



THE WAYS

REST and Reflect. Make time in your week to step back from work, school, and stressful demands. Since Christ has freed us, we no longer have to be obsessively driven. Take a walk, play, nap, meet up with friends, share a meal, or just take some time in solitude.

1. What is your favorite leisure activity?

READ Mark 14:23-28

1. How do you think the Pharisees would define Sabbath?
2. How do you think Jesus would define Sabbath?
3. How is Sabbath *for* humans? (ie What benefits does it bring?)

Scenario: For some reason, the workweek is still defined as 40 hours. You are, however, expected to respond to emails at off hours and work until the job gets done. Work consistently spills over into home time. You realize that there isn't a day of the week that you don't check your email, and when you aren't doing work work, there is house work that needs to be done. It feels like there isn't enough time in the week to get everything done.

1. If you feel like this, what is your first reaction to being told not to do work for a day?
2. What expectations and responsibilities push a person to live like this?
3. What costs or benefits might there be if you were to take a day with no work?
4. What are some steps you could take to move towards Sabbath?

In our world, when we think “rest” we think “sleep” but rest is so much more than napping. Rest can be working out. Rest can be reading. Rest can be taking a walk. Rest can be going out with friends. It is not the absence of anything that could be considered work, it is simply taking advantage of God's good creation and gifts to you. *Resting and Reflecting* reminds us that we are not in control and that God doesn't solely desire our service but also our joy. Don't let *Rest and Reflect* become constricting rules, but let it free you to live the good life God has in store for you.

PRAY TOGETHER. (Pray in gratefulness for the gifts God has put in your life for you to enjoy. Now, Rest and enjoy them.)

DAILY Devotional

MONDAY: *READ:* Gen. 2:2-3. *THINK:* Notice the work that God finishes: the work of creation. There is still much more God can and will do, but instead of getting a jump on His next week, God rests. There is always more work, there will always be one more thing you can do or that is expected of you. *Rest and Reflect* anyway. Set a day aside where work takes a back seat to rest. *PRAY:* to God about your difficulties with rest.

TUESDAY: *READ:* Matthew 11:28-30. *THINK:* A yolk is most often placed on two animals so they can work side by side. Where does it feel like Jesus is in this analogy? Is He the farmer or is He at your side as a fellow worker? The yolk of Jesus isn't easy because there is little work to be done. It is easy because He works at your side. *Rest and Reflect* by letting Jesus shoulder the burden and work at your side. *PRAY:* through areas in your life where you feel burdened and ask Jesus for help.

WEDNESDAY: *READ:* Ex. 20:8-10. *THINK:* None of the 10 Commandments are as easily disregarded by Christians as the Sabbath. No one says "Adultery was a restriction under the Law, I live in a new covenant of Grace." The command to remember the Sabbath is not gone, but remains today. Ignoring Sabbath is harmful to you and your faith. We *Rest and Reflect* because it is a part of God's good plan for our lives. *PRAY:* that the Spirit would continue to sanctify you towards restfulness.

THURSDAY: *READ:* Psalm 55:4-8. *THINK:* Sometimes the circumstances of life feel so oppressive or overwhelming that rest seems impossible. For David, the only way he felt like he could find safety and rest was to fly away. If you are in a period of anguish, do not let the encouragement to *Rest and Reflect* be one more way you feel like you are falling short. Sin breaks into our lives and cuts deep. Remember God rescues, but also that He sits at your side in hardship. *PRAY:* the Spirit's presence to be known in the life of someone experiencing anguish.

FRIDAY: *READ:* Acts 16:13-15. *THINK:* Paul and his friends went on the Sabbath to find a place of prayer and instead found people. Instead of finding a different place to pray, they saw the opportunity to live out their faith in conversation. Taking a Sabbath can easily be a restrictive and judgemental practice. Instead, we find Paul *Resting and Reflecting* by putting his faith into action for those around him. As you *Rest and Reflect*, let people trump expectations. *PRAY:* that God would give you good opportunities to care for people.

SATURDAY: *READ:* Heb. 4:9-11. *THINK:* *Resting and Reflecting* is about more than just enjoying life, it is enjoying life in relationship to God. Sabbath rest is God's rest. It is His gift to you and it is by His invitation that we enter it. God invites you into His presence to rest with Him and to know that He is in control. *Rest and Reflect* and lean hard on God's promises and power. *PRAY:* that God would show you the places where He promises you more.