



# What kind of rest does the Bible command?

**What comes to mind when you consider the command to rest? What picture, idea, or words do you think of?**

You may have heard a teaching or two on rest. Perhaps you have even taught about it. You may have counseled others to take rest during their stressful lives. And yet everywhere in the world, we continue to see many pastors and leaders lacking quality rest. They are stressed, overworked, and overwhelmed. What are we trying to do that makes it so hard to rest? What prevents us from resting the way God commands us?

## **Both work and rest are from the Lord**

For many of us, the reason it is hard to rest is because we are working hard to please God. We know we are supposed to 'work as unto the Lord'. So with a sincere desire to earn a 'well done, good and faithful servant', we take on too much, work to the point of burn out, and find ourselves unable to truly rest even when we try.

Hard work and being productive is Biblical (Proverbs 12:11,14). Good works are a witness to others (Matthew 5:16). But we must understand that our work is not the source of our significance. We do not earn God's love and pleasure by what we accomplish. Yes, God has made us to be fruitful. He wants us to build His kingdom. He wants us to serve and disciple the church. But God has not called us to do that in our own power. Our fruitfulness comes from abiding in Him.

Abiding means we purposefully seek to find spiritual, physical, and mental rest with God. Imagine a jar of silty water. Only when the jar is left still for some time does the silt sink to the bottom and the water become clear. Resting in God is similar—as we quiet ourselves before the Lord, our busyness and striving settle and we can see things more clearly and hear from God more easily.

Let's look at what Sabbath rest is meant to be

## **Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy**

What does Sabbath rest provide? The kind of rest we see commanded by God gives the following three things:

**1. Spiritual rest.** This is about stopping our normal work to spend time with God. We need to take time to be at peace and enjoy intimacy with our Creator. This is the true heart of worship. And this takes intentionality. It takes time.

God knows your deepest needs. He fills you when you're empty. He knows what is best for you. And it is only when you are still that you can hear His voice above the demands of life. This is where your true meaning is defined.

**2. Physical rest.** You need to give your body time to refuel and rest. Sometimes we are just tired and need physical rest. God made us that way. It's not a bad thing. Denying yourself physical rest is not a virtue. It is a form of pride. God both invites and commands us to care for the physical body He has given us. He wants us to pay attention to how we feel so we know when we need to rest.

**3. Mental rest.** Urgency often drives our activity. We feel like we have to do something right away. Or we feel like we have to figure out a solution to a problem right away. We think, 'I don't have time to rest. If I don't do this, it won't get done!' This is a lot of pressure! There will always be more we can learn or plan or do. We can go over and over an issue in our heads instead of trusting it to God. If we don't take sabbath rest, we can become mentally exhausted.

God commands us to rest because He wants to restore our physical, mental, and spiritual strength. God doesn't need us to exhaust ourselves in order to accomplish His purposes. He invites you to slow down. He invites you to savor His gifts and enjoy His beautiful presence. As you rest with Him, you will find purpose and meaning. His rest will give you strength and life. Rest is God's command for you. It is also God's gift for you. The devotion will help us understand some ways we can be intentional about rest in the Lord.

*Devotional Study*

# AUGUST

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does the Bible command?*



Is it hard for you to find time to rest in your schedule? What are the things that prevent you from taking the Sabbath day to rest each week? Name or list the activities, tasks or circumstances.

Is there a difference between being lazy and resting? Read the following verses. What do they say about being lazy?

- Proverbs 10:4-5
- Proverbs 12:11
- Proverbs 12:24
- Proverbs 24:30-34

Now read the following verses on rest:

- Psalm 23:1-3
- Psalm 127:2
- Matthew 11:28-30

What do you see as the difference between being lazy and resting?

How can we prioritize the Sabbath rest that God commands without being lazy or idle?

Read the following verses:

Mark 6:30-31

Mark 6:45-46

Luke 5:12-16

Jesus took time to get spiritual, physical and mental rest. What did He do to get the rest He needed? What boundaries did He set?

Consider your daily and weekly routine—what would it look like for you to set similar boundaries and rhythms to what Jesus modeled?

Are you good at prioritizing rest? If not, what changes could you make to incorporate proper rest in your routines? Perhaps you are doing it well. If so, you simply need to maintain the routine you have. If you decide changes are needed, how will you begin to make those changes starting this week?