

SABBATH



AGENDA

LESSON 1

Overview and Community

LESSON 2

What is Sabbath?

LESSON 3

Preparing for Sabbath

LESSON 4

Sabbath as Resistance

LESSON 5

Joy in Sabbath

LESSON 6

Time with God in Sabbath



REMEMBER THE SABBATH

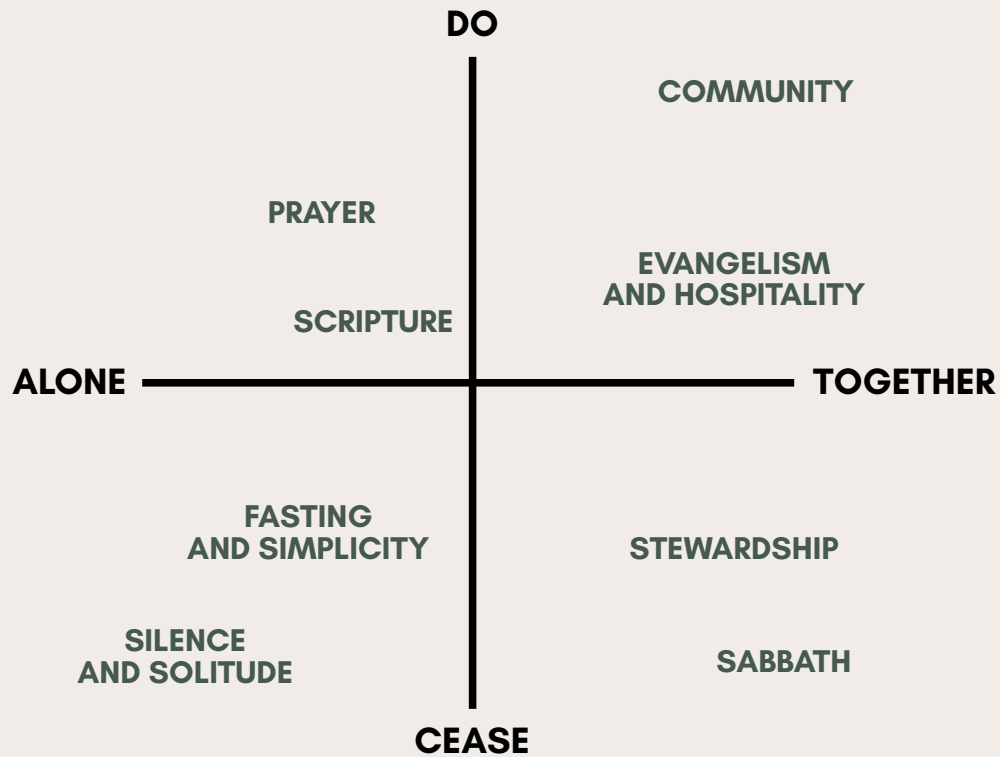
GROUP SCHEDULE

Meeting	Video Sessions	Homework
1	Watch Sessions 1 & 2	page 30
2	Watch Sessions 3 & 4	page 31
3	Watch Session 5	page 32
4	Watch Session 6	page 33

LESSON 1

Overview and Community

The Well-Ordered Life Series

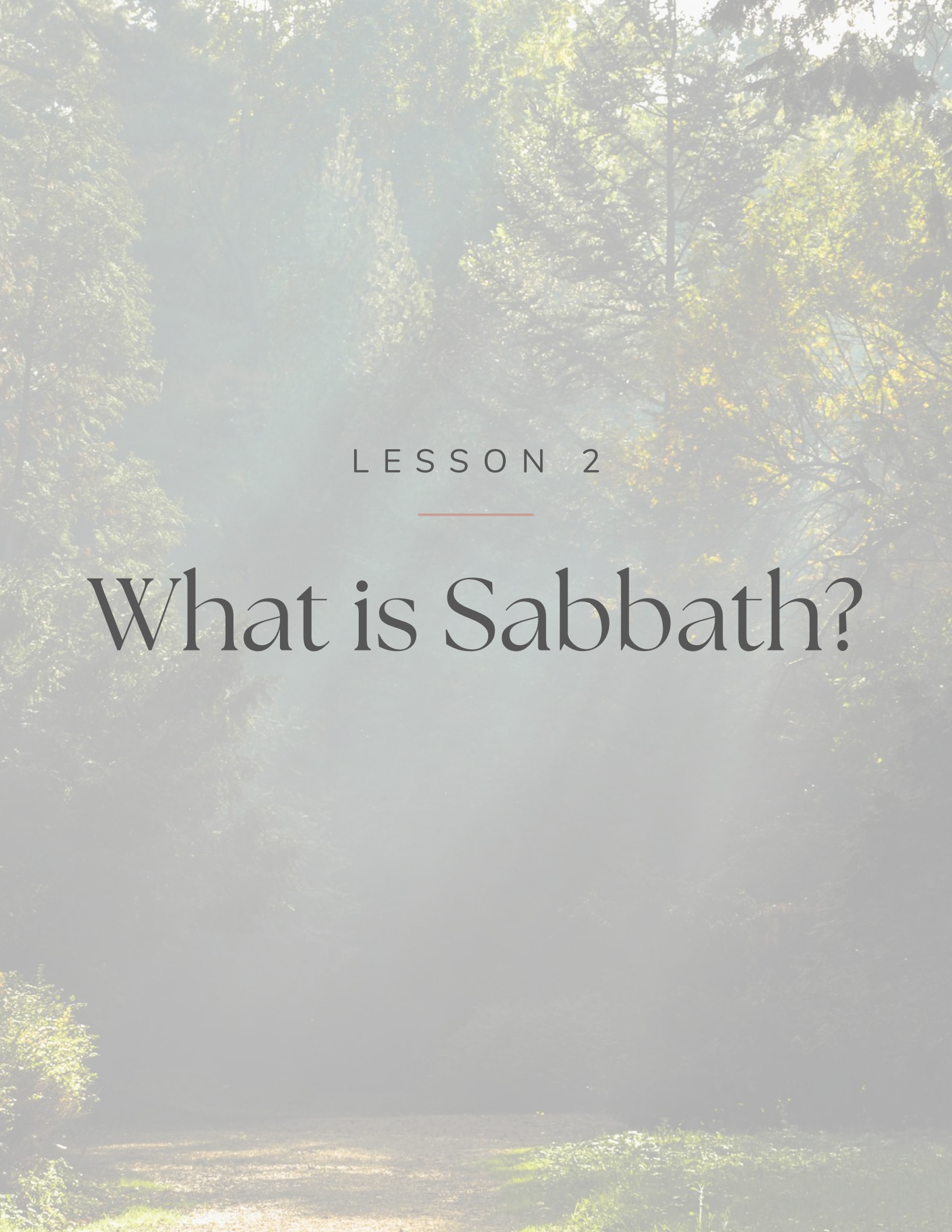


Notes

REMEMBER THE

SABBATH



A photograph of a forest path with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a warm, golden glow. The path is covered in fallen leaves and dappled with sunlight and shadow. The trees are tall and dense, with green foliage. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

LESSON 2

What is Sabbath?

The Origin of Sabbath

“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.” || Gen. 2:2-3, NIV

God Made a Day

God Rested

The Goal of Creation

“Imagine you have worked all day on your yard. Trimming hedges, cutting grass, primping landscape. At the end of the day, you take a nice hot shower, open a cold beer, and sit to gaze at your yard and delight in the work you’ve done.” || John Mark Comer

REMEMBER THE **SABBATH**



The Command to Keep 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. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.” || Exodus 20:8-11, NLT

Discussion Questions

Read Exodus 20:8-11.

What do these verses tell us about Sabbath?

What do we notice about the Sabbath commandment as compared to the other commandments?

Take a look at the overall commands God gives in verses 1- 17. Which commandments has God gone a step further to clarify and give context for?

Sabbath as Worship and Mission

“Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. 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. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your oxen and donkeys and other livestock, and any foreigners living among you. All your male and female servants must rest as you do. Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt, but the Lord your God brought you out with his strong hand and powerful arm. That is why the Lord your God has commanded you to rest on the Sabbath day.” || Deuteronomy 5:12-15, NLT

Sabbath in the New Testament

In their zeal for righteousness, the Pharisees created laws around the Sabbath and "work" that overshadowed God's intention for this holy day.

Discussion Questions

Read Matthew 12:1-8 and Mark 2:23-28.

What are the Pharisees confronting Jesus about in each of these accounts?

How does Jesus respond?

What does Jesus mean when He says, “The Sabbath was made to serve man, not man to serve the Sabbath”?

The big argument that comes up around Sabbath and Christians is that because Jesus fulfilled the law, we no longer need to keep the Sabbath holy. What do you think? Would Jesus still have us observe the Sabbath? Why or why not?

Sabbath was Made to Serve Humankind

So, should we observe it? Absolutely.

In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. You should each be fully convinced that whichever day you choose is acceptable. Those who worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor him. Those who eat any kind of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks to God before eating. And those who refuse to eat certain foods also want to please the Lord and give thanks to God.

|| Romans 14:5-6, NLT

REMEMBER THE **SABBATH**

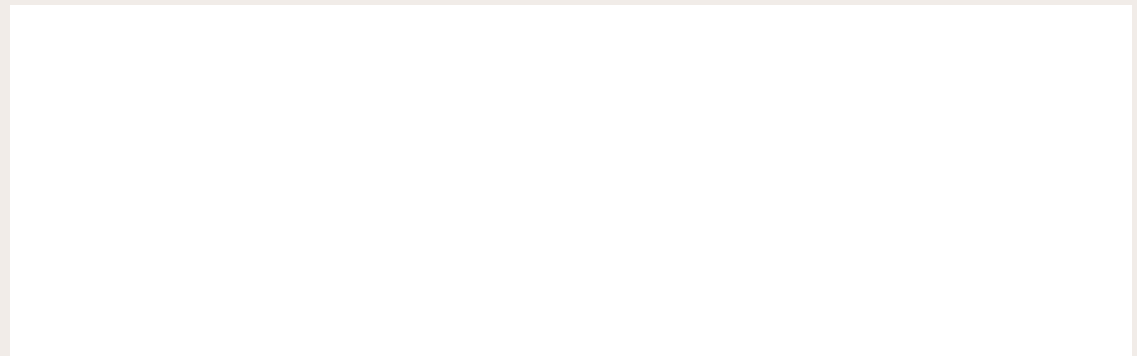


Discussion Questions

What is God showing you about Sabbath that makes you want to follow His command to rest?

How does God's gift of the Sabbath inform us about His character? How does this differ from how you may have interpreted His character if you saw Sabbath as a rule?

Is there anything about a life following a Sabbath rhythm that has you excited? Nervous? Doubtful?



Additional Notes



A photograph of a forest path with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a warm and peaceful atmosphere. The path is covered in fallen leaves and dappled sunlight. The trees are tall and dense, with green foliage. The overall tone is soft and natural.

LESSON 3

Preparing for Sabbath

Preparing for Sabbath

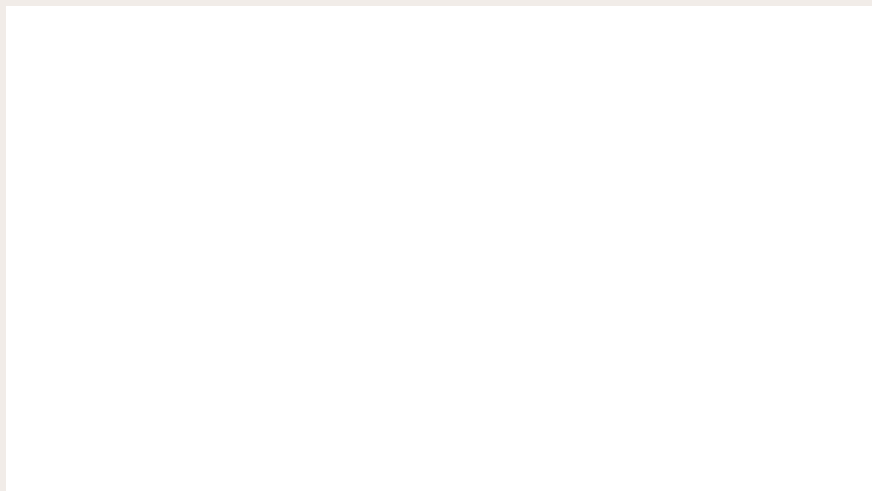


Guiding Questions

Do you find an open invitation to Sabbath more or less frustrating than if there were specific guidelines?

How might a Sabbath based in rules rather than rest be impacting your vision of Sabbath as you get ready to build a practice of rest?

What can we gather about what Jesus tells us about the heart of Sabbath?



REMEMBER THE **SABBATH**



Sabbath Requires Preparation

Prepare your heart.

Prepare your schedule.

“

SABBATH IS THE
PHYSICAL AND
EMBODIED PRACTICE
OF PUTTING OUR
TRUST AND JOY IN
GOD AND HIS
PROVISION FOR US
REGARDLESS OF
WHAT WE DO.

”

Consider

The Bible never says which day we must Sabbath.

Determine when you would like to start your Sabbath practice.

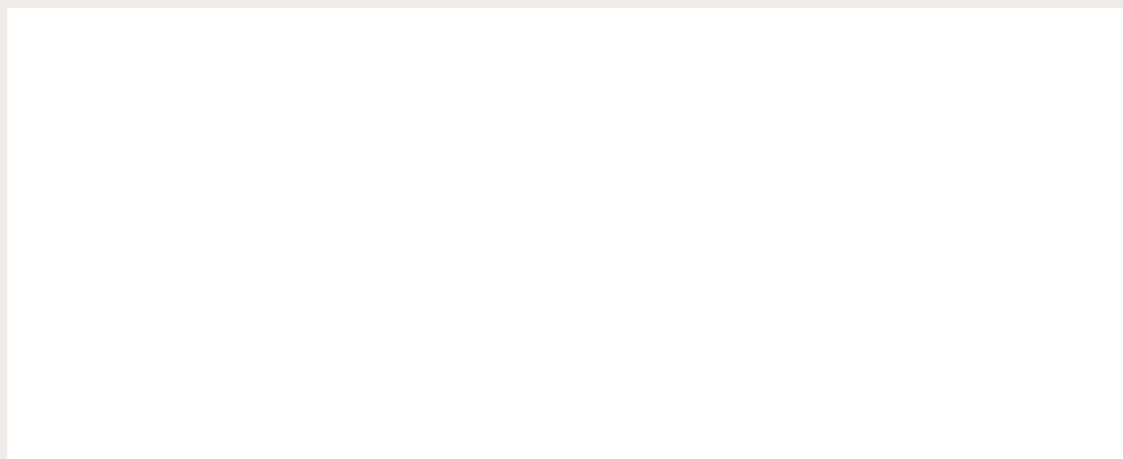
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Discussion Questions

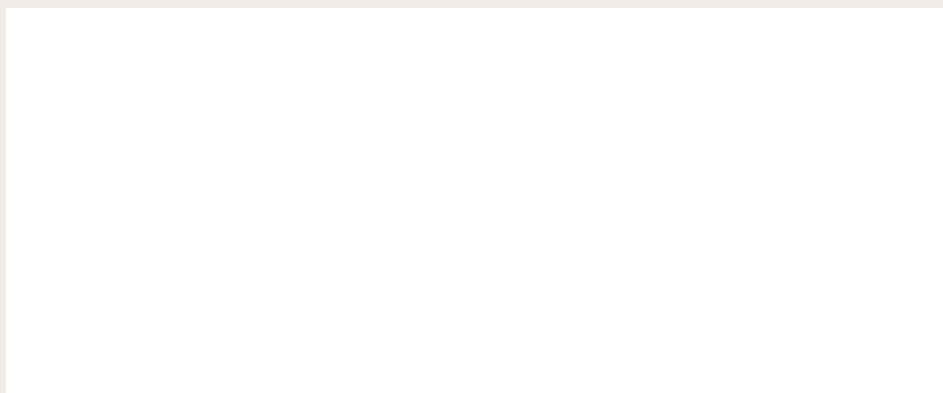
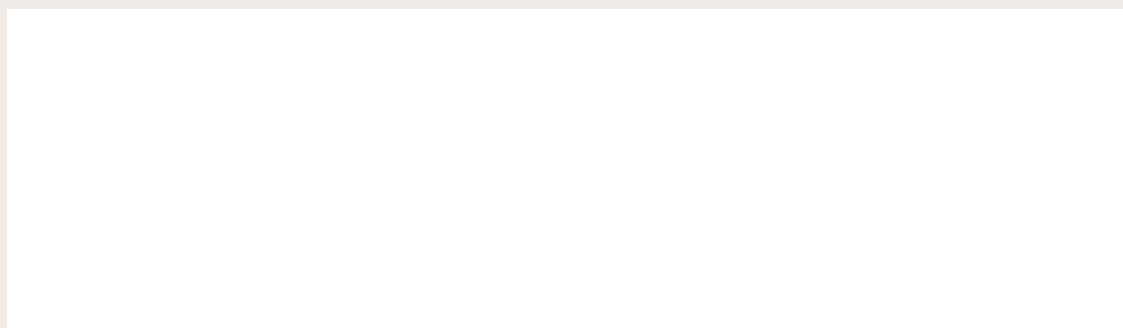
What day/chunk of time are you thinking might serve your Sabbath practice?

What do you see getting in the way of protecting that time?

Make a list of tasks that you will need to move or get done ahead of time so that you can rest on your Sabbath.



Additional Notes



A photograph of a forest path with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a dappled light effect on the ground and foliage. The path leads into the distance, flanked by dense green trees and bushes.

LESSON 4

Sabbath as Resistance

Sabbath as Resistance

What habits, activities, and mindsets can we take a break from on Sabbath in order to fully experience time with God and rest our souls?

“All week we may ponder and worry whether we are rich or poor, whether we succeed or fail in our occupations; whether we accomplish or fall short of reaching our goals. But who could feel distressed when gazing at spectral glimpses of eternity, except to feel startled at the vanity of being so distressed?” || Abraham Joshua Heschel

“Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.”
|| Matthew 6:21, NLT

“ IT TENDS TO BE
THAT THE HARDEST
THINGS TO GIVE UP
ON THE SABBATH
ARE THE THINGS
THAT HAVE THE
TIGHTEST GRIP ON
OUR SOULS. ”

REMEMBER THE

SABBATH



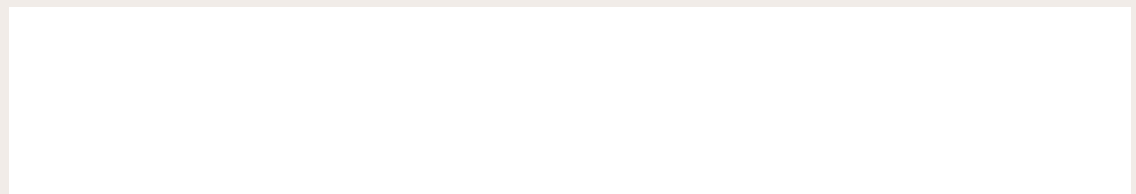
Discussion Questions

Do you feel pressure to work 7 days a week? Do you constantly feel as though you do not have enough time to get everything done?

When you've had times when you have nothing to do...what does it feel like in your body?

Do you feel guilty taking time off from your work? What is your mindset around choosing to do nothing when you could be doing something...or to do something unproductive when you could be doing something productive?

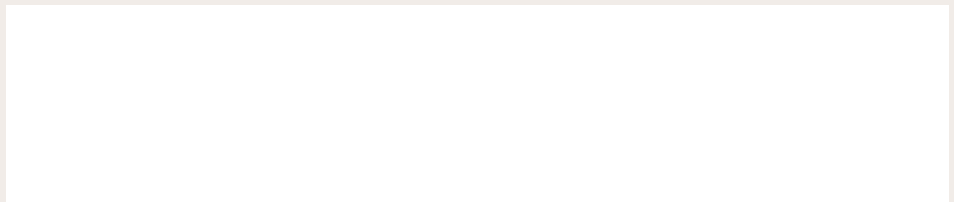
What would be the most difficult thing for you to give up on Sabbath? How might that inform where your treasure is and what has hold of your heart?



Busyness and Hurry

"Multitasking is the drive to be more than we are, to control more than we do, to extend our power and our effectiveness. Such a practice yields a divided self, with full attention given to nothing."

|| Walter Brueggemann



Two Types of Busyness

Activities that are carefully selected to fulfill a purpose

Unending effort to keep up with everyone else

Markers of a Hurried Life

From Ruth Haley Barton, "Embracing the Rhythms of Work and Rest"

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Irritability | ☐ Escapist behaviors |
| ☐ Hypersensitivity | ☐ Disconnected from identity/calling |
| ☐ Restlessness | ☐ Not able to attend to human needs |
| ☐ Compulsive overworking | ☐ Hoarding energy |
| ☐ Emotional numbness | ☐ Slippage in our spiritual practices |

Discussion Questions

How many of these markers would you say occur regularly for you?

Choose 1 or 2 that are the most present and describe how they show up.

Resisting Busyness

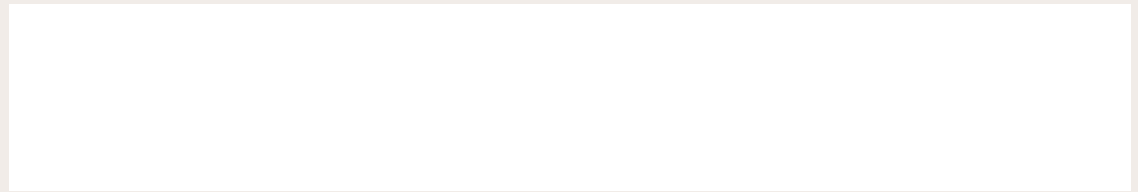
The first step to resisting busyness and hurry is the painful work of examining everything we hurry to accomplish and begin to envision what it might look like to live out a schedule that reflects what is actually important to us.

Then, we need to examine the overall pattern of busyness in our entire week, not just the Sabbath.

Discussion Questions

What habits of hurry come to mind as ones that need to be addressed in order for you to live a life marked by rest?

What obstacles or difficulties might come up as you attempt to resist those habits?



Homework

Coercion

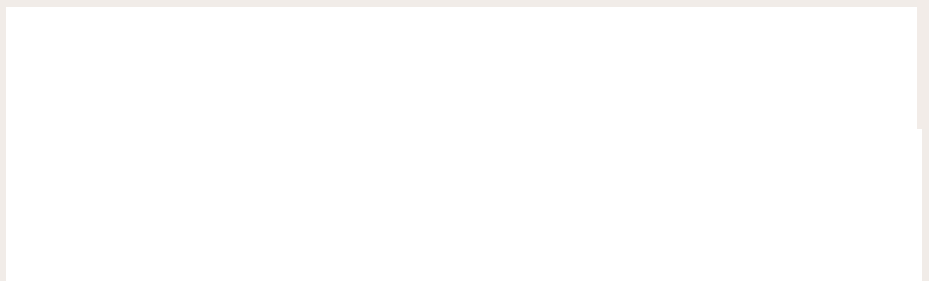
Begin by thinking about what in your schedule might need to go. What work can you let go of, what obligations or responsibilities will survive without your attention on Sabbath, what can you say “no” to?

Hurry

Choose 1 un-hurry tool that we listed earlier and do it for the whole week. You might challenge a spouse or partner to do it with you.

Make a goal of beginning 3-5 days this week by just sitting before God. Before you look at your phone, just find a quiet spot, and sit silently.

Rich Violldas gives a great prompt for prayer when his mind wanders. He says, “Here I am Jesus.” Even just 5 minutes a day is a great place to start. Take some notes in your phone or notebook about how you felt during these times. The days you began with stillness, how did it impact the rest of your day if at all? Did it get easier?



A photograph of a forest path, likely a dirt or gravel trail, winding through a dense forest. Tall evergreen trees line both sides of the path, their branches and needles creating a canopy overhead. Sunlight filters through the leaves, casting dappled shadows on the path and the surrounding foliage. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

LESSON 5

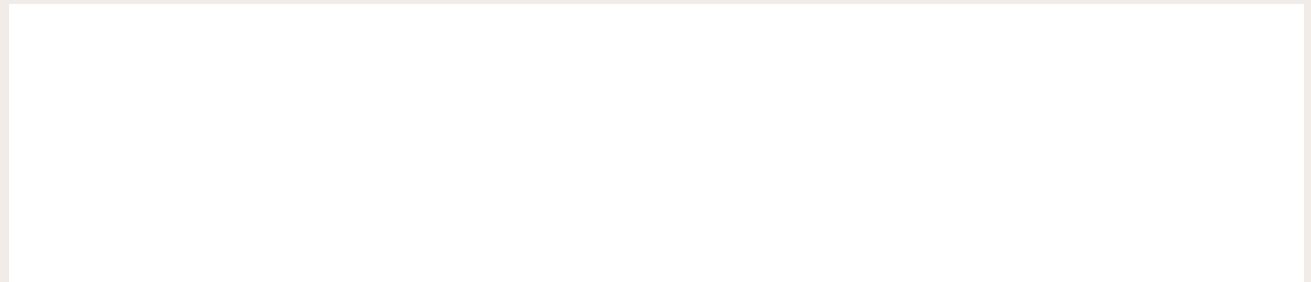
Joy in Sabbath

The Gift of Sabbath

When you give a gift, what is the very best way someone can show you they love it or to show their gratitude? To enjoy it!

“The Sabbath is an invitation to enter delight. The Sabbath, when experienced as God intended, is the best day of our lives. Without question or thought, it is the best day of the week. Sabbath is the holy time where we feast, play, dance, have sex, sing, pray, laugh, tell stories, read, paint, walk, and watch creation in its fullness. Few people are willing to enter the Sabbath, sanctify it, to make it holy, because a full day of delight and joy is more than most people can bear in a lifetime, let alone a week.”

|| Dan Allender



“Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.”

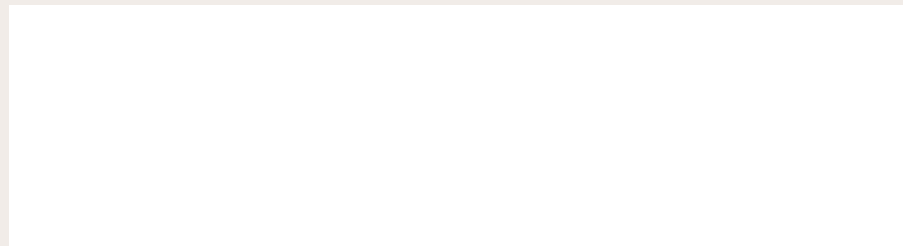
|| Matthew 6:21, NLT

Discussion Questions

What are you thinking or feeling right now about joy?

Do you regularly experience joy?

How does the Sabbath that Dan Allender describes sound different from what you might have previously thought God would want us to do on Sabbath?



REMEMBER THE **SABBATH**

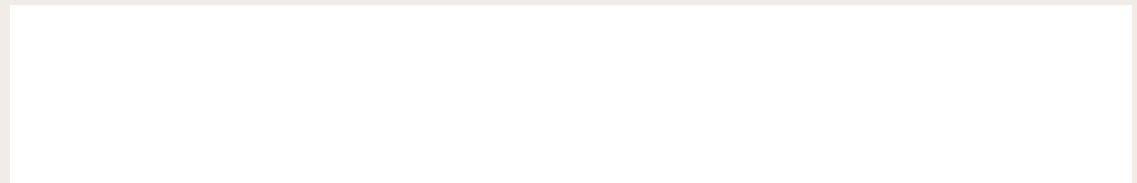


The Joy of Sabbath

“The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works,
before his deeds of old,
I was formed long ages ago,
at the very beginning, when the world came to be
Then I was constantly at his side.
I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in his presence,
rejoicing in his whole world
and delighting in mankind.” || Proverbs 8:22-23, 30-31, NIV

Experiencing Joy and Delight in Sabbath

Experiencing joy and sharing that joy with God is something He longs for.

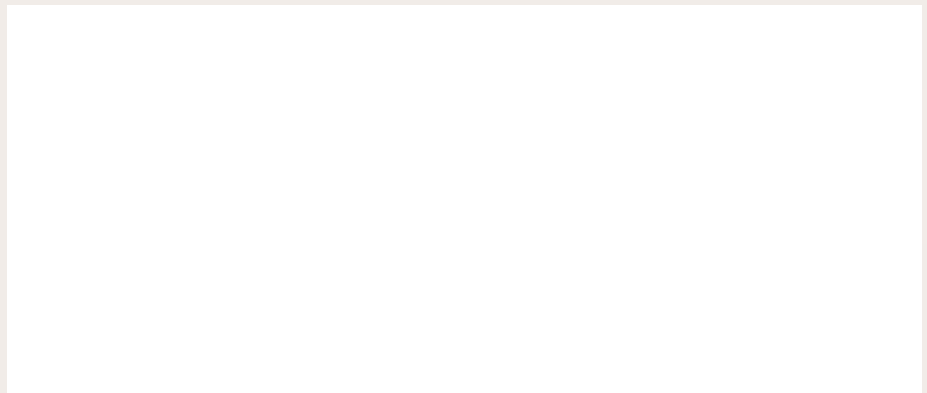


Discussion Questions

Have you considered joy as essential to your relationship with God before?
How does that sit with you?

How might a focus on joy change your relationship with God?

What do you find joy in? Do you have hobbies?



Sabbath in Community

“On Sabbaths God also invites us to slow down to pay attention and delight in people. In the Gospels, Jesus modeled a prayerful presence with people—whether it was a Samaritan woman, the widow of Nain, the rich young ruler, or Nicodemus. He seemed ‘into’ the beauty of men and women crafted in God’s image. This has become a spiritual discipline for me. I try, for example, to walk slowly, leaving lots of free space and time on Sabbaths so I can stop for unexpected conversations with neighbors, family, and shopkeepers. I ask God for the grace to leave the frenzied busyness around me and be a contemplative presence to those around me.” || Peter Scazarro



Discussion Questions

What is your initial reaction to a community dinner to enter into the Sabbath?

What are you thinking this might look like for you?

Is this low-hanging fruit for you or will this be a stretch as you grow in your Sabbath practice?



Homework

Be Joyful

As you practice Sabbath this week, focus on where you find joy. When you recognize moments of joy, fun, delight, and play, thank God for them. Make that joy a complete act of worship by inviting Him into your joy and thanking Him for every good and perfect thing you get to experience.

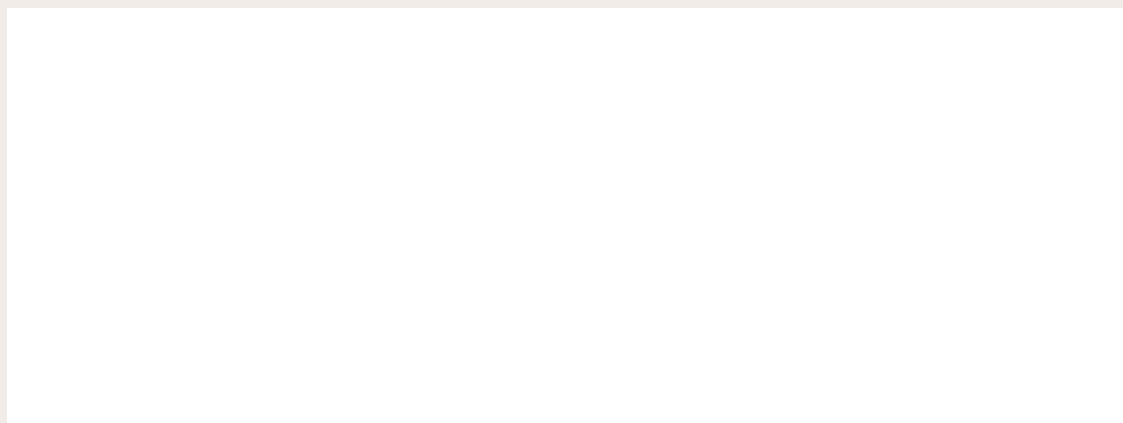
Reflect

Reflect on the day and where you encountered God throughout it.

How did you encounter delight today? Where did you find joy? How did you play, laugh, have fun, and enjoy every good thing today? Was this at all difficult for you?

Take some time for thanksgiving and let God know everything you are thankful for as you remember your Sabbath day.

Additional Notes





LESSON 6

Time with God in Sabbath

A God-Less Sabbath

Self-care leaves us feeling empty and wanting because it doesn't meet our needs as a whole being who needs rest for our mind, body, and soul.

Self-care doesn't allow us to be cared for.



Discussion Questions

What words or ideas stick out to you?

What ideas in this prayer counter our 'self-care' culture?

Are there any things mentioned here that resonate with you?

A God-Filled Sabbath

Sabbath rest is about making space for God to give us what He has for us.

We are all made uniquely in the way our bodies and minds rest, and how we grow our relationship with God.



REMEMBER THE **SABBATH**



A Prayer to Welcome Sabbath

Lord of Creation,
create in us a new rhythm of life
composed of hours that sustain rather than stress,
of days that deliver rather than destroy,
of time that tickles rather than tackles.

Lord of Liberation,
by the rhythm of your truth, set us free
from the bondage and baggage that breaks us,
from the Pharaohs and fellows who fail us,
from the plans and pursuits that prey upon us.

Lord of Resurrection,
may we be raised into rhythms of your new life,
dead to deceitful calendars,
dead to fleeting friend requests,
dead to the empty peace of our accomplishments.

To our packed-full planners, we bid, "Peace!"
To our over-caffeinated consciences, we say, "Cease!"
To our suffocating selves, Lord, grant us release.

Drowning in a sea of deadlines and death chimes,
we rest in you, our lifeline.

By your ever-restful grace,
allow us to enter your Sabbath rest
as your Sabbath rest enters into us.

In the name of our Creator,
our Liberator,
our Resurrection and Life,
we pray.
Amen

- Shane Claiborne and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove,
"Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals"

REMEMBER THE **SABBATH**



Physical Rest

What is your initial reaction to a community dinner to enter into the Sabbath?

The Example of Elijah

Read 1 Kings 19:1-18.

What has Elijah experienced up to this point?

How would you describe Elijah's emotional state at this point?

What is the pattern of rest God granted Elijah?

How would you describe Elijah's emotional state after his rest?

When Elijah had gotten basic rest, where did God lead him?

How did God meet Elijah on the mountain?

Time with God

Spending time listening to and talking with God is what differentiates Sabbath from a slow day.

Suggestions on Spending Time with God on Sabbath

- ☐ Silence and Stillness
 - ☐ Reading Soul-Forming Books
 - ☐ Poetry
 - ☐ Prayer Beads
 - ☐ Contemplative Prayer
 - ☐ Intercessory Prayer
 - ☐ Bible Reading
 - ☐ Kneeling Prayer
 - ☐ Breath Prayer
-

What Will Time with God Look Like on Your Sabbath?

Consider your season of life

Consider your regular routine

Consider how you best experience God in your unique personality and relationship.

“ DO THE
HARD
WORK OF
SHOWING
UP. ”

REMEMBER THE

SABBATH



Practicing Sabbath

WEEK 1 - PREPARATION

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

- Meditate on Mark 2:27.
What does it mean to you that God commands rest, play and worship?

PREPARE YOUR SCHEDULE.

- When might you be able to start carving out time for a Sabbath?

MAKE A SABBATH PREP LIST.

- What do you need to do ahead of time so that you can fully enjoy the Sabbath, free of distractions, work, commitments, etc.?

Practicing Sabbath

WEEK 2 - RESISTANCE

LET GO.

- What work can you let go of? What obligations or responsibilities will survive without your attention on Sabbath? What can you say "no" to?

UNHURRY.

- Choose one un-hurry tool and do it for the whole week.
- Try to begin 3-5 days this week sitting before God in silence. How do you feel during that time? How does it impact the rest of your day?

REMOVE DISTRACTIONS.

- Choose one distraction to eliminate for 24 hours. How often did you miss it? Were you able to turn to God during any of those times? What felt unsettling about it? What did you end up filling that space with?

Practicing Sabbath

WEEK 3 - DELIGHT

CONSIDER:

- Where do you find joy?
- Where do you see evidence that God is a joyful God?
- Who might you invite into your Sabbath practice?

PLAY!

- Find activities that bring you joy and delight!
- When you recognize moments of joy, beauty, delight and play, thank God for them.
- At the end of your Sabbath, reflect on how the day went, and record your observations below.

Practicing Sabbath

WEEK 4 - WORSHIP

WELCOMING GOD

- How might you intentionally welcome God into your Sabbath practice?

REST

- What is your body missing?
- What is your soul missing?

END WITH A PRAYER OF EXAMEN:

- Take a moment to “get in God’s presence.” Find a place you can be still and quiet before God as you tune into His presence.
- Examine/reflect on the day. What distractions came up for you during your Sabbath practice? Where did you experience God today? Did you gain any new insights today?
- How did you experience joy and delight today? Take some time to express your gratitude to God...of your joys and delights and for the gift of the Sabbath day.
- Reflect: In what ways is God drawing you closer to Himself through the practice of Sabbath?
- Look toward tomorrow and the entrance back into the 6 days of work. How has God prepared you for this week? Rejoice that Sabbath is only 7 more days away!

Recommended Resources

BOOKS:

- "Embracing Rhythms of Work & Rest" by Ruth Haley Barton
- "Sacred Rhythms" by Ruth Haley Barton
- "Sabbath as Resistance" by Walter Brueggemann
- "Garden City" by John Mark Comer
- "The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry" by John Mark Comer
- "The Sabbath" by Abraham Joshua Heschel
- "Rhythms of Rest" by Shelly Miller
- "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" by Peter Scazzero
- "Subversive Sabbath" by A.J. Swoboda

OTHER:

- Rule of Life Podcast
- "I Will Give You Rest: An Invitation to Sabbath" workbook by She Reads Truth

