

Week 1: Sabbath as Rest

Description

Sabbath, as introduced in Genesis 2:2-3, is more than a mere pause from work—it is an invitation to rest in God’s finished work. When God rested after creating the world, He wasn’t weary; He was establishing a rhythm for all of creation. We, too, are called to rest—not because we’re physically exhausted, but to honor the work God has done and to trust that He is in control. In our modern world, we often struggle to embrace this kind of rest because of the constant pressure to perform.

A.J. Swoboda in *Subversive Sabbath* explains, “Sabbath is a scheduled weekly reminder that we are not what we do; we are who we are loved by.” Our identity, our worth, and our rest are found in the God who created and finished His work. By practicing a digital Sabbath, we engage in active trust, disconnecting from the tyranny of productivity and reconnecting with our Creator.

This week, let’s explore how we can reclaim rest—not as a luxury, but as a divine command that brings peace to our restless souls.

Discussion Questions

1. What does true rest look like to you, and how does it differ from the cultural idea of “rest” that is often tied to recreation or escape?
2. Read Genesis 2:2-3 alongside Exodus 20:8-11. Why is the concept of Sabbath so closely tied to God’s finished work in creation? What does this reveal about God’s intention for humanity?
3. How does the Israelites’ experience in Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:12-15) inform our understanding of Sabbath as liberation from both physical and spiritual slavery?
4. Read Matthew 11:28-30. How does Jesus’ invitation to find rest in Him relate to God’s original design for rest? What does it mean for us to “come to Him” for rest?
5. How does technology contribute to your sense of restlessness or hurriedness? What would it look like for you to embrace Sabbath rest through a digital detox?
6. What steps can you take this week to implement a rhythm of rest that mirrors God’s design for your life, particularly through a digital Sabbath?

Prayer Ideas

- Begin with a time of thanksgiving for the work God has already done in your life. Thank Him for His creation and the rest He offers.
- Pray for the courage to let go of busyness and embrace true rest in Him. Ask God to reveal areas where you might be resisting rest.
- Pray for the strength to prioritize a digital Sabbath, disconnecting from distractions to fully rest in His presence.

A four week curriculum for small groups on Biblical Sabbath and Rest. Meet each week as a small group and then commit to one day that week to each take a digital sabbath. For more, visit

<https://digitalsabbath.io/>.

Week 2: Sabbath as Resistance

Description

Sabbath is not just about resting; it's a powerful act of resistance. In a world that prizes efficiency, hustle, and the continual need to produce, observing the Sabbath boldly defies these norms. In Exodus 20:8-11, God commands His people to rest, declaring that no matter how busy life gets, rest is sacred. Later, in Deuteronomy 5:12-15, Sabbath is framed not just as a command but as an act of liberation, a reminder that we are free from the oppressive demands of a Pharaoh-like system.

In *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer writes, "Sabbath is a radical rejection of the lie that we must work ourselves into the ground to find meaning or worth." Technology, however, often feeds this lie, urging us to be constantly online, available, and productive. Sabbath resists this narrative and invites us to trust that our value doesn't lie in what we do but in who we are in Christ.

This week, let's explore how Sabbath can be a prophetic act of resistance against the pressures of modern life and a declaration of our ultimate freedom in God.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it so difficult for us to resist the pressures of constant productivity and availability? How does Sabbath provide a necessary counterpoint to this?
2. Read Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. How do these passages tie Sabbath to both creation and liberation? What role does rest play in freedom from oppression?
3. Reflect on Exodus 5:1-9. What can we learn from Pharaoh's oppressive demand for constant work, and how does this parallel our modern obsession with busyness?
4. Read Mark 2:23-28. How does Jesus redefine the purpose of the Sabbath in a way that challenges the legalistic views of the time? How does this speak to how we use Sabbath today?
5. What technological habits or cultural norms do you need to resist in order to embrace the freedom of Sabbath? How can these changes help you rest in God's sovereignty?
6. This week, how can you set intentional boundaries with technology to create space for Sabbath rest, thus resisting the need for constant digital engagement?

Prayer Ideas

- Ask God for the wisdom to recognize the pressures and cultural norms that keep you from truly resting.
- Pray for strength to resist the forces that demand your time and energy, and to embrace the freedom God offers through the Sabbath.

Week 3: Sabbath as Redemption

Description

Sabbath is deeply intertwined with redemption. The gospel itself is the ultimate story of rest—Christ’s work on the cross completed the work that we could never finish. The Sabbath command, which was rooted in creation and liberation, finds its fullness in the redemption Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection. In *The Rest of God*, Mark Buchanan writes, “Sabbath is not just about stopping; it’s about finding God’s rest in the midst of life’s chaos.”

Jesus’ work on the cross was the final and perfect rest. Hebrews 4:9-10 reveals that through Jesus, the ultimate Sabbath rest is now available to all who enter His grace. His death broke the chains of sin and gave us peace with God. This week, we focus on how the death of Jesus restores us to a place of eternal rest—one that transcends all physical rest and points to our eternal home.

By observing a digital Sabbath, we not only honor God’s original design for rest but also remember that we rest in the finished work of Christ. It’s a reminder that the world is redeemed, and in Him, we find the deepest rest for our souls.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways has Jesus’ death on the cross transformed your understanding of rest? How does the gospel provide ultimate rest?
2. Read Genesis 2:2-3 and Hebrews 4:9-10. How does the concept of Sabbath rest find its fulfillment in the work of Jesus?
3. Reflect on Matthew 11:28-30. What does it mean to “find rest” in Jesus, and how does this tie to the concept of spiritual redemption?
4. Read Colossians 2:16-17. How does Paul connect Sabbath with Christ, showing that the shadow of the law has given way to the reality of Jesus’ work?
5. How has the pace of modern life and technology kept you from experiencing Christ’s redeeming rest? How can a digital Sabbath help you refocus on His finished work?
6. This week, how can you use your time away from technology to reflect on the peace and rest that Christ has won for you?

Prayer Ideas

- Begin by reflecting on Jesus’ ultimate work on the cross. Thank Him for the rest He offers through His finished work.
- Ask God to help you experience the deep peace and redemption found in Jesus, particularly as you embrace Sabbath rest.
- Pray for clarity on how to use your digital Sabbath to center your heart on Christ’s redemptive work.

Week 4: Sabbath as Restoration

Description

Sabbath isn't just about rest—it's about restoration. It's a time to renew our bodies, minds, and spirits, to heal from the exhaustion that comes from life in a broken world. In Mark 3:1-6, Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath, demonstrating that the purpose of Sabbath is to restore and make whole. God's vision for the Sabbath is not just a cessation of work but a restoration of what is broken.

In *Subversive Sabbath*, A.J. Swoboda explains, "Sabbath is God's time for healing—a day when broken things are mended." We often think of restoration as physical or emotional renewal, but it's also spiritual. Technology, for all its advantages, has a tendency to dehumanize us, pulling us away from genuine relationships and distracting us from true healing. A digital Sabbath is a powerful practice to restore our relationship with God and with one another.

This week, let's explore how Sabbath is a practice of restoration, not only in our relationship with God but in our relationships with our own hearts and with others.

Discussion Questions

1. In what areas of your life do you need restoration? How might observing Sabbath bring healing to these areas?
2. Read Mark 3:1-6. How does Jesus' healing on the Sabbath demonstrate the restorative purpose of this day? How does this reshape your understanding of rest?
3. Reflect on Matthew 12:9-14. What does Jesus teach us about doing good on the Sabbath? How does this relate to God's intent for restoration and healing?
4. How has technology or constant digital engagement hindered your ability to experience restoration? What changes would allow you to experience more healing?
5. How can you use your Sabbath time to restore broken relationships, whether with God, others, or yourself?
6. This week, as you disconnect from technology, how can you prioritize activities that restore and renew your mind, body, and soul?

Prayer Ideas

- Thank God for the healing and restoration that He provides through Sabbath rest.
- Ask God to show you specific areas of your life where you need renewal, and pray for His healing power to flow in those areas.
- Pray for wisdom in how to use your digital Sabbath to foster restoration in your relationships and in your spirit.