

The Rhythm of Life



Finding Deep

Rest in Our Labor

Lesson 3: Sleep and Sabbath

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Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
(Matthew 11:28-30)

The Bible begins in Genesis portraying God doing two things: God _____ and _____.
God _____.

Our God is a working God. Our God is a resting God. Made in His image, we are to be a _____ people and a _____ people.

I. The _____ of eternal rest

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
And the effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and
trust forever.

My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.
(Isaiah 32:16-18)

Our promised rest is one of the already-but-not-yet realities we experience: For you have not yet come to the rest and the inheritance that the Lord your God is giving you. (Deut. 12:9)

II. The _____ of physical rest

When it comes to physical work, God has put _____ on our labor, and rest is to be built into the rhythm of our lives.

A. Sleep

1. Sleep is a _____ from God.

It is vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. (Psalm 127:2)

Sleep sings of the goodness and glory of God – how the Creator loves his creatures, replenishing them night after night, infusing them with vigor and new life, equipping them for each day. . . God designed us to need sleep, to have to cease our activity, lie down, and surrender ourselves into vulnerability, inactivity, unproductivity. (Henderson)

2. Sleep and insomnia are under the control of God's _____ . I Sam. 26:21, Esther 6:1

Ultimately it is God who allows you to fall asleep and who wakes you in the morning.

3. God never _____, which is why we can.

Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper;

The Lord is your shade on your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day,

Nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil;

He will keep your life.

The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in
From this time forth and forevermore. (Psalm 121)

In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O
Lord, make me dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:8)

The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed
on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, the
seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how.

(Mark 4:26-27)

While we sleep, God _____,
_____, and _____.

Our sleep is linked to our _____ in God.

Do not lose sight of wisdom and discretion. If you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. (Prov. 3:24)

Sleep is an admission of our creaturely limits and a confession that we are more than the sum of the tasks on our to-do list. When we sleep, we say, "I am not God, but God is. Glory be to his name!" (Henderson)

B. Sabbath

The Old Covenant Sabbath was a statement about the _____ of God. God is not a harsh taskmaster! He gives rest to His people.

God created our physical bodies to tire and need replenishment, both daily with sleep and more long-term with a day off. In both sleep and Sabbath God calls us to respect our _____.

We must be able to say, " _____!" in relation to our work.

In plowing time and harvest you shall rest. (Ex. 34:21)
Even in the _____ seasons of our lives, we need a day of rest.

Both sleep and the Sabbath remind us of our creaturely limits. We are not infinite in our power and our ability, but we know One who is. . . Setting aside a day free of work becomes an act of faith, as every Sabbath comes as an implicit question from God: Will you trust me? When we observe the Sabbath, we answer, “Yes, I trust you, God, to make up for the time I am refraining from working. I trust you to provide for me as I choose not to provide for myself. . . . As we lay down what burdens us and take up what replenishes us, we enjoy and honor the One who is life itself.” (Henderson)

III. The _____ of rest

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

(Heb. 10:1)

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. (Col. 2:16-17)

Recognizing that the Sabbath is a shadow keeps us from turning the shadow into law.

IV. Our _____ toward rest

God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. (Gen. 2:3)

The seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. (Lev. 23:3)

God's prescribed periodic rest is _____.

God's prescribed periodic rest is _____.

God's prescribed periodic rest is _____.

It is a Sabbath to the Lord in all your dwelling places.

(Lev. 23:3)

Our rest is for ourselves, but it is also for God. When we stop and rest, it is a message to the people around us that declares, "My God is not a harsh task master! He gives rest to His people."

V. Our _____ of rest

Sin twists God's good gifts.

A. _____ rest

Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands, so shall your poverty come. (Prov. 6:10)

Haven't you slept enough? (Mark 14:41)

B. _____ rest

When we find ourselves relentlessly driven, this is not from God.

We are tempted to think the opposite of an empty life is a full schedule, believing that our significance is found in activity.

Meaning is found in my _____ to God!

Our culture's messages:

You are what you _____;

you are what you _____

or what you _____.

God's message:

You are who you _____ to;

you are My _____.

VI. Our _____ of rest

For thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel,
“In returning and rest you shall be saved;
In quietness and in trust shall be your strength”
But you were unwilling. (Is. 30:15)

Whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. (Heb. 4:11)

These verses are primarily about salvation, but Colossians 2:6-7 assures us that the truths that lead to salvation are equally applicable to our spiritual walk.

We strive to enter God’s rest through

1. _____ . (Heb. 4:12)
2. _____ . (Heb. 3:13)

Let us be a body of believers who encourage one another to keep striving to establish a proper rhythm of work and rest in our lives.

Of the many books I read in preparation for this study, the most beneficial was *Tranquility* by David W. Henderson.

Application Questions

1. Consider your relationship to sleep. What wrong attitudes do you have about sleep? How can you be a better steward of sleep in your life?

2. Consider the habits of your life related to taking a weekly day of rest. How can you better honor the day of rest God desires you to take each week?

3. If a significant amount of your downtime is spent on media entertainment, list some ways you could better rest your body, mind, soul and emotions.

4. If you are retired, are you properly loving and serving God and people in your current balance of work and rest? How can you be a better steward of your retirement?

5. Read Hebrews 3:7-19, and list the words or phrases that describe what jeopardizes our spiritual rest.

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6. Hebrews 4:11 admonishes us to “strive to enter that rest.” How can you practically apply that verse to your life and the place of rest in it?
