

Soul Care

SESSION #3: Replenishing your Soul

SESSION GOALS

The point of every session is a main idea with the goal of informing our knowing, feeling, and doing.

MAIN IDEA: Keeping the Sabbath replenishes our souls.

HEAD CHANGE: To know that God instituted the Sabbath to cure us of our insatiable, disordered desire for more.

HEART CHANGE: To feel grateful that we don't have to observe the Sabbath; we get to.

LIFE CHANGE: To cultivate the habit of stopping our paid or unpaid work, resting, delighting in the Lord, and contemplating His goodness for 24 hours once a week.

CONNECT

When was the last time you took a whole day off – no emails, obligations, errands, or chores? What did you do with that day?

Even after speaking out the universe, God wasn't tired. He didn't institute the Sabbath because He needed it but because He knew we would need it. The infinite God modelled rest for the finite people He'd made, knowing we'd get tired often. In this session, we'll consider how to build into our lives the habit of a weekly, 24-hour Sabbath to replenish our souls.

LEARN

As you watch, write down how Jason answers these questions.

1. What disease does Jason suffer from?
2. When did God institute the Sabbath?
3. How did Jesus change the Jews' perspective of the Sabbath?
4. What are the four practices we can implement to build the habit of Sabbath rest into our lives?

Show SESSION #3: Replenishing your Soul (12 minutes)

REVIEW

Jason opens this session by sharing that he suffers from a disease called 'more-itus'. Of course, more-itus isn't an actual medical term, but Jason makes the point that all of humanity suffers from an insatiable desire for more. Our lists of the stuff and experiences we want are never-ending, and our to-do lists are never-ending too. **What do you find yourself wanting more of? Time, friends, cars, clothes, money, holidays, space in your home, opportunities?**

Jason goes on to explain that God has given us this desire for more. It's part of our divine sense of purpose, the surety that there's more to this life, and the longing for eternity He has placed in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). So, when we channel our desire for more into the pursuit of God, it's a wonderful thing. **What weekly rhythm did God create at the inception of human life to help us manage our desire for more? Does it work? Why or why not?**

God commanded His people to observe the Sabbath. They took it very seriously – eventually worshipping the practice of Sabbath instead of the God who had given it to them as a gift of rest. In Mark 2 we read about Jesus and His disciples eating grain in a field on the Sabbath and getting into big trouble with the Pharisees. **How did Jesus' response to the Pharisees challenge their legalistic religiosity? Did you grow up in a home where the Sabbath was observed? Do you tend to view the Sabbath as something you have to do each week or something you get to do each week?**

If you're wondering what you're supposed to do or not do on the Sabbath, Jason offers two questions you might ask yourself:

- (1) Do these activities drain me and distract me from God's goodness in my life? (If they do, then don't do them on your weekly Sabbath day.)
- (2) Do these activities replenish me and cause me to rejoice in God's goodness in my life? (If they do, then do more of those on your weekly Sabbath day.)

Which activities typically rob you of joy or energy? Which activities replenish your joy and enthrall you for another round of life in the week to come?

Jason offers four helpful practices for intentionally implementing a Sabbath rest: (1) Stop you paid and unpaid work for 24 hours. (2) Rest. (3) Delight by choosing activities that inspire you to rejoice in God's goodness. (4) Contemplate or reflect on God's goodness in your life. **Bearing in mind that the Sabbath will look different for different people and that the goal is practice not perfection, discuss which of these steps come easily to you, and which ones you'd need to, well, practise.**

When it comes to tending to the garden of your inner life, the Sabbath is like weekly soul watering. Most of us probably feel we simply don't have time for a Sabbath, but as Carey Nieuwhof says, 'If you don't take a Sabbath, the Sabbath will take you.' **If you're already in the habit of practising the Sabbath, what difference is it making to your soul?**

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Exodus 31:13 and Ezekiel 20:20 explain that the Sabbath was to be observed as a sign between God and His people. **What would the sign indicate about their relationship?**

We saw in Mark 2 how Jesus undermined the Pharisees' heartless, legalistic adherence to the Sabbath. He does the same in Luke 13:10–17. **How does this prove what Paul later writes in Galatians 5:23, with reference to the fruit of the Spirit, 'There is no law against these things!'**

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul again makes it clear that we're no longer under the law. Rather, we're under grace (Colossians 2:13–17). We don't have to adhere to the Sabbath to get gold stars on God's big behaviour chart. **Why, then, do we still practise the Sabbath? What is the practical or spiritual significance or wisdom in Sabbath observance?**

REVIEW

The Sabbath is an act of surrender to an almighty God who can control all things while we rest. For one day a week, it's ok to let go of the reins and trust God to keep on running the universe without our efforts to assist Him. Let's rejoice in the truth that we don't have to observe the Sabbath; we get to observe it. In the words of Wayne Muller, 'Sabbath requires surrender. If we only stop when we are finished with all our work, we will never stop – because our work is never completely done. If we refuse to rest until we are finished, we will never rest until we die. Sabbath dissolves the artificial urgency of our days, because it liberates us from the need to be finished.'

BEFORE NEXT TIME

Select at least one activity below to complete before watching the next session.

READ: Read through Genesis 1 and 2 again – the creation account and God’s implementation of a Sabbath rest. Notice the rhythm of creation: And there was evening, and there was morning – the [next] day. We tend to plan our days moving from morning into evening, but God moved from rest into work, not the other way around. Ask God to highlight how you might use rest, not just as recovery, but as a way to equip you for what’s to come.

WRITE: Write down a few different plans for a day of Sabbath rest. Maybe run them by your roommates or your spouse to see if they’re realistic and viable.

PRAY: Turn to God in prayer, surrendering your to-do lists and your desire for more. Pray for fresh resolve to cordon off a day a week to stop, rest, delight and contemplate