

DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

An Invitation to Follow

PART 8 | FORMATION | SABBATH

"Sabbath (Hebrew: Shabbat) means to stop and delight. It is not a demand — it is a gift."

THE BIG IDEA

We live in an age of exhaustion. Smartphones mean work follows us everywhere, and stopping has become genuinely difficult. But a life that never stops - however productive it looks from the outside - does damage on the inside: to our souls, our relationships, and our connection with God.

Sabbath is God's gift to us - a built-in rhythm of stopping and delighting that restores what constant work depletes. Jesus himself said it plainly: the Sabbath was made for us, not the other way around. It's not a rule to obey. It's a gift to receive.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Mark 2:27

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

Genesis 2:2-3

"On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation."

WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID

"When we keep pushing forward without adequate time for rest and replenishment, our way of life may seem heroic — but there is a frenetic quality to our work that lacks true effectiveness, because we have lost the ability to be present with God, present with others, and able to discern what is really needed."

— Ruth Haley Barton

"We stop and rest on the Sabbath because God is on the throne — assuring us the world will not fall apart if we stop working. God manages quite well without us having to run things."

— Peter Scazzero

"The Sabbath is a weekly reminder that we are not slaves to our work, but free and loved children of God."

— Timothy Keller

THE TWO MOVEMENTS OF SABBATH

Sabbath is built on two simple but countercultural acts: stopping and delighting. Both matter equally.



STOP

- Cease work and productivity
- Put down your phone — truly switch off
- Stop checking emails and messages
- Let your mind rest, not just your body
- Trust that God is in control while you stop



DELIGHT

- Reflect on the week with gratitude
 - Count your blessings - notice what God did
 - Do things that genuinely bring you joy
 - Be with people you love, or be alone in peace
 - Fill your soul so you can pour out again
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HOW TO PRACTISE SABBATH

1

Find a Day That Works for You

Traditionally Sabbath was Saturday - and many still observe it that way. But the day matters less than the intention. Choose a 24-hour period (or start with a half-day if that's where you are) and guard it. It will look different for different people and different seasons of life.

2

Truly Stop

Being at home on the couch is not the same as stopping. If your phone is in your hand and your inbox is open, you haven't stopped - your body has paused but your mind is still working. Ceasing means ceasing: no emails, no productivity, no output. Put it all down.

3

Actively Delight

Don't just stop - fill the space with something that genuinely restores you. Read a book. Go for a walk. Play golf. Have a long meal with people you love. Sit alone in the quiet. Sabbath delight looks different for everyone - the question is: what fills your soul?

THE RHYTHM GOD DESIGNED

God didn't say rest every day - he said work six days and rest one. Work itself is not the problem; it was part of life even before sin entered the world. The pattern is both/and: work hard and rest hard.

Work

6 days

+

Rest

1 day

=

Healthy Rhythm

Sustainable life

Sabbath fills the cup that constant work empties - so you're ready to pour out again.

A FINAL THOUGHT

"Are you frequently stopping? Do you have a day a week where you can switch off from being productive — and simply enjoy life, delight in God, and rest? What this does for your soul is remarkable."

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. Honestly, when did you last truly stop — not just slow down, but genuinely switch off? What makes it hard for you?
2. Ruth Haley Barton says constant busyness without rest affects our ability to be present with God and others. Where do you notice that cost in your own life?
3. What does "delight" look like for you personally? What activities or spaces genuinely restore your soul?
4. What would it look like to build one Sabbath rhythm into your week — even just a half-day to start? What would need to change to make that possible?