

Week 5- Understanding the sabbath and principles of rest

Intro:

Welcome back to our series, I'm Fine, Just Busy. As we've seen throughout this series, our culture is continually moving faster and faster. As technology advances and we become more efficient, you would think that we would gain more time or have more rest. Instead, the opposite has become true: we simply try to cram more and more into each day, then we get stressed out and burned out, and we crash, just to get back up and do it again.

What we want to do is step back from all the rush and hustle and find a way back to peace, rest, and a pace that can bring honor and glory to God without running us ragged.

Today, we are going to study the idea of the sabbath- God's created day for rest.

Resisting Culture's pull:

- Culture pushes the idea of getting ahead and using all of our time for peak efficiency. A day of Sabbath is not only unexpected in our culture, but it is looked at as weak or Unwise.
 - We see and feel the consequences of murder, adultery, lying, stealing, and the other ten commandments. We know that bad things happen when we ignore God's commands in these things. Yet somehow, culture tells us that there are no negative consequences to ignoring a day of sabbath. In fact, our business and life will just get better if we work hard all the time with no rest.

Ills: The consequence of never stopping to rest is similar to strip mining coal. You get a lot out of the ground very quickly, but you end up with a devastated environment for years to follow.¹

- We've looked at the effects of the rush in earlier studies, and our health and relationships with our family, friends, and church are paying the price of our hustle. We are running ourselves into the ground just to achieve a little bit more.
- We believe the lie that we can do more if we work nonstop rather than if we rest, recenter, and go out again to work. We are focused on short-term achievements rather than longevity and health in all areas of our lives.
- Biblically, we see a different approach to work and rest is put forward. The sabbath.

Rhythms of rest in the Bible

In Genesis 2:2-3, after God creates the world in 6 days, He rests, and He puts in place the principle of rest for humanity as well.

¹National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Service. (n.d.). Forestry and mining operations: Pollution tutorial [Web page]. NOAA. Retrieved June 13, 2025, from https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/tutorial_pollution/08forestry.html

“2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

God not only exemplified rest for us, but He also set aside the seventh day specifically for rest.

God created us to work, and to bring honor and glory to Him through our work, as we talked about earlier, but God also created us to rest, and in our rest, we bring honor and glory to Him.

Then, when God establishes the nation of Israel and gives them their laws, He once again commands that they intentionally set aside time to rest.

- Weekly: In Exodus 20, the fourth command was to keep the Sabbath.

“8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

This is not just some wisdom principle or “good idea” for the Israelites to consider. This is a part of their law that was to be taken seriously. On top of the Weekly Sabbath, the nation of Israel also had specific Holidays to pause, rest, and celebrate what God had done in their lives.

- As Christians, we do not live under the law of the Old Testament; instead, we are under a New Covenant in Christ. Romans 14:5 states:

“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”

Colossians 2:16-17 says:

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

New Testament Christians are freed from the command to observe the sabbath day according to the Old Testament. In Romans, Paul says that some may still observe it, and others may not, but both are able to glorify God in their actions. In Colossians, we see this once again that as Christians, we are not to be judged on how we observe the Sabbath, and that it was only a shadow of what was to come: Jesus Christ.²

- Hebrews 4 states that Jesus Christ is our rest.

² GotQuestions.org. (2021, January 4). *Does God require Sabbath-keeping of Christians?* Retrieved June 13, 2025, from <https://www.gotquestions.org/Sabbath-keeping.html>
[gotquestions.org+12gotquestions.org+12gotquestions.org+12](https://www.gotquestions.org/Sabbath-keeping.html)

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

The true rest that we rely upon is the salvation of Jesus Christ. We do not have to work to earn favor or be found righteous before God. Instead, we can rest upon the true sacrifice of Jesus and enter into rest from our works.³

Though the Sabbath day has been fulfilled in Christ and His work on the cross, the principles of sabbath rest are still applicable and vital for Christians today. We are freed from strict procedures and specific days given to the Israelites, but remember that a day of rest was sanctified by God at creation for ALL PEOPLE, not just the Israelites. We, then as followers of God should be intentional in developing sabbath principles and rhythms of rest into our lives.

Building a sabbath of delight, not of disengagement

- Sabbath rest is not just sleeping in, then sitting on the couch and watching TV. It is fully delighted in God's creation and salvation. It is to be more like a holiday. In fact, the word Holiday actually originates from Holy Day, which refers to the Sabbath. Days of rest are to be times of rest, trust, reflection, and celebration with meaningful community.^{4 5} But this kind of rest doesn't come easily. The easiest path forward isn't always the most restful path forward. Sometimes it is easier to do nothing all day than make the effort to go to church with your family or invite friends over for dinner. Sometimes it is easier to go to work on your day off and just finish a few things rather than spending a day with your family. Sabbath rest isn't about doing what is easiest for us, but instead about trusting God enough to slow down and celebrate who He is.
- The challenge then is to create a rhythm of Sabbath in your life, and begin to build a meaningful, delightful, and restful sabbath. Not everyone's sabbath has to look the same, but there are core principles that you build your foundation on.
 - Gathering with other believers to worship, learn, encourage, and serve.
 - One of the greatest blessings that God gives us is our church family. What an incredible blessing it is to gather with them and worship and learn. This is an opportunity to serve and encourage others, and to lean on them when you are struggling. At the core of our sabbath, gathering together with our church is vital.

³ GotQuestions.org. (2022, January 4). *What is the Sabbath day?* Retrieved June 13, 2025, from <https://www.gotquestions.org/Sabbath-day-rest.html>

⁴ DeYoung, K. (2013). *Crazy busy: A (mercifully) short book about a (really) big problem*. Crossway. (Ch 8)

⁵ Bethke, J. (2019). *To hell with the hustle: Reclaiming your life in an overworked, overspent, and overconnected world*. Thomas Nelson. (pg 144-145)

- Stepping away from the busyness of life so that you can reflect on and celebrate the things that God has done.
 - The world around us always demands more and is constantly shouting that we have not done enough. If you take a day off, you won't get the promotion, you'll fail the class, or you won't cover rent. It's not easy to just stop working. It takes reliance upon God and His provision to give up a day of work and just rest. But our God will not fail you. Don't make sabbath something you practice "when you can." Instead, make reliance upon God regardless of your present circumstance a priority every week.
- Spending time with others that you love (your family, close friends, people from your church).
 - Sabbath times are not meant to be spent alone, no matter how introverted you are. Take this time to intentionally gather as a family, or to invite good friends over to celebrate with. Holidays aren't meant to be spent alone, and neither is a day of real rest.

Conclusion:

All of us need rest. God created us as beings who work, then rest. Culture has tried to hack and cheat and maneuver around this truth, but it just leaves you worn out and burnt out. The sabbath law was fulfilled in Christ and His sacrifice for us, but the principles of sabbath still endure today. Be intentional in creating times of true sabbath in your life. For our homework this week, I want you to set aside 1 day where you can truly rest. I want you to put together some plans for what you will do on that day to rest well. How will you step away from the busyness of life? How will you create times of reflection and celebration? How will you create time to spend with others?

Thank you for listening, and we will see you next week.