretation based on your Myers-Brigg type or stage of life. There's no formula or checklist or schedule.

“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.”— Colossians 2:16

What brings you delight? Delight is important. We need that je ne sais quoi to keep our lives fresh and bring refreshment to others.

7. Sabbath is an act of _____.

The Sabbath is a way of saying “enough.” A way to stand up against accumulation and an over-focus on accomplishment. A way to stand up for the right to rest. To trust God with our not doing; that He will provide and refresh.

Sabbath is a way of living with ease, gratitude, appreciation, peace, and prayer. A way of bearing fruit from abiding, not ambition.

“People who keep the Sabbath live all seven days differently.” - Brueggemann

8. Sabbath is a _____.

Maybe some of this teaching has resonated with you, perhaps you're still unsure. Go to God with your questions, read for yourself about what He says in the Word. Make little

steps. Let the Sabbath bring you closer to God and others and have some fun in the process.

Small Group Questions:

1. Share your Sabbath practices (if any) with the group. How does the Sabbath enrich your life?
2. What is Jesus teaching us about the Sabbath in Mark 3:1-5, Luke 6: 1–10, and Hebrews 4: 9-11?
3. How can you delight in the Sabbath? What brings you delight? Read verse Isaiah 58: 13-14?
4. How can you make the Sabbath a day set apart for God?

Homework:

Implement one to four of these practices for the Sabbath.

1. Make an effort to enter into rest one day this week.
2. Plan delightful Sabbath day activities.
Visit family and friends. Go for a hike. Explore. Write, paint, enjoy your family, garden, and home, or a good book. Do good—reach out to someone who needs it (often our greatest ministry is right in front of our nose).
3. Worship God by going to Church. If you are not comfortable going in person join a church on Zoom. *“The arena we live out our relationship with God is not the Prayer Closet but our relationship with one another.”* - Richard Rohr
4. Prepare during the week to keep the Sabbath.

Without some planning, Sundays can easily become just as busy as other days of the week. Plan the rest of the week with the Sabbath day in mind so that you have plenty of time to rest and delight. Run errands, clean your house, and get other tasks taken care of on Saturday when possible. That way, the Sabbath day really will feel separate and holy.

Let your purpose in keeping the Sabbath follow the greatest commandment, “To Love God and Love others.”

Extra Credit:

Read more about the Sabbath in Hebrews 4, Matthew 12:1&10, Matthew 12:20, Mark 2:23-28, Mark 3: 1-6, Mark 12: 30-31, Luke 6: 1-12, Luke 13: 14-15, John 5: 16-17, Romans 14:5, and Colossians 2: 16-17. These are just a few verses, google more if you like.