

Reclaiming the Ordinary: Simple Rhythms for a Meaningful Life.

Part 2: God's Rhythm of Work and Rest: How to Find True Peace in a Busy World

Genesis 1:27-2:3; Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 2:27-28

Summary: God created us to have a rhythm of work and rest. True refreshment and peace aren't found in constant busyness but in trusting Jesus as the source of real Sabbath rest.

Main Ideas:

We try to rest, but it rarely refreshes us.

Life works best when we follow the original rhythm.

We were designed to have a rhythm of work. And work done well mirrors God.

We were designed to have a rhythm of rest. And rest done well mirrors God.

Without purposely resting and reflecting, work becomes a burden instead of a gift.

Rest isn't about what you do; it's about who you trust.

The ultimate and true rest is found in Jesus himself.

Ordinary life becomes extraordinary when we rest in Jesus.

Invitation:

Set aside time each week to unplug, reflect, and reconnect with God and loved ones.

- Ask: Does this restore me? Does this connect me to God and others?

Discussion Questions:

1. When you think about your weekends, do they usually leave you rested or more drained? Why do you think that is?
2. What makes rest so hard for you personally—guilt, distraction, busyness, expectations?
3. Read Matthew 11:28. Jesus offers rest for our souls. How do you think that's different from just taking a day off or a vacation?
4. What's one small, practical way you could begin to practice Sabbath rest—something that would restore you and connect you to God?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

Transcript:

WE: Do you ever get to Sunday night and wonder... where did my weekend go?

Maybe all the weekend gave you was muddy cleats in the backseat, 3 frustrating trips to Home Depot, and a few hours of staring at different-sized screens.

And now, another week's coming: more practices, appointments, school events, work deadlines... coming at us non-stop.

We try to rest, but it rarely refreshes us.

- Our rhythms are out of sync.

The biblical story tells us God made us for a rhythm of work and rest.

But instead, we're constantly going... being productive, creating experiences, constantly shoving reels and posts into our brains...

- It's no wonder we feel frazzled, distracted, and empty.

But from the beginning, God showed us a better way.

- And still today, he invites us to reclaim a life of healthy rhythm, ordinary joy, and real peace.

If you're tired, whether you call yourself a JF or not... Jesus invites you to something better.

If we want truly refreshing, deep rest... we need to go back to the beginning.

- B/c Life works best when we follow the original rhythm.

Here's how God chose to introduce humanity into his story...

GOD: Genesis 1:27-28 *So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."*

God created us in his image... for purpose, creativity, and fulfilling work.

We were designed to have a rhythm of work. And work done well mirrors God.

Work isn't something to be avoided or dreaded. It can actually be life-giving

- When we work, we are reflecting the image of God by bringing creativity, help, and ideas into the world that wouldn't have been there otherwise.

Ever experienced that? Whether it's a job or a hobby... something you do that takes effort, but is life-giving at the same time?

- That's living out your God-given purpose for work.

But we twist work into something to prove ourselves or earn value... then we get stressed and let work define us.

Work was a gift. Not a punishment or a paycheck.

- God gave humans work even when all of their needs were already met.

Gen. 1:29-31 *Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life." And that is what happened. Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.*

But if we keep going, we see work isn't the whole story. God's design didn't stop on Day Six...

Gen 2:1-3 *So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.*

From the beginning, God showed us that even though work is good...

- Life isn't about what we can produce; our worth doesn't come from what we do.

God modeled a healthy rhythm of work AND rest from week one... We were designed to have a rhythm of rest. And rest done well mirrors God.

And I love the order in this account... God first says, "Your job is to rule the earth, work it, create, produce."

- And if the humans were anything like me, they are thinking, "OK, let's do this! I'm ready to get to work creating and subduing things."

But before they do even one day of work... God says, "Hey, what's the hurry? Hold on, kids. Let's make sure you know how to do this life the best way. Let me show you how to rest first."

Without purposely resting and reflecting, work becomes a burden instead of a gift.

We need a healthy rhythm of work and rest, and God modeled it from the very beginning.

But the story doesn't stop there...

Instead of being satisfied with what they were given, humanity subdued other God-image bearers, and on their backs they created cities, civilizations, and empires.

And one of the most powerful of these empires, Egypt, enslaved a people known as the Israelites

- But God rescued them and led them out of Egypt.

Unfortunately, after generations of slavery, work was their only identity.

So God needed to remind them that they were made for more than just work...

- But we humans can be such workaholics that God couldn't just suggest rest... he had to command it.
- And #4 in the 10 big commandments he gives them does just that...

Exodus 20:8–11 *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.*

The Sabbath... If you enjoy having your weekends off... this is historically where it started. You're welcome.

But the Sabbath wasn't just about having a day off.

God is telling these former slaves, “Your value doesn’t come from what you produce, but from my love for you.”

It taught them to trust God’s provision and not their own productivity.

Taking a full day off meant...

- Some of the harvest could be missed
- A day of sharpening and repairing tools or working on the house or barn was lost.
- Even meals would take extra planning... no take-out or refrigeration. (Though a day off from cooking was probably a welcome break for the women of the house)

“If we take a whole day off... How are we gonna get everything done?”

But God was saying, “Trust me enough to rest. I’ll provide while you stop.”

- The Sabbath was an invitation to trust God by choosing to stop being productive.

Rest isn’t about what you do; it’s about who you trust.

- If you think about it... Frantic hurry is often the result of a lack of trust.

We think everything depends on us.

- Who will get it all done if I don’t? Won’t everything fall apart if I’m not there holding it together?

For example... When we talked about a rhythm of taking breaks as a church community... my first thought was... this will kill momentum. People will take a break and then not come back.

- Jesus said, “It’s not your momentum. It’s mine. I’ll do what I want with it. Trust me.”
- 1st Sunday back... most people on a non-holiday Sunday in over a year.

But maybe for you it’s letting the dishes sit in the sink for a night, turning your phone off in the evening, or actually using all of your vacation time.

- It feels risky, but it’s an act of trust.
- Trusting that God loves you and will take care of things while you rest.

But it’s so hard just to enjoy and rest... We have things we want done. We need to prove ourselves... we need to feel important.

- And the people of Israel struggled with this idea just like we do.

Over time, Sabbath became more about rules than rest.

- Or it was ignored altogether.

But centuries later, a peasant from a backwater town showed up claiming to be the God who created the Sabbath.

Jesus came to set the record straight: Sabbath was always meant to be a gift, not a test.

Mark 2:27-28 *Then Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!”*

God designed rest not just for our bodies, but for our souls.

Jesus says, "I came to give you true rest."

The command wasn't given so people could prove how good they are at rule-following.

It was given so people would have permission to rest. To enjoy life.

- So that employers couldn't make people work 24/7
- It was supposed to be a gift to meet our deepest needs, not a burden or a test to prove ourselves.

See, Jesus wasn't just talking about a physical rest... He is Lord of the Sabbath.

- Meaning he not only gets to say what it means... he is the source of it.

The ultimate and true rest is found in Jesus himself.

Matt 11:28 *Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."*

Jesus offers more than a day off.

- He offers true rest for your soul.
- In him, there's nothing to earn and nothing to prove
- He offers a life of joy, celebration, meaning, peace with God, ourselves, and others.

The Sabbath was a signpost pointing to the true heart of God.

- He loves us and accepts us.
- We can stop working to earn his approval and trust that he loves us.
- And enjoy the rest he gives our bodies and souls.

If you've ever felt like you have to earn God's love/approval

- Had to make sure the good you put out there evens the balance for you somehow.

Jesus is inviting you to stop working and trust him.

Your first step can be accepting his love and truly rest for the first time.

If you're ready to accept his invitation... to give up trying to make it on your own. If you're done trying to prove your worth to God, yourself, and anyone else...

- Tell him... I'm done working. I accept your love. Teach me how to rest in you.

And as we live our lives, we can celebrate and model the true rest of Jesus by enjoying the healthy rhythm God designed for us in the beginning.

YOU: So let's learn to rest in Jesus by practicing a life of Sabbath rest...

- Start small, make it joyful, not legalistic.
- Set aside time each week to unplug, reflect, and reconnect with God and loved ones.

- Ask: Does this restore me? Does this connect me to God and others?

It's less about specific activities and more about setting aside time to cease from your normal work/labor/stress, to be refreshed by God, and to connect with him and others.

WE: Imagine how differently you would respond to crises, stressful situations, annoyance, or interruptions if you were coming from a place of deep rest instead of constant activity.

What would a mind/body infused with Sabbath rest do for your parenting, marriage, work, and self-talk?

How much more could you actually enjoy Jesus and the life he is offering?

What if we were a group of people who practiced this with each other?

- When we see each other on Sundays and even throughout the week... We were places of rest and peace?
- Reminders that we are loved, accepted, and enjoyed... just as we are.

We would have a reservoir of peace/joy/security to give to the world.

- We would be a shining beacon to our stress-out, constantly grinding world.

It would allow us to be agents of peace instead of adding to the anger, outrage, and despair.

Let's show our neighbors and families that Jesus truly is enough, and that ordinary life, lived in God's rhythm, is beautiful, meaningful, and full of joy.

Ordinary life becomes extraordinary when we rest in Jesus.