

Mark Driscoll: 7 Things That Will Ruin Your Sabbath

The **Sabbath** is a gift from God, which means Satan and our own sin will stand in the way of our enjoyment. No matter what the Sabbath looks like for you, you're likely to experience a few of these obstacles along the way:

1. A Poor Work Ethic

If you don't do your **work** during the week, you will end up doing your work on your day off. If you are disorganized, lazy, late, or prone to procrastinate, your day off will get devoured by a bunch of tasks that should be done already.

2. Religious Rules

Let the **Holy Spirit** guide and direct your Sabbath. **Religious** people want to remove the Holy Spirit and replace him with their rules, but their rules never work. We are not to be filled with rules; we're to be filled with the Spirit who helps us to obey the word of God. Everyone's day off is going to look a little different. If you find something that works for you, you can make rules for yourself, but you can't impose your rules on anybody else—because you didn't write the Bible.

3. Observing A Sabbath Day Without A Sabbath Heart

Sometimes you get to your day off, but you're still anxious, stressed, sleepless, and unable to sit down and enjoy it. Your heart isn't able to Sabbath. Perhaps your **identity** is in your work, so when you're not working you lose all sense of value. Or perhaps you need to find away to take your thoughts captive. I always carry a notebook, and if something comes to mind on my Sabbath day, I write it down so that it's out of my head and I can get to it later.

4. A Pharaoh

Our pharaoh today tends to fit in our pocket. One of the great Sabbath-killers is the **smartphone**: ever-present, dominating our whole life, interrupting at all hours, and demanding our constant attention with e-mails, social media, articles, calls, texts, and more. Technology will kill your Sabbath if you don't establish some boundaries. If your phone does not Sabbath, your soul cannot Sabbath.

5. Not Planning Your Sabbath-In Pencil

Have you ever made it to your **day off** only to find you have no plan and no idea how you want to use it? The day disappears before you even begin to enjoy it. Or maybe you're more likely to over-plan and turn your **Sabbath** into another day filled with tasks. Plan your Sabbath, but plan it in pencil. Allow a little flexibility and spontaneity, and make adjustments as you go.

6. *Resting From Your Work Instead of Resting For Your Work*

Work is not sinful. Before sin ever entered the world, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it" (Gen. 1:15). It wasn't until after the Fall that work became toilsome. In some way, a fruitful Sabbath must prepare you and energize you for the work God has called you to do during the other six days of the week.

7. Stimulants Instead of Sabbath

We sabotage our **rest** when we use stimulants instead of Sabbath. Rather than taking a break, we consume coffee, carbs, candy, energy drinks, and soft drinks all day. Then we go home stressed, we watch TV, we surf the Internet, and some will drink into the evening. The result is a population full of caffeinated, drunk, grumpy, phone-answering, Sabbath-violating wrecks. We call it "America."

On this point, it's worthwhile to consider God's pattern at creation, which includes the refrain, "And there was evening and there was morning" to mark each day (Gen. 1). According to the Bible, a new day starts at sundown. Your day doesn't begin when the alarm goes off; it starts with a healthy dinner and a good night's sleep to replenish you for the daytime ahead.

The average person needs 8–9 hours of **sleep** and gets much less than that. Those who cannot get time to sleep because they have too much work are forgetting that part of the work God has assigned to them is sleep.

Remember the Sabbath

Look at your whole life. Seek to arrange your days in such a way that allows you to get things done, and make sure that one of those things is resting in God, enjoying time with him, using the life he has given you, and being with the people he has surrounded you with. That is the heart of the Sabbath.

Are you prone to kill yourself by working too hard? Or do you avoid work as much as possible? In which direction is the **Holy Spirit** calling you to repent? A Sabbath cannot save you—only Jesus can do that—but there is great wisdom in working hard for six days and then enjoying a true day off as he did while on the earth.

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