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Rest

Overview

In Week 2 we explore the second movement of Sabbath—to rest. The idea of rest sounds wonderful, but in reality, rest is a radical, countercultural act of resistance to the powers and principalities of a world at war with God and his kingdom of peace. To practice Sabbath is to draw a line in the sand against all external (and internal) forces that would encroach upon your apprenticeship to Jesus and formation into his image. It's to say, "This far you shall go, but no further." It is to defy some of the most powerful forces known to humanity as an act of non-cooperation done in love for community, for the poor, for the earth, and ultimately for God himself.



Practice

WEEK 02: REST

All four weeks of the Sabbath Practice build on each other. Last week you set a time to Sabbath, you chose a beginning and ending ritual, and you gave yourself to a few Sabbath activities. This week, we have three new exercises for you to add in.

01 Prepare for the day

In the New Testament, the day before the Sabbath is called “the Preparation Day.” And you really need a few hours, if not a day, to prep. Sabbath will not just happen; it’s too countercultural. If you let the inertia of the day carry you, you will get sucked right back into Egypt’s current.

So this week’s first exercise, which will be easy for some of you and harder for others, is to set aside a little time, either the night before or the afternoon leading up to Sabbath, and prepare.

Here are a few recommendations:

- Go grocery shopping and stock your pantry and fridge.
- Prep your meals.
- Clean or tidy your home or apartment.
- Run any errands or pay any bills that need to be sorted before you can rest.
- Answer all your texts and emails in order to power off your devices.
- Make plans to meet your family or community on the Sabbath.
- Plan out some fun activities for play and delight.

You can do a little or a lot; it’s all up to you.

02 Prepare for external resistance

With this simple exercise, pick one to three cultural forces to say *no* to on the Sabbath.

- Phone
- Social media
- The internet
- TV and entertainment
- Shopping
- Social obligations
- Sports
- Weekend work
- Chores
- Errands

It's your choice; identify a few cultural forces that are anti-rest and *resist*.

03 Prepare for internal resistance

The following is a simple journaling exercise for you to do during your upcoming Sabbath.

Find a quiet, distraction-free place and time to breathe and come to rest in God. Then follow these prayer prompts:

1. Invite the Holy Spirit to come and illuminate your mind.
2. Then ask these two simple questions:



What am I feeling today?

Pick from this list of feeling words from Oxford Clinical Psychology.

Happy	Sad	Angry	Scared	Confused
Admired	Alienated	Abused	Afraid	Ambivalent
Alive	Ashamed	Aggravated	Alarmed	Awkward
Appreciated	Burdened	Agitated	Anxious	Baffled
Assured	Condemned	Anguished	Appalled	Bewildered
Cheerful	Crushed	Annoyed	Apprehensive	Bothered
Confident	Defeated	Betrayed	Awed	Constricted
Content	Dejected	Cheated	Concerned	Directionless
Delighted	Demoralized	Coerced	Defensive	Disorganized
Determined	Depressed	Controlled	Desperate	Distracted
Estatic	Deserted	Deceived	Doubtful	Doubtful
Elated	Despised	Disgusted	Fearful	Flustered
Encouraged	Devastated	Dismayed	Frantic	Foggy
Energized	Disappointed	Displeased	Full of Dread	Hesitant
Enthusiastic	Discarded	Dominated	Guarded	Immobilized
Excited	Discouraged	Enraged	Horrified	Misunderstood
Exuberant	Disgraced	Exasperated	Impatient	Perplexed
Flattered	Disheartened	Exploited	Insecure	Puzzled
Fortunate	Disillusioned	Frustrated	Intimidated	Stagnant
Fulfilled	Dismal	Fuming	Nervous	Surprised

<https://www.ndapandas.org/wp-content/uploads/archive/Documents/News/FeelingsWordList.pdf>

What attachment is *under* that feeling?

An attachment is an emotional state of clinging to something we believe we need to be happy and safe. For example, you may be feeling anxiety over a relational conflict with your extended family because you are attached to their approval or opinion. Or you may be feeling anger at your coworker because you are attached to certain outcomes in your career.

3. Feel that feeling.

Even if it's unpleasant, like sadness, boredom, anger, or hurt. Be gently present to it. Breathe the feeling in, and then out. Don't run from it. Let it come to you and roll over you like a wave.

4. Offer your feeling to God in prayer and release it back to him.

You can use words, or not, but just surrender that feeling back to God for him to do with it as he pleases.

5. Finally, wait for God to speak to you.

See if a word or phrase or image or line from Scripture comes to mind as God's word to you. Write it down, and go about your day.



Reach Exercise

WEEK 02: REST

Reading

Read Part 1 of *Sabbath* by Dan Allender (pp. 35-97).

Podcast

Listen to episode 2 of the Sabbath series from the Rule of Life podcast by Practicing the Way.

Exercise: A digital Sabbath

Turn off all your devices, including your phone, for a full twenty-four hours, or at least for a good portion of your Sabbath (such as from your evening Sabbath meal until noon the following day).

We recommend you literally put your phone and devices away, out of sight, in order to minimize the temptation to power back on.

This exercise will be hard at first, as your body goes through neurobiological withdrawals. You may even feel “phantom phone vibrations” in your pocket throughout the day. But if you stick with it, these mildly painful symptoms eventually go away and are replaced by an incredibly freeing sense of peace and presence to God and the Sabbath day.

Sabbath Reflection

WEEK 02: REST

In between your Sabbath and your next time together with the group for Week 3, take 10 minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions.

01 Where did I feel resistance?

02 Where did I feel delight?

03 Where did I most experience God's nearness?

Note: Be as specific as possible as you write. Bullet points are fine, but if you write it out in narrative form your brain will be able to process your insights in a more lasting way.