



THE
WEEKLY
REST
PROJECT



A CHALLENGE TO JOURNAL
REFLECT, AND RESTORE

Introduction

Rest Is a Gift from God

On the seventh day—with the canvas of the cosmos completed—God paused from His labor and rested. Thus God blessed day seven and made it special—an open time for pause and restoration, a sacred zone of Sabbath-keeping.

GENESIS 2:2–3 THE VOICE

Do we really think our all-powerful, all-knowing God *needed* to rest after just six days of work? Possibly, but it seems more likely that God *chose* to rest to show us the importance of resting from our labors. He knew that we would need an example to follow, and that lesson is just as important today as it was all those years ago.

Our culture places a lot of emphasis on working hard, earning your place, and pulling yourself up by your bootstraps, but a close reading of the Bible reveals a very different message. God doesn't love you because you work harder than anyone else. You can't earn your place in heaven through good works. And God certainly doesn't determine your value by your use of your bootstraps—quite the opposite.

After all, the Bible isn't full of stories of independent go-getters who won accolades all on their own by working around the clock. No, the stories are of people who leaned on God to achieve great things by saying yes to Him and following His path, which includes good work, but it also always includes rest.

The Sabbath was the first day specifically set aside for something established by God. More holy days and holidays and feasts would come later, but the Sabbath has been with us since creation. It is one of God's first gifts to us, a sacred time to give our bodies and minds a chance to recharge and anchor our weeks in rest and communion with Him. Resting regularly isn't being lazy and doesn't mean that you are shirking your responsibilities. It is simply accepting God's generous gift. Building your life around weekly rest is the first step in accepting the rhythm of life God laid out for us at the beginning, and it only brings you closer to Him.





*Rhythms
of Rest*

Rhythms of Rest



*To everything there is a season, a time
for every purpose under heaven.*

ECCLESIASTES 3:1 NKJV

The entire world runs on cycles. Day becomes night. Night becomes day. Winter melts into spring. Spring blooms into summer. Summer fades into autumn. And autumn freezes into winter. Years pass by, and people are born and eventually die, but these cycles that God created remain the same. He set each cycle moving at creation, including the ones that govern our days.

The Bible models this cycle for us. It is a rhythm of work, play, worship, and rest. Days for work, nights for rest, Sabbath each week, and everyone pausing to come together to worship and celebrate for holidays and feasts. Everything in balance to keep us healthy physically, mentally, and spiritually. The seasons have always played a role too. Work was limited by daylight and the weather until very recently. There was less outdoor work to be done in the winter and more time to rest. Now, of course, thanks to technology, we can work anytime and anywhere, even when we shouldn't.

Our modern, busy, go-go-go, I'll-rest-when-I'm-dead mentality doesn't truly disrupt or circumvent the cycle God provided us, even if it feels like working around the clock is some sort of cheat code to getting to the good life. It may lead to financial success, but it always comes at a cost—usually our health and overall well-being. We've turned away from living

in community and working together to carry the load in favor of doing it all on our own, in our own ways. As a result, we're a society of people who are sick, unhappy, burned out, lonely, and overwhelmed. And that is definitely not God's plan for us.

Prioritizing rest is about more than catching up on sleep. It's about living your life in sync with the rhythms God laid out for us that are designed to bring us closer to Him.



WEEK 1

The Sabbath Was Made for Man



Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

MARK 2:27 niv

Keeping the Sabbath has always been an important part of Jewish culture, and as stated in the Ten Commandments, no work was to be done on the Sabbath in order to keep it holy. But in Jesus' time, that had been taken to extremes. It was considered work to put food on the table, to gather water, to do almost anything at all. For many people the Sabbath was not restful; it was stressful.

Jesus was revolutionary in many ways, but at the time, one of the most controversial things he said was, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." The Jewish leaders had turned the Sabbath, the day of rest, into a series of rules to be followed. Jesus recognized that for what it was: a perversion of God's original gift of a day of rest. His simple statement said volumes. The Sabbath wasn't some divine test where God was watching for every infraction. It was a generous gift, a sacred day to pause from the hard labor of the week and be refreshed.



| What hobbies do you have that refresh you?

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| How can you incorporate those into your plans for the Sabbath over the next few weeks?

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WEEK 2

Keep the Sabbath



“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”

EXODUS 20:8 NIV

God included the Sabbath, a holy day of rest, in His Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 8–10), because of how important it is. There isn’t any fluff in the Ten Commandments. There were no superfluous words or extra information, and yet the rule about keeping the Sabbath was the longest one. God wanted it to be very clear that *everyone* was to rest on the Sabbath, not just the wealthiest or most powerful people.

The Sabbath was the most sacred day of the week for God’s people in the ancient world. These days, it has become much more difficult to keep a true weekly Sabbath. Weekends get filled with kids’ activities, errands, chores, church, and all the tasks that didn’t get completed during the busy work week. Many of us also manage to squeeze in answering a few work emails too.

We still, as a society, largely keep the rest of the Ten Commandments, but keeping the Sabbath has fallen by the wayside. It’s no less important than it was in Moses’ day, and it’s time we treated it as such.



Why do you think keeping Sabbath is considered less important now?

Handwriting practice lines for the first question.



How do you generally spend your days off? Do you set aside Sunday (or another day) as a Sabbath?

Handwriting practice lines for the second question.



WEEK 3

A Deeper Sabbath Restores More Fully



“When you enter the land which I am going to give you, the land will observe a Sabbath to God. Sow your fields, prune your vineyards, and take in your harvests for six years. But the seventh year the land will take a Sabbath of complete and total rest.”

LEVITICUS 25:2-4 MSG

This edict from God to let the promised land observe a one-year Sabbath to God was probably confusing to the Israelites. After all, a whole year off from planting crops and tending the land must have felt threatening to their food supply. But God knew something that the Israelites didn't: even the land needs rest. Constant planting and growing uses up all the nutrients in the soil, until eventually crops won't grow or growth will be stunted. A year off from growing allows the soil to be replenished.

If time off for replenishment is necessary for something as basic as soil, we, with our incredibly complex bodies and minds, need the same. Observing a Sabbath each week is crucial, but we need more rest than that. Taking longer stretches of time off is important to help replenish ourselves. Seasons where we work less and rest more can help immensely.



If you could take a sabbatical, what would you do to rest and replenish yourself?

Handwriting practice lines for the first question.



How can you incorporate some of those activities into your existing periods of rest, even if for just a weekend or holiday?

Handwriting practice lines for the second question.



WEEK 4

Intentional Rest



“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

MARK 6:31–32 NIV

Jesus had a lot of important work to do here on earth, arguably the *most important* work in history, but He often made time to rest, as we read about in the Gospels. Just as God set an example for us when He took a day to rest during creation, Jesus set an example for us about resting each day.

After spending time with large groups of people, Jesus took time alone to regain His energy and often sought out solitary places. After traveling, Jesus needed time to sit and water to quench His thirst. Jesus didn’t work around the clock. He slept at night and took naps during the day. He shared meals with His apostles. He prioritized time alone to pray.

Jesus was limited by His human body here on earth, and He felt all the pangs and pains that come with that, just like we do. Instead of pushing past His own limits, Jesus very intentionally cared for his body, mind, and soul regularly, just as we should.



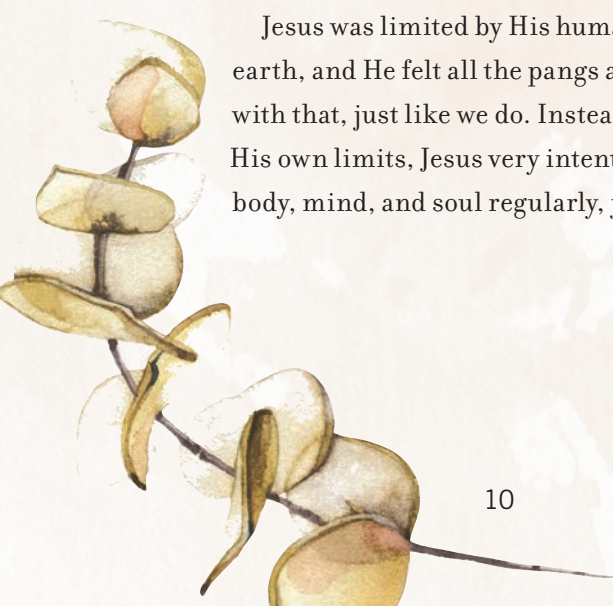
How do you intentionally rest and recharge your body throughout each day?

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If you get overstimulated easily, how do you replenish your energy when you hit your limit?

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WEEK 5

Praise



Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

PSALM 150:6 NKJV

Nothing recharges us like time spent with God. Reading Scripture, prayer, and praise are all deeply restorative for our minds and souls. This is why the Sabbath is meant to be a “Sabbath to the Lord.” It’s not just a day of rest, but a day to reconnect with God and thank Him for the blessings of the week. Consistent time spent with God is as important to our overall health as sleep and food.

Many people honor the Sabbath by attending church, but that is certainly not the only way to connect with God each week. Prayer and praise can happen just as easily in the solitude of your home or in the beauty of God’s creation as it can in a sanctuary. You can read God’s word as easily alone or with a small, trusted group of believers as you can in an auditorium of thousands.

Communing with God isn’t one size fits all. The important thing is to find what works for you and make it a priority.



How does praise and prayer restore you?

Four horizontal dotted lines for writing.



How do you feel when you go too long without connecting with God in some way?

Four horizontal dotted lines for writing.



How can you be consistent in spending time with God?

Four horizontal dotted lines for writing.

WEEK 6

Feasts and Holy Days

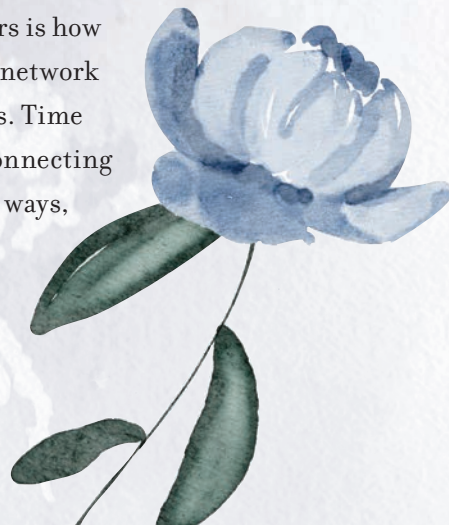


When it was time, he sat down, all the apostles with him, and said, "You've no idea how much I have looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you before I enter my time of suffering. It's the last one I'll eat until we all eat it together in the kingdom of God."

LUKE 22:14-16 MSG

The Sabbath each week is an important, sacred day for rest and worship, but God also set aside other holidays for celebration, connection, and rest from the usual work and routine. Jesus made sure to stop and celebrate these holy days, feasts, and festivals, including Passover, Shabbat, and Hanukkah. One of the first miracles Jesus performed was at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-12), where He turned water into wine. Jesus knew that times of celebration were important for building connection and community.

Community matters as part of a balanced life. Genuinely connecting with others is how friendships are forged. We all need a network of people to support and encourage us. Time spent resting alone and time spent connecting with others recharge you in different ways, but both are essential.



| What is your favorite holiday to celebrate and why?

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| Do you have a particular tradition that you find especially restorative?

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| If not, what is one tradition you could add to the holidays?

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WEEK 7

Share in Rest



Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord."

NEHEMIAH 8:10 ESV

God intended times of rest and the Sabbath to be for everyone. But of course, it is easier for some people than others. Money, grief, family estrangement, and other personal issues can all leave time off feeling less than restorative.

The flip side of building a community to support you is being willing to support others as well. Sharing your time and energy with others may sound draining, but there is something profoundly restorative to your heart when you take the time to love others well.

Jesus told us that the most important of God's laws for us are to love Him and to love each other (Matthew 22:36-40). To love one another well, we have to get out into our community and connect with one another. Each of us has different skills and a heart for different causes and issues. Find a way to help that speaks to your skills and your heart, and you'll find that helping will restore you in the best possible ways.



How have you helped others in the past? How did this feel restorative?

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How can you plan ahead to help others during the holidays this year?

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