

Theme: Sabbath rest is not a legalistic restriction but rather a gift from God to allow us to be refreshed as we rest from normal activities so we can focus on God and His provision for us.

## I. Refusing To Rest and Be Healed

- A. I had hurt my shoulder weight lifting
- B. “Doctors will just tell me to stop - and I can’t”
- C. I ended up really hurting rotator cuff
- D. Sound stupid now - just like our culture!
- E. What is Sabbath - and do we really need it?

## II. The Central Idea of Sabbath - Rest

- A. The central idea of Sabbath is rest  
There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a **Sabbath of rest**, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord. Leviticus 23:3
  - 1. It is called a ‘Sabbath of rest’ - a ‘Sabbath of Sabbathing’
  - 2. Usually Sabbath mentions rest and no work
  - 3. Hebrew word **שָׁבַת** means to cease, desist, rest
  - 4. Exodus 20:11 interprets the word as ‘rest’  
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. Exodus 20:11  
  
And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he **rested** from all the work of creating that he had done. Genesis 2:3

- a. In Genesis 2:3 God took Shabbat - He ceased
- b. In Exodus 20:11 - interpreted as He rested (**נָחַ**)

- B. The central idea in this important term is that of rest
  - 1. Not primarily about rules & regulations
  - 2. We turn to other questions - laws, days, etc - and miss the point
  - 3. It is not mainly about less activity - it is about more rest
  - 4. It calls for less activity - but with the purpose of more rest

## III. Recovering the Biblical Idea of Sabbath Rest

- A. Sabbath - rest to refresh our bodies and spirits  
There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a **Sabbath of rest**, a day of sacred assembly. You are **not to do any work**; wherever you live, it is a **Sabbath** to the Lord. Leviticus 23:3
  - 1. Sabbath is day of rest - word and specifically stated
  - 2. Cease normal activities - so you can rest  
Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, **so that** your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be **refreshed**. Exodus 23:12
    - 1. No work - less - SO THAT you may be refreshed - MORE
    - 2. Refreshed - literally “re-souled”; take a breather
    - 3. Applies to all humans - not just God’s people

4. All creation needs this - humans, animals - even the land (see Leviticus 25:4)
5. We are not machines - we must have down time to be refreshed

#### B. Sabbath - rest to remember redemption

There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, **a day of sacred assembly**. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is **a Sabbath to the Lord**. Leviticus 23:3

1. This is legislation for God's people
2. True Sabbath must be "to the Lord" and include sacred assembly
3. Time off without gathering to worship is just doing nothing - it is not the Sabbath we need

Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. Deuteronomy 5:15

1. As God's people we observe Sabbath because we have been redeemed
2. In Sabbath we cease other activities to focus on God and His redemptive work for us
3. Any pagan can take a day off - only Christians can really take Sabbath to remember we have been redeemed

#### C. Sabbath - rest to rejoice in God's provision

"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: **These are my appointed feasts**, the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies. 3

"There are six days when you may work, but **the seventh day is a Sabbath** of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord. Leviticus 23:2-3

1. The Sabbath is the weekly festival/feast for Israel
2. It was to be a time of celebration
3. It is not about restriction but rejoicing in abundance

"If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, **if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable**, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, <sup>14</sup> **then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.**" The mouth of the Lord has spoken. Isaiah 58:13-14

1. Sabbath is not a burden but a delight & joy
2. In Sabbath, we do 'less' work so that we can do 'more' of feasting and celebrating God's goodness
3. In Sabbath we imitate our Father, who ceased working to rejoice over the goodness of His creation.

#### D. Sabbath - rest to restrict our materialist urge

There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. **You are not to do any work**; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord. Leviticus 23:3

1. Although the focus is rest - they were told NO work
2. We have to trust in Yahweh to provide - and He does!

3. This is a speed bump on our materialist urge - life is more than accumulating possessions

Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, <sup>5</sup> saying, “When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?” — skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, <sup>6</sup> buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat. Amos 8:4–6

1. Sabbath interfered with their work & marketing
2. They were right - it was MEANT to interfere!
3. This was a constant problem for Israel (see Jeremiah 17:21-27; Nehemiah 13:19-22)
4. We have put this materialist urge on steroids!
5. Our age can not stand the thought of shutting down the wheels of commerce - even for a day!
6. Into this acquisitive age the practice of Sabbath crashes, structuring our weeks to break the materialist urge. There is no worse master than money and possessions, and the Sabbath is a rest from this master than can free us seven days a week.

#### E. Sabbath - rest to regard eternity

“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies. Leviticus 23:2

1. Feasts were typological - and in part point to eternity

2. The Sabbath points us to our eternal rest in heaven

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

1. The OT Sabbath was not the real rest - it just pointed to it
2. Our real rest comes in Jesus - and in eternity
3. This rest still awaits us - in the age to come
4. In Sabbath we focus less on this fading world and more on the eternal world to come

## IV. Applying the Word

### A. Have you received Sabbath rest from Jesus?

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28–30

1. This passage is about Sabbath - as seen in the next verses in chapter 12!
2. Rest is not found in law and rules - but in Jesus
3. We can rest our bodies apart from Him - but never our soul
4. In Jesus we cease from our own works to receive and rejoice in His work for us

5. We can only receive the 'more' of Jesus' work for us when we do 'less' by ceasing from our own efforts to save ourselves!
6. When we rest from our labors, we receive His rest!
7. Have you done this? Receive His rest today!

B. Are we practicing biblical Sabbath?

1. Of all people, Christians should practice Sabbath!
2. Do we practice real Sabbath? Not like the world would, but as God calls us to?
3. (Slide of main points from above)
4. Building Sabbath into our lives
  - a. Daily Sabbath - time set aside to rest and hear from God
  - b. Weekly Sabbath - setting aside Sunday from all normal activities to rest, reflect, worship
    1. Setting it aside as a day of no work if at all possible
    2. Setting it aside as a day for worship - not letting other things interfere
    3. Getting off the commercial treadmill to rest, be grateful, worship, restrict materialism, focus on eternity

5. A few tips for doing less to receive more in Sabbath

- a. We used to really practice this from Saturday-Sunday evening
- b. We really tried to restrict activities - no kids sports, no chores, simple meals on Sunday
- c. We reserved Sunday for God, family, and a few close friends

- d. We often had nice meal and dessert, family time Saturday night
- e. Look for ways to make the day different and fun

C. Communion - Our Sabbath Meal of Rest & Refreshment

1. At this Table we rest from our own works
2. At this Table we receive refreshment from Jesus
3. At this Table we look forward to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb
4. Come to our Table of rest and refreshment!

The Refreshment of Rest

Leviticus 23:1-3  
 January 4, 2015  
 Communion  
 Matthew 11:28-30

Teaching keywords: Sabbath and rest; redemption; remembrance; money and finances; contentment; heaven, hell, and eternity; legalism

Matthew 11:28–30 - “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Leviticus 23:1–3 - The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.

3 ““There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord.