



# GPS GUIDE: JANUARY 8, 2023 G r o w . P r a y . S t u d y .

**Series: Back to Basics**

**Sermon: Rest**

**Monday: Read Exodus 20:8-11**

Sabbath used to mean a specific day - Sunday for Christians. It was a day taken off from work for religious ritual and rest. But our culture has not taken seriously this kind of sabbath in a long time. Sporting events, shopping malls, businesses and the like are in operation 7 days a week. Even when we choose to stop and participate in worship on Sundays, our minds are too often filled with thoughts of work, sporting activities, shopping lists, etc. leaving no real time for a true sense of rest.

In its true form sabbath is a state of mind, not just a day of the week. Sabbath comes from the word "to separate." Time without sabbath, without separation, turns us into human doings rather than human beings. Sabbath separates our time on duty from our time off duty. Both kinds of time have value, but neither has the right to dominate the whole of our time. Since sabbath is no longer clearly defined by days, we must become disciplined to create sabbath rest. Do you have a habit of separating your time so that you have dedicated sabbath rest? Think about your weekly routine. How can you carve out specific and regular time to rest, not just your body but also your mind and spirit?

*Prayer: God, grant me the discipline to make time for honoring you by truly resting in your goodness. Amen.*

**Tuesday: Read Isaiah 41:8-10**

The personal path to reviving a sense of sabbath is learning to be right where we are. Even if where we are is on an assembly line, or at the kitchen sink, or in front of the computer monitor, or in the doctor's office. Just being where we are is a radical step in a society such as ours where the cultural instructions are loudly stated: "MOVE ON, MOVE OVER, MOVE AHEAD, MOVE UP, MOVE, MOVE, MOVE!" From "Go west, young man" to "climb every mountain" our culture has committed itself to insatiable instability.

To revive a sense of sabbath we have to give ourselves time to be, time to be where we are. Recovering a sense of sabbath as a spiritual discipline depends, in part, on allowing ourselves to be present in a given moment and to look for God’s presence in that given moment. How able are you to be present in each moment of your life? How do you rest in God’s presence as you go about your day?

*Prayer: Strengthen my ability to be fully present in each moment I’ve been given, God, that I might be more attuned to your presence in all the activities of my daily life. Amen.*

**Wednesday: Read Matthew 6: 19-21**

One of the ways we can tell a sabbath experience is that we do not pay for it. It doesn’t cost anything. It doesn’t cause us to get out our credit card. It is free. We pay for our pleasures at a fairly high rate. Sabbath doesn’t not imply that paying for things is bad. Rather, it insists that some things are not for sale. Think of taking a nature walking, or doing yoga, or singing. Think of dreaming, or good conversation, or watching a beautiful sunset. Each of these activities is free enough of outer expense to qualify as sabbath.

Sabbath offers us a break from buying. We “fast” from consumption and nourish ourselves spiritually. We are much less likely to see God’s gift to us in activities that we must pay for because we evaluate those experiences based on what they cost us and wonder, “Did I get my money’s worth?” The free sabbath activities provide us with the opportunity to recognize and experience the holy and give thanks to God for such a gift. When is the last time you made a date to watch the sun set? How often do you sing or dance with abandon? With whom do you long to have a leisurely conversation with over a cup of coffee? Make a plan to participate in some sabbath activities this week and then keep your heart open to God’s holy presence in the midst of your sabbath time.

*Prayer: Lord, help me store up experiences that cost me nothing yet deepen my understanding of the heavenly treasure that your care provides. Amen.*

**Thursday: Read Genesis 12: 1-9**

If Sabbath is to be part of our lives, we need to provide space for it. Some people may balk at the thought of an altar, others will rearrange their entire kitchen or living room around one. Still others will have a simple candle and journal on a side table. There is no one way to fix the spot. The point is that when God has a place among us we are able to practice sabbath there.

Some of the best places to practice sabbath is in community, in church. We do this as we worship together and share in communion around the Lord’s table each week. Yet that hour of worship hardly constitutes all our needs for sabbath. We have a daily need to be filled by the Spirit who sustains us. For my mother, building a garden in her backyard was a way of creating a sabbath space in her home. For me, it’s my grandmother’s chair where I spend devotional time. Do you have an altar or special

space in your home to welcome the Spirit’s presence? If not, where might you make space for one? Do you make time to practice sabbath daily? If not, how might you schedule regular sabbath time?

*Prayer: Grant me the wisdom to feel your presence in my life and home, O God, and space to pause and give thanks for your continuing guidance in my life. Amen.*

**Friday: Read Philippians 4: 4-9**

Sometimes when we are really tired, we long desperately for some “peace and quiet” – by which we mean the absence of hassle and conflict. God wants so much more for us. The peace God wants for us is so much more than the absence of conflict. The Hebrew word for peace is shalom (שָׁלוֹם). Shalom means reconciliation with God and with each other. Shalom means being at peace with ourselves, finding contentment, experiencing tranquility – in other words – wholeness. One of the ways that sabbath contributes to our wholeness is that it places God at the center of our lives and gives us the ability to weave together all the bits and pieces of our lives which often seem fragmented. Even in the hardest times in my life when it has seemed that God was more absent than present, practicing sabbath has brought me a peace that passes all understanding and given a wholeness to my life that is not otherwise possible. How has practicing sabbath rest helped you to experience peace and wholeness, even in hard times?

*Prayer: Peace giving God, I long for your peace that passes all understanding. Thank you for such a life-giving gift. Amen.*

**Saturday: Sabbath Practice**

Today carve out at least 30 minutes to practice sabbath rest. If you haven’t already, you can make a sabbath space in your home today. Call a friend for a conversation, start a gratitude list, practice being fully present in an activity, clear your mind of all work and offer your attention to God’s presence in your life.

