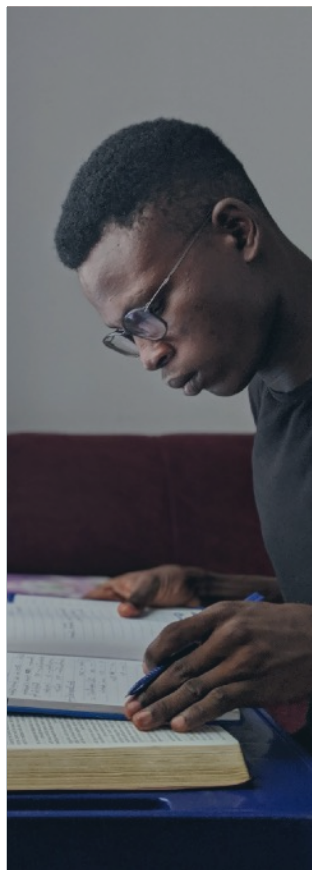
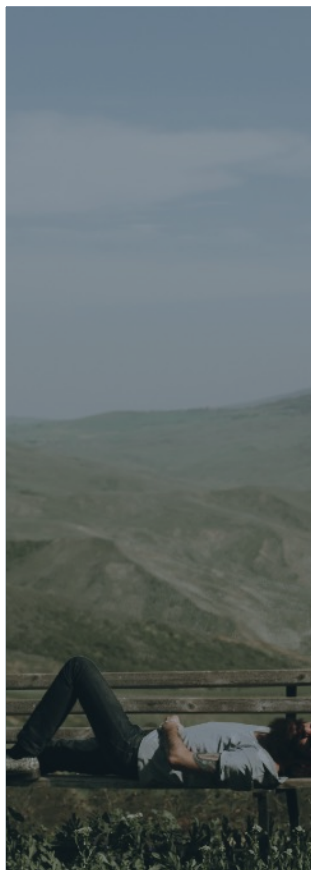


SABBATH REST



A SPIRITUAL PRACTICES DEVOTIONAL



What is a Sabbath?

The word “Sabbath” (שַׁבָּת, shabbath), which means “cease,” “rest,” “complete rest,” or “desist.” The sabbath was a day (from Friday evening until Saturday evening in Jesus’ time) when all ordinary work stopped. The Scriptures relate that God gave his people the sabbath as an opportunity to serve him.

Observing the sabbath should not be a burden, but rather an occasion to focus on and celebrate the goodness of God. God did not intend for life to be all effort, so he punctuated each week with a day of sabbath rest, during which people could remember what life is about and who it is for.

So if you are new to keeping a day of rest, here are a few suggestions from Adele Calhoun book, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*.

1. Plan a twenty-four-hour sabbath you can enter into with anticipation. Consider the things that would nourish you: worship, music, a nap, walking, reading, playing with children, afternoon tea, etc. Plan them spaciouly into the day.
2. Prepare a sabbath box or basket. Choose a basket to put all the things you don’t need to take with you into Sunday. Drop cell phones, credit cards and gadgets into the box. Put work projects and homework in the box. You must eliminate the temptations.
3. Begin your sabbath gently in the evening. Invite the presence of Christ to guide you through your sabbath. Consider eating with friends and family, or go to bed early and pray for Christ to give you deep, refreshing sleep.
4. Awake gently to your sabbath day. If it is possible, don’t set an alarm. Let your body wake naturally and as you awaken, take several deep breaths and open your day up to God. Thank God that you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Thank him for the gift of the day before you. Participate in activities that strengthen your spiritual, relational, emotional, and physical life. Listen and respond to God’s leading.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Exodus 20:8–11

“Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it... There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest.”

Hebrews 4:1, 9–11

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

Mark 2:27

“You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”

Deuteronomy 5:15

Day 1: Recognizing the Gift of Sabbath Rest

READ: **Genesis 2:2-3** "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."

THINK: God is not like us. He doesn't need sleep, nor does His ability to create run dry. So why then would He rest from His work as the Bible tells us? The word rest means to rest of achievement, not just to be inactive. So humans would do well to imitate the pattern of God's work/rest cycle. Most people rest from their work after having a long day or week. *God's pattern is that we work out of our rest.* The work we do is established from strength, creativity, and wisdom that is found when we first rest.

DO: Reflect on your current pace of life and consider the importance of rest. Below, write down three reasons why you believe God instituted the Sabbath. Take a few moments to pray and ask God to help you embrace the gift of Sabbath rest in your own life.

1

2

3

"The Sabbath is a reminder of our freedom from the chains of constant work and the tyranny of time."

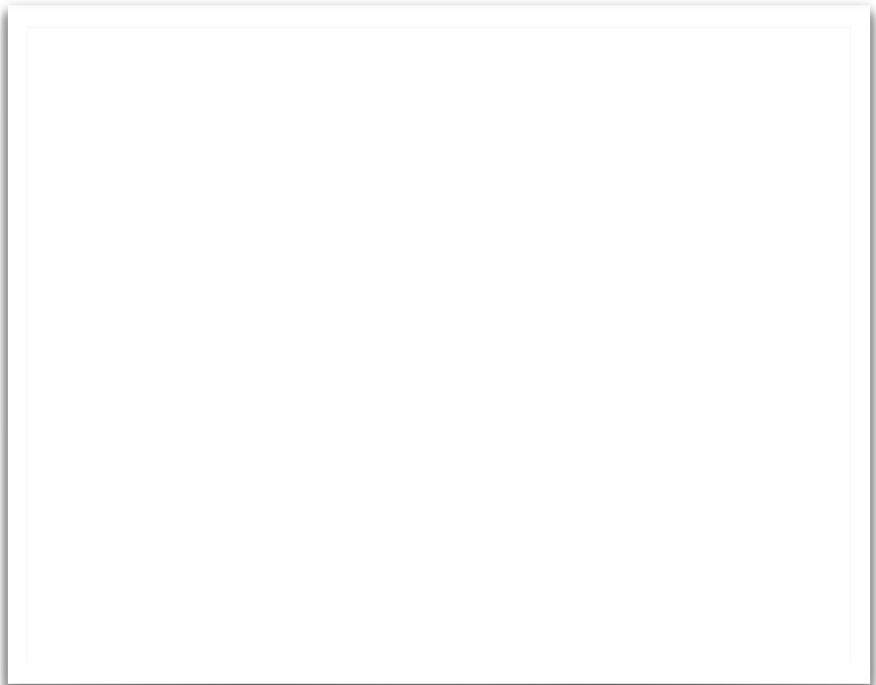
- Abraham Joshua Heschel

Day 2: Restoring Our Souls in Sabbath Rest

READ: **Psalm 23:2-3** "He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul."

THINK: As the Good Shepherd, God wants to lead us to areas of nourishment and abundance because He cares for us. Sometimes in the frenzied pace of life, what we need most is the strong encouragement of the Lord to stop and lie down. Like children who sometimes fight their bedtime, parents know what the next day holds for them and what they need the most to meet the challenges of the next day is that rest and refreshment.

DO: Find a peaceful spot in nature, such as a park or garden, where you can spend some quiet time. Take a leisurely walk and pay attention to the beauty around you. As you observe, meditate on God's creation. Consider using the space provided below to either draw a picture of how you would imagine Psalm 23 looking like or to write down your reflections and express gratitude to God for the rest He provides and the places He provides that rest in.



"The Sabbath is a day to realign our hearts with God's rhythms, to remember that he is in control and we are not."

- John Mark Comer

Day 3: Cultivating Sabbath Delight

READ: **Isaiah 58:13-14** "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth."

THINK: Religious rituals done irresponsibly and with improper motives do not gain divine favour. The Sabbath was a day in which people were to give themselves to the worship of the Lord. The prophet Isaiah calls the people of Israel to look upon the Sabbath as a day that the Lord has given to them to rest. To rest from one's labours is to think not about personal gain or to do that extra work to get ahead, but to take delight in the Lord.

DO: Make a list of activities that bring you joy and help you connect with God. Choose one activity from your list and set aside intentional time for it on the upcoming Sabbath. Whether it's reading a book, painting, or listening to worship music, make it a priority to engage in something that brings you delight and helps you draw closer to the Lord.

What activities do I delight in?

"The Sabbath is a weekly reminder that our worth is not based on what we do, but on who we are in Christ."

-
-

John Ortberg

Day 4: Sabbath Rest for Others

READ: **Mark 2:27** "Then he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.'"

THINK: During the time of Jesus, some had made the Sabbath burdensome and had lost sight of its purpose. It was a ritual meant to bring life, joy, and rest and some put so many rules in place, it made it almost impossible to enjoy. In our pursuit to seek after God, we must not put harsher restrictions on ourselves than the Bible commands. Jesus tells us the Sabbath was made for our benefit, not our detriment.

DO: Consider ways in which you can extend the gift of Sabbath rest to others. Is there someone in your life who could benefit from a helping hand or a listening ear? Reflect on how you can embody Christ's love by serving others and offering them the gift of rest. Write down practical steps you can take to bless someone during your Sabbath time.

NAME: _____

STEPS: _____

NAME: _____

STEPS: _____

NAME: _____

STEPS: _____

"The Sabbath is not an arbitrary law to restrict our freedom, but a loving invitation to experience true rest and communion with God."

- Richard J. Foster

Day 5: A Lifestyle of Sabbath Rest

READ: **Hebrews 4:9-10** "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his."

THINK: God desires for us to embrace the tranquility of His rest. The ancient Israelites, under Moses' leadership, caught a glimpse of this rest when they entered the Promised Land. While Christians anticipate eternal life in the future, they have the privilege of savouring this rest in the present through a deep connection with God's peace. There is no need to postpone the enjoyment of God's rest and peace until the afterlife; we can experience it here and now!

DO: Evaluate your current lifestyle and commitments. Are there areas where you can simplify or create boundaries to prioritize regular Sabbath rest? What fights against you taking a Sabbath? Pray and seek God's guidance on how you can incorporate Sabbath principles into your everyday life. Consider making a personal commitment to embrace a lifestyle of rest, trusting in God's provision and surrendering control to Him. Consider the external and internal lists below and identify areas of your life that make it difficult to practice the Sabbath

EXTERNAL RESISTANCE

What causes the most distraction for you?

- Phone
- Social media
- The internet
- TV and entertainment
- Shopping
- Social obligations
- Sports
- Weekend work
- Chores
- Errands
- Other _____
- Other _____

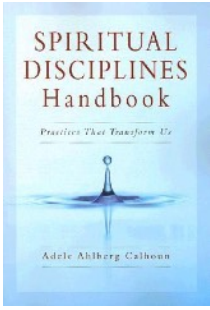
How do you plan on quieting those distractions?

INTERNAL RESISTANCE

Consider the words below and ask yourself what emotion comes to the surface that works against you resting. Write your own word if it's not on the list. What is causing that emotion? The goal is to identify any negative emotions that may fight or rob you of that rest by surrendering it to God.

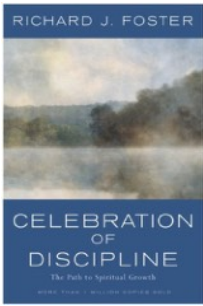
Sad	Angry	Scared	Confused
Alienated	Abused	Afraid	Ambivalent
Ashamed	Aggravated	Alarmed	Awkward
Burdened	Agitated	Anxious	Baffled
Condemned	Anguished	Appalled	Bewildered
Crushed	Annoyed	Apprehensive	Bothered
Defeated	Betrayed	Awed	Constricted
Dejected	Cheated	Concerned	Directionless
Demoralized	Coerced	Defensive	Disorganized
Depressed	Controlled	Desperate	Distracted
Deserted	Deceived	Doubtful	Doubtful
Despised	Disgusted	Fearful	Flustered
Devastated	Dismayed	Frantic	Foggy
Disappointed	Displeased	Full of Dread	Hesitant
Discarded	Dominated	Guarded	Immobilized
Discouraged	Enraged	Horrified	Misunderstood
Disgraced	Exasperated	Impatient	Perplexed
Disheartened	Exploited	Insecure	Puzzled
Disillusioned	Frustrated	Intimidated	Stagnant
Dismal	Fuming	Nervous	Surprised

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES READING



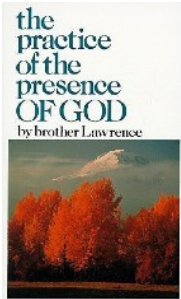
***Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun**

Adele Ahlberg Calhoun provides a comprehensive guide to various spiritual disciplines, offering practical ways to deepen your spiritual life and draw closer to God.



***Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* by Richard J. Foster**

Richard J. Foster explores twelve classic spiritual disciplines, from meditation to fasting, providing a roadmap for personal spiritual growth and transformation.



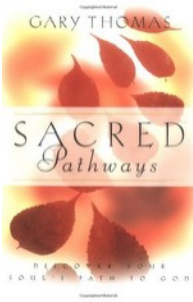
***The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence**

Brother Lawrence's timeless classic reveals how simple, everyday activities can become acts of worship when practiced with a constant awareness of God's presence.



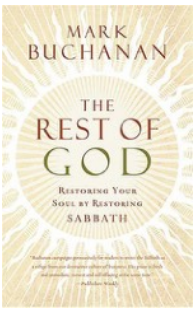
***Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the Character of Christ* by Dallas Willard**

Dallas Willard delves into the transformation of the heart and mind, guiding readers towards becoming more like Christ through spiritual growth and character development.



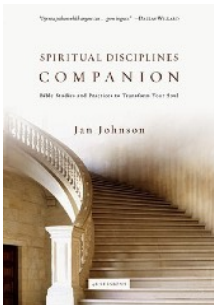
***Sacred Pathways* by Gary L. Thomas**

Gary L. Thomas explores different spiritual temperaments and how individuals can connect with God through various unique pathways, helping readers discover their own spiritual preferences.



***The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath* by Mark Buchanan**

Mark Buchanan emphasizes the importance of Sabbath rest in the fast-paced modern world, demonstrating how observing Sabbath can restore and rejuvenate the soul.



Spiritual Disciplines Companion: Bible Studies and Practices to Transform Your Soul* by Jan Johnson

Jan Johnson's companion offers practical Bible studies and exercises that complement the spiritual disciplines, helping readers engage with these practices on a deeper level.



***The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer**

John Mark Comer explores the detrimental effects of busyness and hurry on our spiritual lives and offers practical steps to slow down, find rest, and grow spiritually in a frantic world.

