



NO SERMON NOTES THIS WEEK

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE ON THE NEXT PAGE

ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *September 11-16, 2023*

INTRODUCTION

Setting a day aside each week for rest and renewal is essential to our well-being and helps us be intentional about how we use our time to live the balanced life God intends.

Please note: this week's devotionals are adapted from those used by Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS, in conjunction with a message on the Ten Commandments in 2019.

Monday: Genesis 1:31 - 2:3

The creation narrative from Genesis 1:1 through 2:3 reflected the essential rhythm of life. "There was evening and there was morning: the first day" (Genesis 1:5). Six days of work. One day of rest. This daily, weekly, and yearly rhythm of life provided a life structure that centered around stopping, giving thanks to God, resting in God's mercy and recognizing that what God has created is very good. Do you allow space in your life for a day of rest and reflection? If not, how might you create that rhythm?

Tuesday: Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15

The version of the Ten Commandments you're likely most familiar with comes from Exodus; but Deuteronomy also contains a record of them and the commandment on the Sabbath provides a different foundation as to why the nation of Israel is commanded to rest. Exodus 20 says we rest on the seventh day because that's when God rested from forming creation; so the Sabbath was to give the Israelites time to reflect, not on their works, but on God's works. In Deuteronomy 5, the reason for Sabbath was to rest and reflect on God's deliverance of Israel from enslavement in Egypt. Pastor and author John Maxwell writes, "the principle of the Fourth Commandment on the need for time to reflect upon God's glorious work never changes. Yet it is interpreted differently from one generation to another."* What aspects of God's glorious work mean the most to you?

Wednesday: Psalm 92:1-8

The key sources of joy in Psalm 92 were God's loyal love (Hebrew *hesed*) and faithfulness. Those are with us every day, not just on Sabbath. But for an Israelite farmer struggling to feed his family from rocky, semi-arid soil or for a worker today scrambling to meet multiple deadlines and goals, purposely setting aside everyday demands creates space to focus on God's unending love. How have you found spiritual value from taking a Sabbath break from your "daily grind"?

Thursday: Isaiah 56:1-8, 58:6-14

How did today's scripture passage teach that treating "outsiders" justly is a key part of keeping the Sabbath? What kinds of attitudes and actions, guided by the God who gathers outcasts, can help make our church more fully "a house of prayer for all people"?

Friday: Matthew 11:28-12:14

Devout Hebrews in Jesus' day saw Sabbath keeping as a key way to let God govern life's pace. But too often, they lost the spiritual purpose of Sabbath in a blizzard of rules and regulations. Jesus, "the Lord of the Sabbath," hated that. The point of Sabbath rest, he said, wasn't to conform to detailed rules (especially those that forbade doing good) but to rest in his grace and caring. How can you make your Sabbath practices Jesus' kind of "yoke," easy and light to bear, rather than another rule to follow?

MOVING FORWARD

In today's 24/7 world, the Bible principle of taking a day for spiritual and physical rest may feel unworkable and absurd. Can you trust, down deep, that if you live at "the will and pace of God" you'll truly be more productive? Hebrews said God's word is "living, active... It's able to judge the heart's thoughts and intentions." How can taking Sabbath seriously help you more clearly discern, and live beyond, the inner wishes or fears that keep you feeling locked into a frenetic life pace?

* John Maxwell, *The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 5: Deuteronomy*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1987, pp. 103-104.