



SOUL: Rest & Play



*Almost everything will work again if you unplug
it for a few minutes, including you.*

— Anne Lamott

Definition: "Rest and Play" describes the ability to balance work and play and to take the time to renew oneself.

Verse: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

- Matthew 11:28

Introduction - The Sacred Rhythm of Rest & Play

Our culture often celebrates busyness, but God created human beings with a rhythm of work, rest, and joy. Rest and play are not distractions from a spiritual life—they are part of the way God restores our souls. The word *recreation* literally means "to create again." God, the Creator, established a rhythm of work and rest (Sabbath). When we rest and play, we are participating in God's restorative work.

1. The Theology of "Re-Creation"

Genesis 2:2–3: ² *By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.* ³ *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.*

Exodus 20:8–11: ⁸ *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.* ⁹ *Six days you shall labor and do all your work,* ¹⁰ *but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns.* ¹¹ *For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

Psalms 95:10–11: ¹⁰ *For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.'* ¹¹ *So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'*

Hebrews 4: 9-11: ⁹ *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;* ¹⁰ *for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.* ¹¹ *Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.*

"God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. These words provide the basis for the obligation that God placed on the Israelites to rest from their normal labor on the Sabbath day. There is no evening-followed-by-morning refrain for this day in Genesis, prompting many to conclude that the seventh day still continues. In fact, for Israel, the idea of entering God's rest was synonymous with entering the Promised Land and entering God's earthly blessings as a result of living a life of faithful obedience."

-Crossway

God modeled a rhythm: Work-Pause-Renewal. His "rest" allows us time to dwell with Him, to provide a taste of what it would be like to dwell with Him always.

2. Jesus Invites Us to Rest

Mark 6:30-32: ³⁰ *The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.* ³¹ *Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."* ³² *So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

Even Jesus prioritized pulling away from the crowds to recharge. (This is right before he fed the 5,000.)

Rest is part of God's design for human life. It reminds us our value is not defined by productivity or how many hours we work. It creates space to reconnect with God, renew our energy and rejuvenate our spirits.

3. The Importance of Play

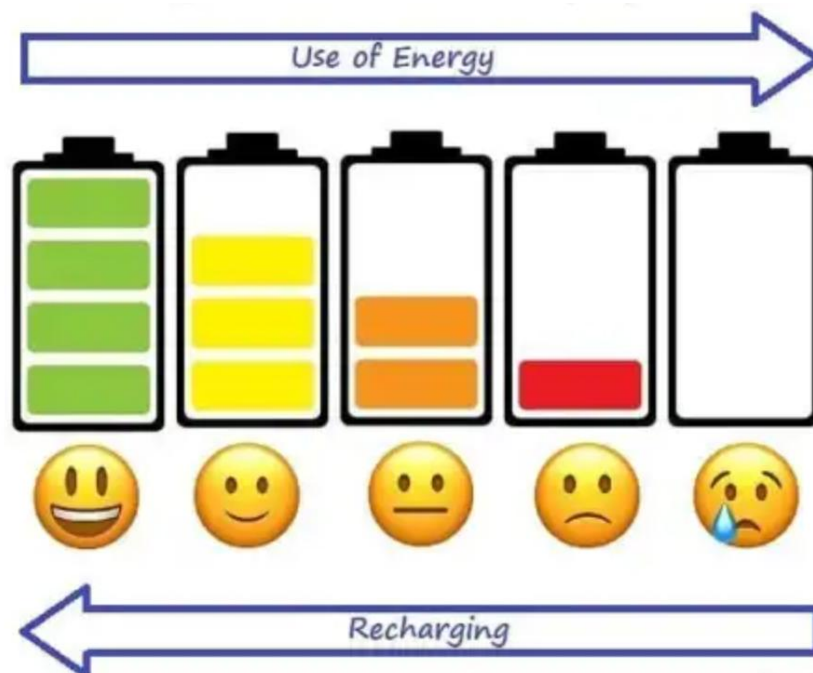
Psalm 37:4: *Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

Psalm 126:2: *Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy.*

Ecclesiastes 3:12–13: *“...there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.”*

The Bible affirms that joy, celebration, and enjoyment of life are gifts from God. Healthy play restores our energy, promotes joy and creativity.

Reflection: We all have an "internal battery" that needs to be plugged into the right source. On a scale of 0% to 100%, where is your "personal battery" today? What has been draining it this week? What activities recharge it?



Weekly Challenge

- **Sanctuary Space:** Create a quiet, clutter-free corner where you can spend time alone. Establish a regular routine where you use this space for prayer, reading Scripture, quiet reflection, etc.
- **Schedule Time for Sabbath Rest:** Pick a time any day of the week for dedicated rest and renewal (doesn't have to be on a Sunday). Block out two hours with zero agenda. Treat this time like an irreplaceable appointment. See Handout #1 for inspiration.
- **Practice Different Ways of Resting:**
 - Spiritual Rest**
 - Turn off all digital notifications for two hours to sit in intentional silence.
 - Read one Psalm repeatedly, letting the words settle without trying to study them.
 - Inhale a truth (e.g., "*The Lord is my shepherd*") and exhale your worry ("*I lack nothing*").
 - Physical Rest**
 - Commit to a consistent sleep schedule to respect your body's biological limits.
 - Engage in a restful hobby that looks completely different from your normal job.
 - Take a quiet walk outdoors without devices, observing God's creation.
 - Mental Rest**
 - Write down every lingering task or anxiety on paper to clear your mental space.
 - Swap an hour of news or social scrolling for a period of instrumental worship music.
 - Practice saying a polite, firm "no" to non-essential obligations this week.
 - Emotional Rest**
 - Schedule coffee with a trusted friend where you can be entirely honest about your struggles.
 - List five specific things from the last 24 hours that brought you unexpected joy.
 - Write a raw, unfiltered letter or prayer to God expressing exactly how you feel.
- **Joy Project:** Block out time for a joyful activity you love but rarely prioritize. A few examples:
 - Paint, write, build or do some other creative thing, purely for enjoyment.
 - Revisit a childhood hobby like biking or puzzles.
 - Read a book you loved as a child.
 - Watch a comedy or play a fun game with a friend.
 - Explore a local park without tracking your steps.
 - Spend quality time with friends, pets, or anyone who encourages your spirit.