

Why Sabbath Rest Is Not Optional for You

“Even God rested on the seventh day. So, what makes you think you can get by without doing the same?”

The minute I heard the speaker say that, I was convicted down to my toes. Indeed, if Almighty God, the maker of heaven and earth, saw that it was important to rest, what makes me, or you, think we can work seven days a week without taking a Sabbath rest?

I was going to church on Sundays and hanging out with my family around Sunday dinner, but I had gotten in a bad habit of working on Sunday afternoon. It was a great time to do my weekly videos for my coaching group because my hair and makeup were already done.

Overwork Causes Overeating

I knew things had to change. Working seven days a week was taking its toll on me even though I loved what I was doing. Stress can drive me to overeat and for someone who's lost 250 pounds, putting myself in a state to be tempted is not wise. I never want to go back to where I weighed 430 pounds and was feeling totally overwhelmed.

Our society's emphasis on performance is screaming at us to work, work, work. The pressure is on to make more money, to have more stuff, to save money for hard times, to do more and more and more. It's an easy trap to fall into.

We feel we are forced to work two or three jobs just to support our families, but in financially supporting our families, we are not there for the love and support our children need. Then that morphs into even more issues.

Why Did God Rest?

In the process, we have forgotten how to really rest and relax. God knew we'd have this problem, and that's exactly why He modeled for us what rest should look like. Why else did He rest on the seventh day? It's not because He was tired. God is all-powerful and always present. He never sleeps or slumbers (Ps. 121:3-4). Still, after creating the entire world, He rested.

"By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested (ceased_ on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it [as His own, that is, set it apart as holy from other days], because in it He rested from all His work which He had created and done" (Gen. 2:2-3, AMP).

Work is not all there is to our lives. If we don't stop and smell the roses, we won't have time to actually enjoy our lives. God intentionally stopped creating. He abstained from work, He ceased to create in order to really see and appreciate that what He had done was good.

This what we need to do. We need a change of pace. We need to appreciate that we have worked hard. But in order not to burn out, we have to take a step back and really thank ourselves for our hard work.

We Need to Recharge

God created us as limited human beings. He knew we'd need a day at least to stop and recharge. So He showed us how important that is by doing it Himself.

Ceasing from work allows us to stop long enough to think, to ponder, to hear God. Taking short breaks in the day, taking a day a week to rest and taking time to get totally away are all ways to help us stop and recharge.

Daily time with God, though, is the most important time to recharge. When I go into my intentional no agenda time with God, I put aside my to-do list and my questions to be with Him and hear what's on His heart. Disconnecting from my drive to accomplish things must be intentional.

Queen of Busy

I used to be the queen of busy. I had to be busy doing something every minute of every day. My busyness actually fueled my food addiction. I was too busy to shop for healthy food, to cook healthy foods, to think about preparing healthy foods, to even care about healthy foods. Not only that, but my workaholic attitude and drive made me feel like I needed to reward myself for all my hard work.

Since no one was patting me on the back for getting a freelance job done, I would feel like I deserved that brownie, cinnamon roll or entire cake, if it had been a particularly stressful day. So. I "rewarded" myself by indulging in whatever my heart desired.

We have to recharge, but not with unneeded food that only makes us more tired. We were not created to run without recharging in the proper way. We are overwhelmed. We are loaded down with cares. We have taken on way too much. Rest is our answer.

Sabbath Rest

We need to recharge daily, but we also need to take a day when we stop working. I will confess this is harder for me to do, but because I know the value of it, I have made it a goal to cease all work on Sunday. (Sunday is the day I choose, but you can choose another if Sunday is a workday for you.)

It is only a true Sabbath when we allow Jesus to give us rest. Jesus said in Matt. 11:28-30 (MSG): "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Me. Get away with Me and

you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me and work with Me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

When I feel I have a heavy burden to carry, it is because I have piled more on myself than I should be handling. He says He will give us rest when we come to Him. That's because He is our rest. He is where we find our rest. If your burden feels heavy, it's because you are carrying more than God wants you to carry.

Tips for Resting

I've learned a few things along the way about this. So let me give you four don'ts and three dos to help keep you from being constantly tired, worn out and burnt out.

1. Don't say yes to another job unless God has said yes to you doing it.
2. Don't feel like you *have* to burn out in order for God to be pleased with you.
3. Don't assume God wants you to overwork for Him.
4. Don't assume that doing yet another thing for God will mean you don't have to do what God really wants you to do.
5. Do rest in God.
6. Do learn the unforced rhythms of grace.
7. Do learn how to live freely and lightly.

Doing these things will go a long way toward alleviating the overwhelm in our lives. This in turn will help us make healthier life choices in what we eat, when and how much we exercise and how we incorporate other sacred rhythms into our lives.

For more specifics on this topic and more on these seven tips, listen to *Sweet Grace for Your Journey* podcast, episode 19.

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