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Resting Our Weary Minds



Part 51 (000917AM)

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As you open to our exposition of [Colossians 3:1-17](#), may I make one thing perfectly clear: God wants your mind. More than anything else God wants to have the control of your mind.

- If God has your mind** - He has your body,
- If God has your mind** - He has your emotions,
- If God has your mind** - He has your appetites,
- If God has your mind** - He has your time,
- If God has your mind** - He has your money.

See the point? The one who gets your mind gets it all. All the rest are just the scraps.

Your Mind is the Prize!

The battlefield is for our minds. Satan is seeking to steal the minds of God's children. Your mind is the key to knowing God. Only a mind stayed on the Lord can have perfect peace. A personal Sabbath rest is the road to God's perfect peace filling your mind! Sadly it seems that Satan has caught many believers off guard. While they carefully avoid many obvious dangers, perhaps the most powerful mind robber has been overlooked. Satan is neutralizing the power of a godly mind little by little every day through the onslaught of the media that overflows us like a raging flooded river every day.

Has it troubled you yet that our modern [1][1] media has reset the Moral Acceptability Threshold? Here is the test - "Do the things that once offended you now entertain you?" asks media [2][2] critic Al Menconi. "Are you able to enjoy the company of television programs, videos, and movies that have values diametrically opposed to yours? This moral drift is important to understand, for it continues unabated. Extrapolate ten or twenty years into the future, and it is frightening to imagine what media content awaits us.

Has it troubled you yet that our modern media has reset the Shock Threshold? In the past if we saw blood, killing, or tragedies on the evening news, it would disturb us for weeks. Today, however, the rule of the newsroom is, "If it bleeds it, leads." Movies are worse. Beginning about thirty years ago, succeeding waves of movies relied on more and more violence to attract crowds. Audiences became numbed to the repulsiveness of each level of violence, so directors had to enhance the horror to maintain interest. Such common fare no longer elicits anguish, no shock over the sin.

Has it troubled you yet that God defines spiritual adultery in [Ezk 23:21](#) as the sin when His people spend and invest more time getting help, counsel, direction, and advice from TV, secular books, unsaved professionals, magazines, commercials, and the internet -- than from God and His Word?

Has it troubled you yet that today's teens (the 31 million 12-19 year olds, some of whom may be living in your house) have a world that has been defined for them **more by** computer games, TV, movies, the Web, and advertisements for Nike, Sony, Tommy Hilfiger, Nintendo, Addidas, Gap, Old Navy -- **than by God's Word?** Half of all teens are from a broken home, 63% have both parents working. And all of them down deep need adult guidance. In **A Tribe Apart**, author Patricia Hersch said in 1998, "Every kid wished they had more adults in their life, especially that their parents would invade their lives."

Has it troubled you yet that television's effects are well known to be disastrous to the life of any child or adult? Statistics by secular research have concluded what undisciplined TV watching causes. Let me apply them to our culture as Paul lists the same sins in Colossians 3:

- ✓ A shortened attention span. **That means a regular TV watcher can't** think about God very well.
- ✓ Reduced linguistic powers. **That means a regular TV watcher can't** talk about God very well.
- ✓ Limited capacity for abstraction. **That means a regular TV watcher can't** dream about heaven very well.
- ✓ Blur of adulthood and childhood. **That means a regular TV watcher can't** grow in Christ very well.

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Has it troubled you yet that to attract and hold its audience, the TV industry feels it has to parade the taboos of culture: adultery, promiscuity, homosexuality, incest, violence, and sadism. As a result, the lowest of activities become commonplace, and even morally cachet.

Has it troubled you yet that what you choose for your mind today will shape your eternal future?

If you choose to watch godlessness-	it will callous you.
If you choose to watch sensuality -	It will defile you.
If you choose to watch violence-	It will desensitize you.
If you choose to watch evil-	It will distance you.
If you choose to watch worldliness-	it will discourage you.
If you choose to watch Satan's mind-	you will forfeit Christ's.

Let's be blunt: Don't say you are committed to Christ unless you are pursuing the mind of Christ! God has a will for your mind! Saturated with the word.

Please open with me to [Colossians 3:1-17](#) as Paul tells us that to have Christ's mind we need to put off some things and put on others!

Do we need to rest and to cease from our wandering minds? Yes, and that is what this Old Testament picture teaches us New Testament saints! God offers rest! Not too long after Christ's teaching on the Sabbath rest, He invited His disciples minds to be filled with the serenity, tranquility, and solitude of rest. Look at [Mark 6:31](#):

And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

As Jesus and the disciples needed to cease from their labors and rest, so should we regularly cease. Our spiritual lives also need a time of reflection, a time of rest, a time of renewal, and a time to refocus. We have learned the New Testament perspectives on the Sabbath, [\[3\]](#) [\[3\]](#) some of which were:

- 1) The Lord's Day is not simply a "Christian Sabbath" moved from the 7th day to the 1st!
- 2) The Old Testament Mosaic Sabbath day was superseded by the "Lord's Day" (the day Jesus was resurrected, Sunday), and became the Church's day of worship.
- 3) The New Testament character of the Lord's Day was worship and so our Lord's Day ought to be observed as much as possible in the same way.
- 4) New Testament Christians do not have to follow the Mosaic Sabbath's stringent command to desist from labor and to rest because that command was not transferred to the Lord's Day.
- 5) However, wise Christians will incorporate the Sabbath rest principle into their observance of the Lord's Day as best they can, because the rest principle is noted in our cosmos, so that there is a genesis rhythm to life, which, if observed, will benefit us *physically* and *spiritually*.

So the rest God commends is a ceasing from the blur of daily life, pausing, and resting in God by a focused time of seeking Him. This rivets our minds back upon Him. Does God have and hold your mind this morning? Is it fixed upon Him? Do your thoughts have a default setting so that whenever they are not on your work or duties of the moment, they revert back to the Lord?

The rewards of a Godward mind, a mind stayed on the Lord, a mind that is renewed and fixed on the King above, is beyond description! Listen to the dividends of the Godward mind that RESTS in the Lord:

[Isaiah 26:3](#): You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.

[Isaiah 48:18](#): Then your peace would have been like a river.

[Matthew 11:28-29](#): "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29. "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

In our Sabbath study we have seen:

1. First, SABBATH PURPOSES: What did **Jesus say about the Sabbath**? As Lord of Sabbath He said one thing: The Sabbath was made for man to worship God. It was not a prison, a straight jacket, a death squad to hunt Sabbath breakers; no, it was a delightful offer of spiritual communion with God.
2. Second, SABBATH PROMISES: **Do we need to rest and to cease from our wearying schedules**? Yes, and that is what this Old Testament picture teaches us New Testament saints! God offers rest!
3. Third, SABBATH LAWS: **Should we really meet on Sunday** or on the Sabbath day, which is Saturday?
4. Fourth, SABBATH BLESSINGS: How **do we apply all this to our lives**? How do we cultivate a rest, a cessation from weariness in our lives? How do we make worship of the Lord special on our Day of Gathering, the Lord's Day?
5. Fifth, SABBATH THIEVES: What **takes away the blessings** and promises of the rest God offers?
6. Sixth, SABBATH PLANS: What are **some simply wonderful plans** we can make to heighten our worship, our communion with God? Some real blessings can come with some small changes and some preparations.
7. Seventh, SABBATH PICTURES: What are **the illustrations** that Jesus, His apostles, and all the Old Testament saints used to show the plan of God? God's holidays, the feasts. And each is a wonderful picture and pathway to deepening our devotion to Jesus.
8. Finally, SABBATH REST: What does God want more than anything? Our minds. What is the key to our spiritual success? A mind that rests upon, and is fixed upon the Lord God Almighty!

So why do we need to rest our Godward minds on a regular basis? Because of two dangerous

THE EXHAUSTING PACE OF OUR LIVES WEARS DOWN THE GODWARD MIND: For most of us, the Lord's Day [4][4] is the best day to rest, because Christianity's past influence has made it the day most people have off. And Christians ought to make use of the day for rest—not legalistically, but in thankful observance of the genesis rhythm. For some, that rest may be sleep. For some, it may include some activity. If so, we must keep in mind the distinction between the older understanding of recreation as *re-creation* and the modern pursuit of recreation. In broad strokes, today's idea of recreation is a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure. It's not re-creative but destructive. The older, wiser way of re-creating is the way to go. Forget your regular labors, and re-create with *conversation* with family and friends. A common, unrushed meal around a table is so important. Especially re-creative are *picnics, walks, swims, or playing* with the kids, wrestling on the floor, shooting baskets with the boys. Listening to *good music* is also a marvelous way to re-create. A great "read" in one of the Christian classics is a time-proven way to restore the soul as well. Think of it—the Lord's Day, a day to show love for Him—a day to break your frantic rhythm and allow Him to recharge you—a *day of grace!*

So the exhausting pace of the world wears down our Godward minds, also --

THE INESCAPABLE MEDIA [5][5] OF OUR WORLD NEUTRALIZES THE GODWARD MIND: Right now television has the culture by its throat. Neil Postman warned that in the years ahead, we will live increasingly in fictions: We will turn on our virtual-reality systems and lie back, experiencing heavenly pleasures of sight and sound in a snug, electronic nest. The real world will almost be totally blotted out from our experience. That is the world of the future, and the society that will embrace the lie of the Antichrist!

"At MTV, we don't shoot for the 14 year-olds, we own them." BOB PITTMAN, former MTV chairman

Has it troubled you yet that according to media expert, [6][6] Dr. Ted Baehr, teenagers watch fifty movies a year in the theater and view another fifty a year on video. Eighty percent of these movies are PG-13 or R-rated? And research has demonstrated that we store three trillion "videotape" images in our brain by the time we are thirty years old. But, worrisomely, we have no volitional control over selective forgetting. Once the images are there, we must then live with the consequences of that visual imprint. Realizing that the graphic content of R-rated movies is now irrevocably loaded into the memory banks of our youth gives us legitimate cause for alarm. Movies continue their slide in the direction of violence, nudity, and objectionable language. Many blockbuster movies now have elements of all three. The tendency in this direction has been mainstreamed and seems hardly to elicit a yawn. Children at younger and younger ages are drawn into the movie/video habit, especially with the common use of videos for baby-sitting. As parents become more overloaded, it is simply too tempting to put in a video and place the children before the set. They are well behaved and even entranced. And for busy, stressed-out, exhausted parents, there is nothing so attractive as quiet children. Toys are now commonly linked to movies that are R-rated. For example, the sci-fi movie *Starship Troopers* has graphic violence, nudity, and objectionable language. Alien bugs impale and behead humans, even sucking out their brains. (This from the same director whose last film was the pornographic NC-17 rated *Showgirls*.) Uninformed parents who see these alien bugs on toy shelves labeled for kids four and up are likely to think the movie is acceptable viewing. They would be mistaken.

Has it troubled you yet that our modern media has reset the Boredom Threshold? After one eight-year-old boy had been watching television all Saturday afternoon, his father politely asked him to turn off the set. When five minutes of silence had elapsed, the boy moaned, "But Dad, it's so lonely."

Has it troubled you yet that our modern media causes Addictive Behavior? As a generalization, when media is available, people use it as a first option; the younger the age, the truer this principle holds. And once fully indoctrinated into this world of media, it is hard to break away. Media increasingly defines our world, and taking the media away is like taking our world away. When media is gone, there is seemingly nothing left, no inner reality, no relationships, no comfort, laughter, music, or security.

Has it troubled you yet that our modern media gives a More Negative View of the World? The world is already in enough trouble, and we don't need to make it appear any worse than it is. But in the world of media, bad news sells. According to media critic [7][7] Ben Wattenberg, bad news is big news. Additionally, good news is no news. So if you want to get on the air, the formula is simple: Say something terrible. Fictional programming isn't any better than the newscasts. The average prime-time TV schedule presents the viewer with 350 characters each night, seven of which will be murdered on screen. "If this rate applied in reality, then in just 50 days, everyone in the United States would be killed," explains media critic [8][8] Michael Medved.

Has it troubled you yet that our modern media Increases Exposure to Sexual Material? The pervasiveness of media leads to an almost unavoidable exposure to sexually explicit material at ever-younger ages. Observes adolescent [9][9] medicine specialist Victor Strasburger, M.D.:

Teenagers watch an average of three hours of TV per day, listen to the radio for an additional one to two hours, and often have access to R-rated movies and even pornography long before they are adults. According to the best study from the late 1980's, the average American teenager views almost 15,000 sexual jokes, innuendoes, and other references on TV each year. Fewer than 170 of these deal with what any sane adult would define as responsible sexual behavior. Add to that the 20,000 commercials per year each teenager in America sees with implicit messages that sex is fun, sex is sexy and everyone out there is having sex but you and you have at least the possibility of a fairly important influence.

Has it troubled you yet that renowned media experts, like Professor Neil Postman of New York University, say that between the ages of six and eighteen, the average child spends some 15,000 to 16,000 hours in front of the TV, whereas he spends only 13,000 hours in school?

Has it troubled you yet that Postman says that during the first twenty years of an American child's life, he will see some one million commercials, at the rate of about 1,000 per week.

Has this troubled you yet? I am aware [10][10] of the wise warnings against using words like *all*, *every*, and *always* in what I say. Absolutizing one's pronouncements is dangerous. But I'm going

to do it anyway. Here it is: It is impossible for any Christian who spends the bulk of his evenings, month after month, week upon week, day in and day out watching the major TV networks or contemporary videos to have a Christian mind. This is always true of all Christians in every situation! A Biblical mental program cannot coexist with worldly programming.

- [Phil 2:1](#): Let this mind
- [Col. 3:16](#): Let the word of Christ richly dwell
- [Rom. 12:1-2](#): Present yourself and renew your mind

So God's goal is that we cultivate the mind of Christ.

And the scandal is that Christians neglect this area immensely.

But the cure is available this morning: PLAN how to saturate your mind with the Word.

How? Remember Paul's list of [Colossians 3:1-17](#): Thirteen Put-offs and a Dozen Put-ons!

Translated this morning, I would say:

1. Stop watching TV, movies, video games, and videos for some planned periods of time.
2. Start replacing these "Godward mind deadeners" with times of systematically and prayerfully reading and studying God's word
3. You have the time -- take it!

Let's choose the mind God has willed us to have today. **HOW DO WE RECOVER OUR GODWARD MIND? WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO RETURN TO OUR REST IN JESUS?** The Navigators, a worldwide discipleship and Bible memorization ministry has published [\[11\]](#) [11] the following list of practical guidelines:

1. **GUARD AGAINST MEDIA CONSTITUTING YOUR ONLY BARRIER TO LONELINESS:** It is easy to lapse into a media-saturated existence, which eventually leads to a media-dependent existence. When lonely, bored, or stressed, the first thing we often do is activate our media surrounds, which usually means turning on the television. In a previous era, we would instead have perhaps visited a friend.
2. **ESTABLISH MEDIA LIMITS:** If media in all its forms continues to escalate in visibility and dominance, there obviously comes a point when we have to impose limits. Decide such limits as an act of intention rather than randomness. For example, consider putting some limits on television. It is acceptable for TV to be an interlude, but it should not become a way of life. Have standard rules that make sense. Don't force yourselves into re-deciding every week. Possible suggestions (not laws!) might include: Allow up to seven hours of TV (including videos) each week. Require all viewing to be preplanned or intentional. No TV is allowed until homework or chores are done. One hour per day can be viewed only for approved shows. Also, limit the number of channels; be leery about expanding. More is not necessarily better. Limit the number of TVs as well. Although the majority of children today have a television in their own room (fifty-eight percent), mostly it is not a good idea. For one reason, we want to live as family; otherwise "home is where we live alone together." For another reason, it is essential that parents keep an eye on what their children watch. Beyond television, consider also establishing limits on Nintendo, Sega, Walkman, and Internet use.
3. **HAVE NON-ELECTRONIC CHILDREN'S PARTIES:** Consider not renting or viewing any electronics for birthdays or slumber parties. Cultivate other activities instead. For our boy's birthdays, we would always have two special events: marshmallow fights (they are safe and don't hurt) and darts thrown at balloons.
4. **RESIST ADVERTISEMENTS:** Ads are omnipresent in our "engineered-messages" lives. If we try to completely avoid them, we will not succeed. The next best thing is to discipline ourselves and train our children to be wary.
5. **ZAP THE SET:** Consider always having the remote nearby when watching television. Use it freely. Also use it as a threat and a teaching tool. If something objectionable comes on, hit the mute button, switch the channel, or turn off the set.
6. **DISCONNECT CABLE SELECTIVELY:** If you have cable, and most people do, there are some things best to avoid. Most cable operators will allow selective disconnection from those elements that you find objectionable. When media expert Bob DeMoss was asked if there was any reason people should have HBO and MTV in their homes, his answer was immediate: "None."
7. **FAST FROM THE MEDIA:** Throughout God's Word fasting occurs often. Media is perhaps one of the most important kinds of fasts. Have a no-television week or month. Don't listen to the news perhaps for a week. Pray in the car instead of listening to the radio. Or simply enjoy the silence for a change. Cancel the newspaper or magazine and donate the funds rather to the fasting and hunger relief ministry. Create an intentional solitude.
8. **REGAIN CONTROL OF THE VALUE SYSTEM:** "Parents can no longer control the atmosphere of the home and have even lost the will to do so," asserted Professor of Social Thought [\[12\]](#) [12] Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind*. Sadly, many of us have essentially and tragically lost control of the value system of our children, often compliments of the media. If we still hope to influence them in the direction of virtue, it is important to make our move early.
9. **HATE EVIL:** Evil, for reasons not completely clear to me, is always more interesting. This obviously is not a statement about the way things should be, but simply a statement of the way things are. Once we understand this, much that is mysteriously wrong in life becomes clearer. For example, if we had forty-nine stations broadcasting healthy, virtuous programming and only one station broadcasting violent or sexual programming, most of America would be tuned into the one channel--even church people. Evil is always more interesting. Understanding the allure of evil explains why we watch so much of it, even when it is so clearly destructive. The sheer volume of evil our nation is exposed to on a daily basis is one of the most disturbing effects of the proliferation of media. The only remedy I know is two thousand years old: "Hate what is evil; cling to what is good." [Romans 12:9](#)
10. **SUBSTITUTE SOOTHING MUSIC:** Music fills the air and the ears of America, especially our youth. For many youth (perhaps most) music heroes have even greater stature than movie or sports stars. To simply tell these kids to stop listening is not realistic; they won't. But if we can give them an alternative, perhaps. At least we can try. And hope. And pray. Looking beyond the interests of our children to our preferences, there is a wide choice of what we might listen to. My advice: Listen to that which calms the spirit.
11. **ENCOURAGE READING** Someone once said, "Having your book made into a movie is like having your oxen made into bouillon cubes."
12. **CREATE A READING EVENING:** Consider having a regular or episodic family reading evening.
13. **VISIT USED BOOKSTORES.**
14. **HAVE A FAMILY OUTING:** The library is as enjoyable a place to visit as the movies, but only if you start young enough.

We have finished our look at the Biblical teaching on the Sabbath. Jesus clearly sets the tone for the controversies of the day and speaks to us to this day on the Sabbath.

1. First, **SABBATH PURPOSES:** What did **Jesus say about the Sabbath**? As Lord of Sabbath He said one thing: The Sabbath was made for man to worship God. It was not a prison, a straight jacket, a

- death squad to hunt Sabbath breakers; no, it was a delightful offer of spiritual communion with God.
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LEGALISM STEALS OUR REST: A Personal Sabbath Rest: *Helps us Counter the claims we are required to worship on the Sabbath day.* It, like the other Old Covenant holy days Paul mentions, is not binding under the New Covenant. Legalism [13][13] is the religion of human achievement. It argues that spirituality is based on Christ plus human works. Our manifesto under God's grace to combat the legalists in our day is found in [Colossians 2:16-17](#).

We resist anyone who makes conformity to man-made rules the measure of spirituality. We are complete in Christ, who has provided complete salvation, forgiveness, and victory. Paul reminded the Galatians, who were also beguiled by legalism, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery" ([Gal. 5:1](#)).

Paul reminded the Romans, "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" ([Rom. 14:17](#)). That the dietary laws are no longer in force was illustrated by Peter's vision ([Acts 10:9-16](#)) and formally ratified by the Jerusalem Council ([Acts 15:28-29](#)).

A festival was one of the annual Jewish celebrations, such as Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Lights (cf. Lev. 23). Sacrifices were also offered on the **new moon**, or first day of the month ([Num. 28:11-14](#)). Contrary to the claims of some today, Christians are not required to worship on the **Sabbath day**. It, like the other Old Covenant holy days Paul mentions, is not binding under the New Covenant. There is convincing evidence for that in Scripture.

1. First, the Sabbath was the sign to Israel of the Old Covenant ([Ex. 31:16-17](#); [Neh. 9:14](#); [Ezek. 20:12](#)). Because we are now under the New Covenant (Heb. 8), we are no longer required to keep the sign of the Old Covenant.
2. Second, the New Testament nowhere commands Christians to observe the Sabbath.
3. Third, in our only glimpse of an early church worship service in the New Testament, we find the Church meeting on Sunday, the first day of the week ([Acts 20:7](#)).
4. Fourth, we find no hint in the Old Testament that God expected the Gentile nations to observe the Sabbath, nor are they ever condemned for failing to do so. That is certainly strange if He expected all peoples to observe the Sabbath.
5. Fifth, there is no evidence of anyone's keeping the Sabbath before the time of Moses, nor are there any commands to keep the Sabbath before the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.
6. Sixth, the Jerusalem Council did not impose Sabbath keeping on the Gentile believers ([Acts 15](#)).
7. Seventh, Paul warned the Gentiles about many different sins in his epistles, but never about breaking the Sabbath.
8. Eighth, Paul rebuked the Galatians for thinking God expected them to observe special days (Including the Sabbath) ([Gal. 4:10-11](#)).
9. Ninth, Paul taught that keeping the Sabbath was a matter of Christian liberty ([Rom. 14:5](#)).
10. Tenth, the early Church fathers, from Ignatius to Augustine, taught that the Old Testament Sabbath had been abolished and that the first day of the week (Sunday) was the day when Christians should meet for worship. That disproves the claim of some that Sunday worship was not instituted until the fourth century.

[1][1] Adapted and quoted from Swenson, Overload, p. 137-160.

[2][2] Al Menconi, "Our Collective Soul Is Dying" *Minnesota Christian Chronicle*, 16 February 1995, p. 6.

[3][3] Adapted from, Hughes, *Disciplines of Grace*, p. 92-94.

[4][4] Quoted and some parts adapted from, Hughes, *Disciplines of Grace*, p. 92-94.

[5][5] Swenson, Overload, p. 137-160.

[6][6] Ted Baehr, "Miracle on Main Street?" *Focus on the Family*, April 1995, p. 2.

[7][7] Ben J. Wattenberg, *The Good News Is the Bad News Is Wrong* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1984), pp. 112 and 378.

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