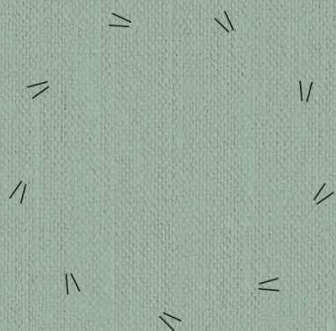
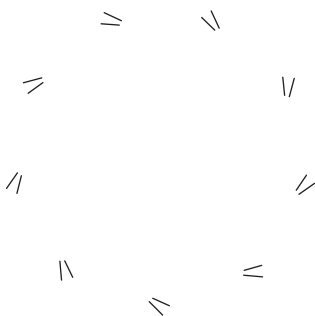


# Sabbath Meditations



John Mark Comer  
and Practicing the Way

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WaterBrook

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## Welcome

The Sabbath is a day like no other. In the Genesis account, we read that God “blessed the [Sabbath] day and made it holy” (2v3). The word “holy” is *qadosh* in Hebrew, and it means “unique, special, or uncommon.”

The Sabbath is a day of uncommon goodness. Of what the Hebrews called shalom. It is an aftertaste of Eden—a time when all was as it was meant to be. And it is a foretaste of eternity, of “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21v1)—a day in which we anticipate and act out our glorious future as the people of God, a new community, sitting around a table to feast with King Jesus, in a world set free from the curse and made new under his good rule.

It is a day set apart.

To **stop**.

To **rest**.

To **delight**.

And to **worship**.

Without fail it is the best day of the week; the day we look forward to on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and we remember on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.\* The anchor of our week, and of our entire life with God and with our community. That's why it's on day seven, not on day three or four. It's not a "break" from our busy lives; it is the aim of our lives. On the Sabbath, we practice eternity in time.

It is holy.

But in the Ten Commandments we are commanded to "remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy" (Exodus 20v8).

So, it is holy, but we also have to *keep* it holy.

Living in the Sabbathless culture of the West, the temptation is always to profane it, to treat it like just another day, to let it become a secularized day off.

For this reason, the Hebrew people don't talk about "practicing" Sabbath but "keeping" Sabbath. Keeping it holy, special. An entire day set apart just to rest, delight, and worship God.

May this book of meditations help you enter into the beauty of the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

—John Mark Comer  
Founder of Practicing the Way

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\* Dan Allender, *Sabbath*



## How to Use This Book

Life is a series of moments, but not all moments are created equal. Some are much, much better than others.

In order to keep the Sabbath holy, to keep it from being absorbed by the weekend, most Sabbath practitioners find it essential to develop a beginning and ending ritual to mark the passage into and out of the day. What the Hebrews called “sanctifying the day.”

There is no right way to begin your day of rest and worship. The traditional Sabbath practice begins with a liturgy called the *Kiddush* (a word meaning “sanctification”) and ends with the *Havdalah* (“separation”). Many people find that a light adaptation of these ancient liturgies can be enormously helpful.

**To begin, you may want to follow this basic template:**

- Put away your phones, devices, wallets, and/or anything that keeps you from Sabbath rest into a “Sabbath box.” You may also want to write out any fears, sorrows, or unfinished tasks on little pieces of paper and prayerfully put them into the box as a way of setting them aside for the next 24 hours.
- Sit down around the table or in a comfortable, beautiful place, ideally with your community or family. You can sabbath alone, but it is best experienced with others.
- Begin a Sabbath liturgy.

## **A Liturgy for the Sabbath**

### **Pause**

*Take a few deep, slow breaths and set your whole self before God.*

### **Light the Candles**

Begin by lighting two candles.\* Then pray:

*Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by your commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights.*

*May the Sabbath light which illumines our dwelling bring peace and happiness to our home. Bless us, O God, on this holy Sabbath, and cause your divine glory to shine upon us. Enlighten our darkness and guide us and all humankind, your children, toward truth and eternal light. Amen. (From the Kiddush)*

### **Pour the Wine (if You Choose)**

Then pray:

*Come, let us welcome the Sabbath in joy and peace! Like a bride, radiant and joyous, comes the Sabbath. It brings blessings to our hearts; workday thoughts and cares are put aside. The brightness of the Sabbath light shines forth to tell that the divine spirit of love abides within our home. In that Light all our blessings are enriched, all our griefs and trials are softened. (From the Kiddush)*

## **Bless the Children**

Those of you who are fathers, bless your children. Look them in the eye. Put your hand on them. Smile at them. Call up all the love in your heart from the Spirit of God. And speak words of blessing, affirmation, and destiny over them.

Next, have all those present turn and bless each other. If you don't know what to say, you can simply speak this blessing: "May you be happy and at peace on this Sabbath."

## **Reflect on a Scripture**

## **Reflect on a Meditation**

## **Hold Silence**

## **Pray Together**

**"Shabbat shalom!"**

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\* For those with small children, ask them what the two candles represent. (They are the commands to "Remember the Sabbath" in Exodus 20 and "Observe the Sabbath" in Deuteronomy 5.)

**To end, you may want to follow this basic template:**

- Gather together in a comfortable, beautiful place.
- Light two candles.
- Go around the circle and share your highlights of the Sabbath.
- End in a prayer of gratitude for the Sabbath and anticipation for the next Sabbath.

*Note: Many find great joy in beginning the Sabbath on Friday or Saturday night and moving straight from this beginning ritual into the Sabbath meal—with feasting, sharing highlights from the week, practicing gratitude, singing, and dancing.*

Stop

# On the Sabbath, we stop

In Genesis 2, we see that after days of making and forming, God the creator stopped—or, in other words, he “sabbathed.”

He worked for six days, and then he stopped for one.

And in doing so, God built a rhythm into the fabric of the created order for his beloved creation to follow.

Now *we too* are to work for six days and then to sabbath—to stop—for one.

But while many of us feel intuitively in our bodies an ache to stop, it seems there is a vast modern conspiracy to keep us from doing so.

“Always-on” work expectations, alarm clocks, hustle culture, smartphones—all these and more drive us to gear up, not gear down, and create a world where we go and go and never stop.

So, busyness has become a sign of social status, to the point where nearly all of us have responded to the question “How are you?” with the singular word “Busy.”

And in the shadow of all that productivity, earning, and accumulating is this low-grade exhaustion that has become the new normal.

But this is not the Way of God.

To each of us in the midst of this fast-paced, frenetic, exhausted culture, there is an invitation to an age-old pattern built into creation.

To work for six days and to stop for one.

To remember we are human beings, not merely human doings.

To remember that we don't have to wait for the finish line or the elusive feeling of "enough."

To remember that we are not defined by what we do, what we have, or what others think of us; we are God's loved ones.

In this act of stopping, we are freed from inflicting on ourselves the splinters that come with moving against this God-created grain and released instead to step into the rest, delight, and worship of God that we were made for.

We live in an exhausted world, yes, but we don't have to *live exhausted*.

You, right where you are, no matter your stage of life, can step into this.

And you don't have to buy it, order it online, or earn it—all you have to do is stop.

## SABBATH IS...

Sabbath is blessed.

Sabbath makes us blessed.

Sabbath is holy.

Sabbath makes us holy.

Sabbath is a command.

Sabbath is a gift.

Sabbath is a law woven into the fabric of creation by the Creator.

Sabbath is an invitation.

Sabbath is a 24-hour unit of time.

Sabbath is practicing eternity in time.

Sabbath is a day.

Sabbath is a way of being.

Sabbath is rhythm.

Sabbath is resistance.

Sabbath means we don't have to hurry, because there is nothing we have to do.

Sabbath means that "it is finished."

Sabbath means that we work from love, not for love.

Sabbath means we can rest because we are no longer slaves.

Sabbath means we must never become slave drivers.

Sabbath means that we do not need to ask, because we lack nothing.

Sabbath means that we do not need to buy, because we lack nothing.

Sabbath means that we do not need to want, because we lack nothing.

Sabbath means that we do not need to complain, because we lack nothing.

Sabbath breaks our addiction to the twin gods of accomplishment and accumulation.

Sabbath says that we are not what we do, what we have, or what others think of us.

Sabbath says we are who we are loved by.

Sabbath must be prepared for.

Sabbath must be sacrificed for.

Sabbath must be remembered.

Sabbath must be observed—guarded, protected, watched over.

Sabbath puts a wall around beauty and goodness.

Sabbath brings maturity and health.

Sabbath brings healing and deliverance.

Sabbath is not a denial of pain but a determination to move through pain into joy.

Sabbath is embracing our limits and accepting our finitude.

Sabbath shatters the illusion of control.

Sabbath reminds us that the Lord is our shepherd. Someone else is caring for us.

Sabbath says the world will get along just fine without us for a while.

Sabbath says someone else is running the universe, and he is a good king.

Sabbath is for quiet and solitude.

Sabbath is for celebration and community.

Sabbath is a day to delight in the goodness of the world.

Sabbath is a day to delight in the goodness of our lives in the world.

Sabbath is a day to delight in God.

Sabbath is a day for worship. To orient and reorient all we are back to God.

Sabbath is for God.

Sabbath is a signpost in time.

Sabbath points backward to Eden.

Sabbath points forward to the New Jerusalem.

Sabbath is a taste of heaven on earth.

Sabbath is where God is taking his people to live forever.

—Christian Dawson and John Mark Comer