

Spiritual Discipline: Practicing the Sabbath Principle

Psalm 46:10 (NIV84)

*¹⁰“Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”*

- We are first introduced to the Sabbath concept in Genesis 2:1-2. Read these verses and discuss observations and insights.
- Another important biblical text on the Sabbath comes in Exodus 20:8-11. Read this passage and discuss the biblical principles it reveals.
- As the story of the bible continues to unfold, we see that the Sabbath became a very important distinctive for the people of God. As we read passages about the Sabbath, it becomes clear that it was to be a special day of the week set aside for worship, renewal, and rest (specifically rest from one's regular work). How do you see these themes in the following scripture passage?

Leviticus 23:3 (NIV84)

“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.”

- When we get to the New Testament, we often see Jesus coming into conflict with the Pharisees and other religious teachers concerning the Sabbath. What can we learn from Matthew 12:1-12 about Jesus' view of the Sabbath?
- As New Testament believers who live under the New Covenant as opposed to the Old Covenant of Law, how should we view the Sabbath? Evaluate and discuss the following options.
- We should keep the Sabbath in the same way that God's people did during the OT times.
- We are free from the Sabbath laws and rules and need not bother with the Sabbath (i.e., we are free to ignore or neglect the Sabbath and its principles).
- We should honor the Sabbath principle(s) in our lives.

Based on your observation of evangelical Christians, which option above is the most common choice? Which option is the best choice?

- If the third option above is the best choice, then specifically, how can we honor the Sabbath principles mentioned below in our lives today?
- Principle of having a day or specific time set aside each week for worship (time for corporate and private worship)
- Principle of having a day or specific time set aside each week for renewal (time for recharging and relaxing)
- Principle of having a day or specific time set aside each week for rest (break from one's normal work)
- How will you practice the Sabbath principle(s) this next week? How can your K-group practice the Sabbath principle(s) together?

Helpful resource for further study:

Dawn, Marva. *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1989.