

**Sermon Series:** Productive: Finding Joy In What We Do

**To be used with:** Session Six: Give Work a Rest

**Sermon Title Possibilities:**

The Joy of Rest

Finding God on the Sabbath

**Scripture:** Exodus 31:12-17

**Connection to Unit Theme:** *Productive: Finding Joy in What We Do* is a six session study on developing a Christian work ethic. These text-based sermon outlines will cover the same Scripture passages and topics as are being studied in the small groups, but with a different perspective. This will allow you as the pastor to reinforce the session without repeating it. Session 6 is called “Give Work a Rest.” The Point of the session is “Rest is a gift from God for His glory and your benefit. This sermon provides helpful reminders that support this truth.

**Introduction:** We need to learn balance. We are a tired people. Workaholism is no longer a symptom but a way of life. It is most unfortunate that we deplore drug and alcohol addicts but somehow promote and admire the work addict. William McNamara, author of *The Human Adventure*, has said, “Possibly the greatest malaise in our country today is our neurotic compulsion to work.”

Burnout, overwork, and nervous breakdowns were not a part of God's plan and design for us. An antidote exists—Rest. Why do we need to rest?

### **I. Rest is a pause from labor to reflect on God.**

Sabbath means rest. It implies a cessation, a stop, a break. The Sabbath was exemplified by God when he rested from his Creation work. He did not rest because he was tired. He rested because he had completed his work. But in doing so he provided a model for us to follow.

To rest is to stop. It means that one day a week we stop doing what we normally do. If you are plumber for one day you don't plumb. If you are a student for one day you don't study. If you are a painter for one day you don't paint.

When we stop, here's what we are to do:

- A. Look *upward* to God. Rest reminds us of who God is and his role in our life. We ask ourselves, “Where is God in my life?”
- B. Look *backward* at our work. Rest is a time for a personal check up. We ask ourselves: Was it done for God?
- C. Look *forward* to the future. When we rest in the biblical sense, we affirm our intentions to pursue a Christ-centered tomorrow. We ask ourselves, “Am I going with God?”

### **II. Rest is a gift from God that benefits you (v. 14).**

Note the words: *for you*. The Sabbath is set apart *for you*. Can you believe it? God knew that we could not run full throttle. He knew we needed a day set apart to rejuvenate and to recharge our batteries. The Sabbath is a day for you.

Rest and relaxation are not optional. Rest was never meant to be a luxury, but a necessity for growth, maturity, and health. We do not rest because our work is done; we rest because God

commanded it and created us to have a need for it. The Sabbath was made for man because God knows that our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being demands periodic breaks. The old proverb is true, “If you don’t come apart and rest awhile, you will come apart.”

### **III. Rest is a solemn day that honors God (v. 15).**

First the Sabbath was holy or set apart for you. This time God said that this day is holy or set apart to the Lord. The Sabbath is a holy day. It’s God’s day. The word *holy* literally means set apart or different or unique. This day is different from the other six. On the other six you can work but on this day—it is different—you don’t. It is a holy day. It is God’s day in the same way that the first ten percent of your income is God’s money.

### **IV. Rest is a sign that distinguishes God’s people (vv. 13, 16-17).**

The covenant was an agreement that the people had with God. He would be their God; they would be his people. It carried all kinds of wonderful benefits, as well as, consequences. One of the signs that showed that God’s people were keeping the covenant was their keeping the Sabbath. Taking the time away from their labor, which would have been very difficult in an agrarian society, was a sign of trust that God would provide and protect them. Again, just as God can do more with the ninety percent of our money when we give him his first ten percent, God can accomplish more with our time when we set aside one day out of seven for him.

What do Chick-fil-A and Hobby Lobby have in common? Several things. One is that both are owned by Christian men who operate according to biblical principles and one on those to keep the Sabbath, therefore, they are not open on Sunday. They observe a Sabbath and both of those companies are extremely profitable. Makes you wonder why any business is open on Sunday, doesn’t it? Their action carries another reality. It is a sign of their dependence on God.

By the way, when you go to church every Sunday, it is a sign to your neighbors that you have a covenant relationship with God. You are depending on him. You know he will protect and provide for you.

Rest is not an option. It distinguishes the believer's life. It empowers us for greater growth.

Billy Graham once said that if he had the last ten years of his life to live over, he would withdraw more often for times of rest, meditation on the word, and prayer so he could give himself completely to the battle when he needed to. I suspect the same could be said for us. He knew that God’s rest is necessary for spiritual growth.

Augustine wrote, “Man was made for God and is restless until he rests in God.” Until we enter God’s rest we will never fully enjoy life. Until there is a balance of rest of work, we will never achieve full effectiveness. Until we rest in God, we will never know God’s rest. The root of our problem may not be physical but spiritual. Spiritual growth necessitates God’s rest.

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