

Sabbath

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We currently living lives we have never had to face before. The terms “social distancing” and “quarantine” are now a regular part of our vocabulary, and we are losing track of what day it is because, for the most part, they all feel the same. Yet, in the middle of all this difficulty, I cannot stop thinking about what a gift this season of slowing down truly is. As the whole world is forced to cease striving, and all of the busyness comes to a quick halt, we have a chance to realign our priorities. We have an opportunity to create healthy habits that will not only be good for us now, but for the rest of our lives.

We were created to Sabbath

God, in His wisdom, knew from the beginning of time that we would need help forming these habits, and so He built it out for us during the creation of the world. In the beginning of scripture, we find these words, *“On the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.”* (Gen 2:2-3). We later learn that this day of rest is called Sabbath. *“There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a sabbath to the LORD”* (Lev 23:3). Why should sabbath matter to us? Because the Lord cared about it so much that he made it a rhythm since the beginning of time. Because he knew we would need a day to reset, and because he created it for our ultimate good.

For our good and God's glory

So what exactly is the sabbath, and what does that look like in modern day life? I think of the sabbath in context of these four words: **stop, rest, worship, and celebrate**. In order to fully rest, we must first stop. **Stop** working, worrying, and wanting. It is a time to remind ourselves that unlike God, we cannot do it all. That our bodies and minds have limits, and that our homework will still be there for us to finish later. It is a time to enjoy what we already have, instead of allowing our mind to focus on all the things we want. Putting those things aside allows us to enter into true rest. **Rest**, while it can include sleeping (I am a big fan of naps myself), also means resting our mind, and spirit. This could involve doing creative activities like playing an instrument or painting, but could also mean simply taking a walk outside and enjoying nature. When our soul has space to properly rest, it is much easier for our hearts to turn to **worship**. We put God back at the center

of our heart, and praise him for who he is. And lastly, that worship then leads to celebration. We **celebrate** the beauty around us and the goodness of God and life in his world.

Sometimes, it is helpful to know not only what something is, but what it is not. This is not a day to power through a newfound Netflix series, or cross a ton of things off your to do list. It is not a “free day” to fill with whatever comes your way. But it also does not mean that you have to sit in silence the entire day and push out any thought that does not relate to God. There are no hard and fast rules on what your sabbath looks like, and in some ways, it is like your own mystery that you and your family get to solve. Think through what things make you feel alive; things that lead to real rest, worship, and celebration for you and do those things. Imagine a day that was one of your favorite days. What made that day so special? Is there a way you can try to add those special things to your sabbath? Think about what makes you feel tired and commit to stop (if you can) doing those certain activities during your sabbath.

There is always time to Sabbath

As with most things in life, this is something that takes practice. You probably won't feel like your life has totally changed after your first attempt. It may even be hard and frustrating, but keep going! Start where you are at. Ideally, sabbath is a full 24 hour time period, but if you only have an hour, or half a day, that is fine! Give God what time you do have, and he will bless it. This may sound crazy, but I believe that when you make sabbath a priority, all the things that needed to get done, still get done! I started practicing this discipline in college and can you believe that I always finished my homework by the time my sabbath started? While some of it does take discipline, I really do think that when we give our time back to God, he honors that and helps us accomplish all that we need to.

Friends, I am so excited for you to begin trying this practice! I hope it becomes something as life changing for you as it has been for me. Remember: Stop, rest, worship, and celebrate. Keep trying even when it doesn't feel great, and start small if you need to.

“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” **Psalms 46:10**