



PRACTICING SABBATH

“Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God.”

Exodus 20:8-10a

“

Sabbath is not a reward for hard work. Sabbath is a gift that precedes work and enables us to work...as with God's grace, rest is never a reward; it's a gift.

Rich Villodas

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Sabbath is a gift. It is a gift from God to regularly enter into rest. The word Sabbath in Hebrew is “shabbat,” which literally means to stop. For the Israelites, this meant that they were to take a full 24-hour day to stop working and enter into rest and enjoy God. Sabbath is actually a representation, one day a week, of the ultimate rest that is to come. Sabbath is not meant to turn into a legalistic practice where you just do it to “check off the box.” Rather, it is meant to be entered into intentionally, ready for a day of rest, delight, and worship.

Many people have not allowed themselves to delight in anything at all, and this is why many people have trouble with Sabbath and resting. In our busy lives and culture, just the thought of taking a Sabbath can seem impossible. Think about your typical week for a moment. What fills your time? Perhaps work, emails, your child’s sports commitment, and errands, are a few that come up for you. Maybe you feel like you never stop. Maybe you feel like you are able to stop a little, but do not feel refreshed or renewed by the end of it. It is in this very context where we find Sabbath as an invitation to enter into true rest and delight in the Lord.

You may be wondering, “what do I actually do on Sabbath then?” Well, what is restful for you and what is worshipful? Here are a few ideas: making a new meal, eating out at a favorite restaurant, reading (Scripture and/or other books), enjoy friendships and/or family, turn off your phone, turn off your email and social media, go on a walk, enjoy nature, spend time in prayer, take a nap, go to bed early, journal, watch the sunset, play an instrument, be creative, draw, paint, and so on.

Sabbath is not the same as your “day off.” On your day off you run errands, do chores, seek to entertain yourself, etc. Sabbath is a day for the Lord where you stop toiling. So to practice Sabbath well, it will take some intentionality. Don’t toil. Plan ahead! Run the errands, buy the food you need, run the errands, prepare the candles, etc. before Sabbath day comes.

PRAYER & PRACTICE

About 10 minutes:

Ask the Lord...

- *“Lord, how does the idea of practicing Sabbath make me feel? And what is behind these feelings?”*
- *“Lord, what are difficulties in my life that can hinder me from practicing Sabbath?”*

About 10 minutes:

Ask the Lord...

- *“Lord, what is rest for me? How do I find delight? What are some specific ways I worship and feel connected to you?”*

About 10 minutes:

Ask the Lord...

- *“Lord, what is a realistic time-frame and day I can begin practicing Sabbath? And, Lord, what can I do on my sabbath that would be restful and worshipful? If you’re married, talk with your spouse about this as well. If you have kids, ask the Lord how you can incorporate your children into practicing Sabbath as well.”*

When: _____

How Long: _____

Ideas of What I Can Do: _____