

# Stop

## Overview

In Session OI we explore the first movement of Sabbath and the most literal meaning of the Hebrew verb *shabbat* — "to stop." To sabbath is, at it's most basic, to *stop*, to cease, to be done.

Peruse any popular magazine and pay close attention to the advertisements — a couple lounging in bed and reading the paper, a woman and her dog napping on the couch, a group of friends on the beach for a picnic — they are all images of stopping. Marketing departments the world over know that you crave a life with Sabbath, or what Marva Dawn called a "Sabbath spirituality" — a life with moments of peace, ease, calm. And they are offering to sell you Sabbath. The irony is you don't need to buy anything to sabbath, you just need to stop.

In the Genesis story, the Creator God himself rested on the seventh day, and in doing so he built a rhythm into the fabric

of creation. For six days we work and labor and wrestle with the earth, but on the seventh day, we stop. We breathe. We come to rest.

When we live in alignment with this ancient, primal rhythm, as Jesus did, we find what Jesus called "rest for our souls." But when we fight or chafe against or attempt to outsmart this innate, bodily cadence, we fracture our soul's wholeness into a million pieces. Exhaustion, confusion, alienation from God and others, harm to the earth and the poor, and even spiritual death are all the toxic waste of a life without Sabbath.

In Session O1, we experiment with Sabbath as a day to stop.

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## Opening Questions

When instructed, pause the video for a few minutes to discuss in small groups:

- 01 What's your current understanding of the Sabbath?
- 02 Is the Sabbath a part of your life currently or not?
- 03 What thoughts and feelings do you have going into this Sabbath practice?

## Discussion Questions

Now it's time to pause the video to reflect on the teaching. Circle up in triads (groups of three) and discuss the following questions:

- 01 What stuck out to you from that teaching? Was there a Scripture or thought that especially resonated with you?
- 02 Is Sabbath a part of your current life rhythm or not?
- 03 What are the obstacles that get in the way of your practicing Sabbath? Either practically or emotionally?

### Practice

SESSION 01: STOP

Information alone does not produce transformation. To grow, let's put this teaching into practice. Consider what steps the Spirit might be inviting you to take before the next session in response to what you've learned.

O1 Pick a time to sabbath, and give it a try

There are three basic options.

- 01 The Christian Sabbath on Sunday, which is best for most of us since it's also our day of worship.
- O2 The traditional Sabbath from sundown on Friday night to the same time on Saturday.
- 03 The midweek Sabbath for those with nontraditional work schedules.

If an entire day is too much for you, that's fine. Start where you are. We recommend you set aside a three-to-four hour time period, either after church on Sunday or on a weekend night, turn off your phone, and just *stop*.

If at all possible, get into a rhythm with Sabbath on the same day each week. Your body will "memorize" the day, begin to anticipate it in the days before, and live off its energy and joy in the days after.

In biblical theology, the day begins at sundown, not sunrise as in the modern mindset. By the end of the week, many of us are too exhausted to really enjoy our Sabbath. For that reason, we recommend you begin at night, if at all possible. Start with a Sabbath meal with your community (more on that in Session O3), or simply light a candle and say a short prayer before you fall asleep.

	Circle or write what you feel led to try.
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#### 02 Pick a beginning and ending ritual

In a traditional Sabbath ceremony, called the *Kiddush*, you begin by lighting candles, praying, and eating a Sabbath meal with your family and community. And you end by praying and sharing the highlight of your Sabbath.

You can do exactly that, or you can let Sunday worship with your church mark the start, or you can get creative—start with a picnic, bonfire, or hot bath. Let your creativity guide you.

Feel free to use the companion volume Sabbath Meditations from Practicing the Way.

	What ritual would you like to try?
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### O3 Pick one to three Sabbath activities to enter into the spirit of Sabbath

If you read the wider Sabbath literature, some of which is as old as the New Testament itself, you discover there are 12 common activities that fill up a traditional Sabbath.

- 01 Lighting the candles
- 02 Blessing the children
- 03 Eating a Sabbath meal
- 04 Expressing gratitude
- 05 Singing
- 06 Worshiping with your church
- 07 Walking
- 08 Napping
- 09 Making love to your spouse
- 10 Reading, especially Scripture
- 11 Spending time alone with God
- 12 Spending time with family and friends in conversation and celebration

This is not a "to-do list," but more like 12 best practices that you are invited to grow into over time as your heart desires.

For Session O1, pick one to three that your heart is drawn to and sound appealing to your personality and stage of life. And just see what happens.

Circle or write what you'd like to do.		

### Reach Practice

SESSION 01: STOP

We all learn differently. Some of us prefer reading, others listening, and others doing. If you'd like to go deeper, choose what resonates with you and give it a try! Even if you don't try a Reach Practice, remember to journal in the Sabbath Reflection section before your next session as a group.

#### Reading

Read the introduction and chapter 1 of Sabbath by Dan Allender (pp. 1-32).

#### **Podcast**

Listen to episode 1 of the Sabbath series from the Rule of Life podcast by Practicing the Way.

#### Exercise

Sleep a full eight to nine hours every night for an entire week. Leading research from doctors and neuroscientists like Dr. Matthew Walker in his book *Why We Sleep* has documented a growing body of evidence that dramatically highlights the crucial role of sleep in our overall health and well being. Contrary to popular opinion, the overwhelming majority of people need a full seven to nine hours of sleep every night. Mental illness, anxiety, depression, ADHD, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, even cancer have all been tied to insufficient sleep. For many of us, the first step toward becoming a person of love in Christ is learning to sleep a full eight hours every night.

See additional tips on the next page.

### Reach Practice

SESSION 01: STOP

Here are 13 tips for getting a better night's sleep, from a study by NIH Medline Plus.

#### 01 Stick to a sleep schedule.

Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. As creatures of habit, people have a hard time adjusting to changes in sleep patterns. Sleeping later on weekends won't fully make up for a lack of sleep during the week and will make it harder to wake up early on Monday morning.

#### O2 Exercise is great, but not too late in the day.

Try to exercise at least 30 minutes on most days but not later than two to three hours before your bedtime.

#### 03 Avoid caffeine and nicotine.

Coffee, colas, certain teas, and chocolate contain the stimulant caffeine, and its effects can take as long as eight hours to wear off fully. Therefore, a cup of coffee in the late afternoon can make it hard for you to fall asleep at night. Nicotine is also a stimulant, often causing smokers to sleep only very lightly. In addition, smokers often wake up too early in the morning because of nicotine withdrawal.

#### 04 Avoid alcoholic drinks before bed.

Having a "nightcap" or alcoholic beverage before sleep may help you relax, but heavy use robs you of deep sleep and REM sleep, keeping you in the lighter stages of sleep. Heavy alcohol ingestion also may contribute to impairment in breathing at night. You also tend to wake up in the middle of the night when the effects of the alcohol have worn off.

#### 05 Avoid large meals and beverages late at night.

A light snack is okay, but a large meal can cause indigestion that interferes with sleep. Drinking too many fluids at night can cause frequent awakenings to urinate.

### O6 If possible, avoid medicines that delay or disrupt your sleep.

Some commonly prescribed heart, blood pressure, or asthma medications, as well as some over-the-counter and herbal remedies for coughs, colds, or allergies, can disrupt sleep patterns. If you have trouble sleeping, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to see whether any drugs you're taking might be contributing to your insomnia and ask whether they can be taken at other times during the day or early in the evening.

#### 07 Don't take naps after 3 p.m.

Naps can help make up for lost sleep, but late afternoon naps can make it harder to fall asleep at night.

#### 08 Relax before bed.

Don't overschedule your day so that no time is left for unwinding. A relaxing activity, such as reading or listening to music, should be part of your bedtime ritual.

#### 09 Take a hot bath before bed.

The drop in body temperature after getting out of the bath may help you feel sleepy, and the bath can help you relax and slow down so you're more ready to sleep.

#### 10 Have a good sleeping environment.

Get rid of anything in your bedroom that might distract you from sleep, such as noises, bright lights, an uncomfortable bed, or warm temperatures. You sleep better if the temperature in the room is kept on the cool side. A TV, cell phone, or computer in the bedroom can be a distraction and deprive you of needed sleep. Having a comfortable mattress and pillow can help promote a good night's sleep. Individuals who have insomnia often watch the clock. Turn the clock's face out of view so you don't worry about the time while trying to fall asleep.



#### 11 Have the right sunlight exposure.

Daylight is key to regulating daily sleep patterns. Try to get outside in natural sunlight for at least 30 minutes each day. If possible, wake up with the sun or use very bright lights in the morning. Sleep experts recommend that, if you have problems falling asleep, you should get an hour of exposure to morning sunlight and turn down the lights before bedtime.

#### 12 Don't lie in bed awake.

If you find yourself still awake after staying in bed for more than 20 minutes, or if you are starting to feel worried, get up and do some relaxing activity until you feel sleepy. The anxiety of not being able to sleep can make it harder to fall asleep.

## 13 See a health professional if you continue to have trouble sleeping.

If you consistently find it difficult to fall or stay asleep and/or feel tired or not well rested during the day despite spending enough time in bed at night, you may have a sleep disorder. Your family healthcare provider or a sleep specialist should be able to help you, and it is important to rule out other health or emotional problems that may be disturbing your sleep.

 $Source: https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/pdf/MLP\_Summer 2012 web.pdf$ 

## Sabbath Reflection

SESSION 01: STOP

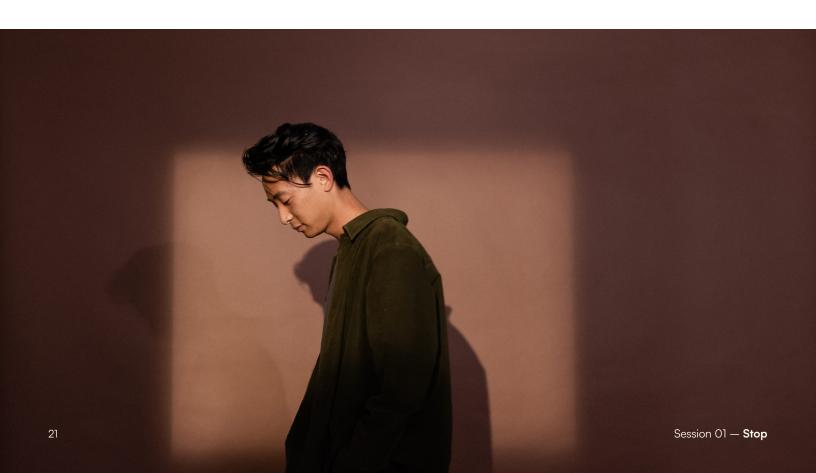
Reflection is a key component in our spiritual formation.

Millenia ago, King David prayed in Psalm 139:

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

South African professor Trevor Hudson has said, "We don't change from our experience, we change when we reflect on our experience."

If you want to get the most out of this Practice, you need to do it and then *reflect* on it.



## Sabbath Reflection

SESSION 01: STOP

In between your Sabbath and your next time together with the group for Session 02, take 10 minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions.

O1 Where did I feel resistance?	

02 Where did I feel delight?

03 Where did I most experience God's nearness?

Note: Be as specific as possible as you write. Bullet points are fine, but if you write it out in narrative form your brain will be able to process your insights in a more lasting way.



# Rest

## Overview

In Session O2 we explore the second movement of Sabbath—to rest. The idea of rest sounds wonderful, but in reality, rest is a radical, countercultural act of resistance to the powers and principalities of a world at war with God and his kingdom of peace. To practice Sabbath is to draw a line in the sand against all external (and internal) forces that would encroach upon your apprenticeship to Jesus and formation into his image. It's to say, "This far you shall go, but no further." It is to defy some of the most powerful forces known to humanity as an act of non-cooperation done in love for community, for the poor, for the earth, and ultimately for God himself.



## Notes

As you watch the teaching as a group, feel free to use this page for notes.		
What are some main ideas? Or what really resonates with you?		

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## Discussion Questions

Now it's time to pause the video to reflect on the teaching. Circle up in your small group and have a conversation about the questions:

- O1 Where are you most tired? Physically? Mentally? Emotionally? Spiritually? What is the greatest drain on your energies?
- O2 What is the strongest force of resistance in your life (external or internal) that attempts to keep you from Sabbath rest?
- 03 What are the hardest things for you to say no to on the Sabbath?

26 Session  $02 - \mathbf{Rest}$ 

## Practice

SESSION 02: REST

You can do a little or a lot; it's all up to you.

Information alone does not produce transformation. To grow, let's put this	Circle or write how you will prepare.
teaching into practice. Consider how the Spirit is inviting you to engage in this	, , ,
practice before the next session in response to what you've learned.	
All four sessions of the Sabbath Practice build on each other. Last session you	
set a time to Sabbath, you chose a beginning and ending ritual, and you gave	
yourself to a few Sabbath activities. This session, we have three new exercises	
for you to add in.	
O1 Prepare for the day	
In the New Testament, the day before the Sabbath is called "the Preparation	
Day." And you really need a few hours, if not a day, to prep. Sabbath will not	
just happen; it's too countercultural. If you let the inertia of the day carry you,	
you will get sucked right back into Egypt's current.	
So this session's first exercise, which will be easy for some of you and harder	
for others, is to set aside a little time, either the night before or the afternoon	
leading up to Sabbath, and prepare.	
Here are a few recommendations:	
Go grocery shopping and stock your pantry and fridge.	
Prep your meals.	
Clean or tidy your home or apartment.	
<ul> <li>Run any errands or pay any bills that need to be sorted before</li> </ul>	
you can rest.	
Answer all your texts and emails in order to power off your devices.	
<ul> <li>Make plans to meet your family or community on the Sabbath.</li> </ul>	
Plan out some fun activities for play and delight.	

Session O2 - Rest

#### O2 Prepare for external resistance

With this simple exercise, pick one to three cultural forces to say *no* to on the Sabbath.

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

It's your choice; identify a few cultural forces that are anti-rest and resist.

Circle or write what stands out to you.	

#### 03 Prepare for internal resistance

The following is a simple journaling exercise for you to do during your upcoming Sabbath.

Find a quiet, distraction-free place and time to breathe and come to rest in God. Then follow these prayer prompts:

- 01 Invite the Holy Spirit to come and illuminate your mind.
- 02 Then ask these two simple questions:

#### 01 — What am I feeling today?

Here is a list of feeling words from Oxford Clinical Psychology to help:

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

https://www.ndapandas.org/wp-content/uploads/archive/Documents/News/FeelingsWordList.pdf

#### 02 — What attachment is under that feeling?

An attachment is an emotional state of clinging to something we believe we need to be happy and safe. For example, you may be feeling anxiety over a relational conflict with your extended family because you are attached to their approval or opinion. Or you may be feeling anger at your coworker because you are attached to certain outcomes in your career.

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#### 03 Feel that feeling.

Even if it's unpleasant, like sadness, boredom, anger, or hurt. Be gently present to it. Breathe the feeling in, and then out. Don't run from it. Let it come to you and roll over you like a wave.

04 Offer your feeling to God in prayer and release it back to him.

You can use words, or not, but just surrender that feeling back to God for him to do with it as he pleases.

05 Finally, wait for God to speak to you.

See if a word or phrase or image or line from Scripture comes to mind as God's word to *you*. Write it down, and go about your day.



## Reach Practice

SESSION 02: REST

We all learn differently. Some of us prefer reading, others listening, and others doing. If you'd like to go deeper, choose what resonates with you and give it a try! Even if you don't try a Reach Practice, remember to journal in the Sabbath Reflection section before your next session as a group.

#### Reading

Read Part 1 of Sabbath by Dan Allender (pp. 35-97).

#### **Podcast**

Listen to episode 2 of the Sabbath series from the Rule of Life podcast by Practicing the Way.

#### Exercise: A digital Sabbath

Turn off all your devices, including your phone, for a full twenty-four hours, or at least for a good portion of your Sabbath (such as from your evening Sabbath meal until noon the following day).

We recommend you literally put your phone and devices away, out of sight, in order to minimize the temptation to power back on.

This exercise will be hard at first, as your body goes through neurobiological withdrawals. You may even feel "phantom phone vibrations" in your pocket throughout the day. But if you stick with it, these mildly painful symptoms eventually go away and are replaced by an incredibly freeing sense of peace and presence to God and the Sabbath day.

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## Sabbath Reflection

SESSION 02: REST

In between your Sabbath and your next time together with the group for Session 03, take 10 minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions.

O1 Where did I feel resistance?	

02 Where did I feel delight?

03 Where did I most experience God's nearness?

Note: Be as specific as possible as you write. Bullet points are fine, but if you write it out in narrative form your brain will be able to process your insights in a more lasting way.



# Delight

## Overview

Timothy Keller has said, "Because the world is full of ugly things, we need the Sabbath to feed our soul with beauty."

Jesus himself said plainly, "In this world, you will have trouble," but he also said his desire for his disciples was "that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full." Sorrow is inevitable in this life, but joy is not. In the Way of Jesus, joy is a gift, but it's one that must be chosen and cultivated, day after day, as an act of apprenticeship to our joyful God.

Previous generations often thought of the Sabbath as a somber, serious day full of religious duty and legalistic rules. Today, many people think of it as a day to chill, relax, or sleep. Both generations miss the essential truth — the Sabbath is designed by God as a day to give yourself fully to delight in God's world, in your life in it, and ultimately in God himself.

In Session 03, we experiment with the Sabbath feast and how to spend an entire day in joy.



## Notes

As you watch the teaching as a group, feel free to use this page for notes.		
What stands out to you? What's going through your brain or body right now?		

## Discussion Questions

Now it's time to pause the video to reflect on the teaching. Circle up in your small group and have a conversation about the questions:

- O1 Does joy come more naturally to you? Or is it more of a struggle for your personality?
- O2 What did you think of Marva J. Dawn's claim that we "don't know how to feast because we don't know how to fast"? In what ways would the rest of your week need to change to set apart the Sabbath as a special day of delight?
- 03 Are you in a season of joy or sorrow or both? What does Sabbathkeeping feel like for you at this moment in your life?

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## Practice

SESSION 03: DELIGHT

Routine can help us grow in our practice and our joy. Consider how the Spirit is inviting you to practice this routine before the next session.

This session we have two very simple and very fun exercises for you.

#### 01 Plan a Sabbath feast!

Ideally, do this together with the people around you, such as your small group or your family. Whether it's 20 people for a giant cookout in the backyard or just one or two close friends out to dinner, plan out a meal together. Cook or order your favorite foods. Make sure there's dessert. If you drink wine, save your best bottle for this meal.

Don't forget, this is an incredible chance to practice hospitality. If you have a home or apartment, host. If you know how to cook, use your skills. If you know people who don't have community or family, bring them in. Reach across the lines that divide our society—socioeconomics, race, politics, etc. Jesus' dream is for our dining room tables to look as diverse and beautiful as the kingdom of God, where every tribe, tongue, and nation is on display.

You can do this to begin your Sabbath if you start at night, as we do, or to end it, or just after church on Sunday.

We recommend you follow a basic Sabbath ritual:

- 01 Light two candles.
- O2 Read a psalm or liturgy, like the ones we have for you in the Sabbath Meditations companion book.
- 03 Bless the kids if they are there; bless one another.
- 04 Pray.
- 05 Feast.
- 06 Share highlights of the week.

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- O7 Share what you are grateful for, or try our practice of *Dayenu*, "It would have been enough, but ..."
- 08 And then just celebrate life together.

Write do	own a specific plan that would be life-giving

O2 Pleasure stacking	List of Activities
On the right, make a list of activities that cause	
and joy, and plan to do one to three of them d your Sabbath.	uring
your outsum.	
Here are a few ideas:	
01 Make pancakes.	
02 Open a good bottle of wine.	
03 Have a dance party.	
04 Play music.	
05 Get coffee with your best friend.	
06 Make love to your spouse.	
07 Take a walk.	
08 Nap.	
09 Eat delicious food.	
10 Do your nails or favorite self-care ac	tivity.
11 Go fishing or surfing or swimming.	
12 Be in nature.	
13 Watch the sun rise or set.	
14 Make a fire.	
15 Read fiction or poetry.	
16 Sing.	
17 Go to an art museum.	
18 Go on a picnic in a beautiful park.	
19 Play a game.	
20 Call a friend or family member who	lives far away.
Be as creative and thoughtful as you can.	

39 Session 03 — **Delight** 

## Reach Practice

SESSION 03: DELIGHT

We all learn differently. Some of us prefer reading, others listening, and others doing. If you'd like to go deeper, choose what resonates with you and give it a try! Even if you don't try a Reach Practice, remember to journal in the Sabbath Reflection section before your next session as a group.

#### Reading

Read Part 2 of Sabbath by Dan Allender (pp. 101-145).

#### **Podcast**

Listen to episode 3 of the Sabbath series from the Rule of Life podcast by Practicing the Way.

#### Exercise: the Sabbath box

- Find a decent-sized box.
- Right before you begin your Sabbath, put in the box anything that would keep you from Sabbath delight — your phone, laptop, car keys, wallet, etc.
- Take a moment (ideally with your Sabbath meal community), and write
  out any anxieties, sorrows, or unfinished tasks from the previous session
  (there are always things we ran out of time to get done).
- Say a brief prayer giving it all over to God's care, and then put the box away for your Sabbath as an embodied act of trust in God.
- From there, begin your Sabbath meal or beginning ritual.

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## Sabbath Reflection

SESSION 03: DELIGHT

In between your Sabbath and your next time together with the group for Session 04, take 10 minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions.

O1 Where did I feel resistance?
O2 Where did I feel delight?

03 Where did I most experience God's nearness?

Note: Be as specific as possible as you write. Bullet points are fine, but if you write it out in narrative form your brain will be able to process your insights in a more lasting way.



# Worship

## Overview

For many Western Christians, Sunday has become what Eugene Peterson called a "bastard Sabbath"—the illegitimate offspring of the Sabbath and a secular day off.

Whether you practice Sabbath on Sundays, Saturdays, or another day of the week, it's essential to remember God commands us to "remember the Sabbath by keeping it holy." To keep it "holy" means to sanctify it, set it apart, and dedicate it to God for his special purposes. Sabbath isn't just a day to sleep in, relax, and do whatever brings you joy (it is, but it's more): it's a day to worship. To reorient your entire life back to its center in God.

In our final session of Sabbath, we elevate the Sabbath from a restful, joyful day off to a holy day of worship and delight in God himself.



## Notes

As you watch the teaching as a group, feel free to use this page for notes.		
hat stands out or resonates with you?		

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## Discussion Questions

Now it's time to pause the video to reflect on the teaching in your small groups. Here are some questions to give shape to your discussion:

- 01 In what ways is it easy for your practice of Sabbath to become "sabbish," more of a day off than a day of worship?
- 02 How do you enjoy God? What practices, disciplines, or activities bring you genuine joy in God?
- 03 What "false gods" are you tempted to worship, which, while they may be very good things (or not), pull you away from your holy center in God?

### Practice

SESSION 04: WORSHIP

The practice of Sabbath can slowly change the trajectory of our entire life! Consider how the Spirit is working in you and your community to invite you into deeper worship.

For our final session, we have two exercises for you.

# O1 Practice a light and life-giving version of what the ancients called "fixed-hour prayer."

All that means is you pause two to three times during your 24-hour Sabbath to pray. Not prayer as in intercede for God to move in the world. In fact, in Orthodox Judaism, intercessory prayer is forbidden on the Sabbath because it's a form of work. Prayer in the wider sense is a reorientation of

your heart to God in wonder and awe. One understanding of prayer is coming to rest in God's goodness. Two to three times this Sabbath, rest in God's goodness.

The most ancient and, for many people, the most helpful way to do this is by praying a psalm, such as Psalm 23, 37, 103, or 105.

You can also do this by listening to worship music or praying with a friend or going on a walk in nature—the options are endless.

The end goal is spend as much of the Sabbath as you possibly can in conscious communion with God, just receiving his love for you and giving back your love for him.

Jot down your plan here.		

### O2 Identify two to three practices by which you enjoy God and do them.

It's key to discover what the spiritual writer Gary Thomas calls your "spiritual pathway;" the way you are uniquely wired to enjoy God.

For you this could be time alone in stillness, or it could be throwing a raucous party with your community. It could be walking in nature or reading a novel by the fire. It could be an emotional experience, or it could be the intellectual study of theology, philosophy, or quantum physics. It could be a sensory act such as walking, fishing, or bird-watching.

As you discern if an activity is a good fit or not for your Sabbath practice, it can be difficult to know if certain things are appropriate. One simple rubric is to filter every potential activity through the four movements of Sabbath:

on Stop — Is this ceasing what I do on normal workdays? For example, if you work as a mechanic, but you really enjoy gardening, even though it can be a bit physical, that may be a beautiful Sabbath activity for you. But if you're a landscaper, it's likely not the best fit for your Sabbath practice.

- O2 Rest Is this restful? Does it refill my soul with new energy emotionally, intellectually, physically, spirituality? Things like watching TV may give us a welcome break, but we seldom get done and feel new energy for life.
- O3 Delight Does this activity bring me deep, visceral joy in God? Do I find myself naturally happy and grateful and connected to God as I do it?
- 04 Worship Does this activity connect me more deeply to God and his goodness and beauty? Do I find myself coming alive to the wonder of his nature and spontaneously bursting into praise?

However you enjoy God and whatever the practices you love, do a few of them this coming Sabbath.

The point of both these exercises is to live in what Jesus called "abiding," not only all Sabbath long, but all week long.

	What two to three practices might the Spirit be inviting you into?		
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### Reach Practice

SESSION 04: WORSHIP

We all learn differently. Some of us prefer reading, others listening, and others doing. If you'd like to go deeper, choose what resonates with you and give it a try! Even if you don't try a Reach Practice, remember to journal in the Sabbath Reflection section before your next session as a group.

#### Reading

Read Part 3 and the Conclusion of Sabbath by Dan Allender (pp. 149-194).

#### **Podcast**

Listen to episode 4 of the Sabbath series from the Rule of Life podcast by Practicing the Way.

#### Exercise: Silence and Solitude

Our final Reach Practice is to spend a portion of your Sabbath in the quiet with God. There is a special kind of stillness that comes on the Sabbath when our relationship to time is unhurried, and we savor more than we stress. See if you can tap into that Sabbath time and give it back to God in loving worship.

To do this, we recommend you find a quiet, distraction-free time and place. For many, first thing in the morning is the ideal time, but do whatever works best for your life.

For couples with younger children, consider breaking the day into thirds — a third spent all together in delight, a third for one parent to go be alone to rest and pray while the other plays with the children, and a third where the parents swap places.

Spend your time in silence and solitude reading Scripture, journaling, walking in nature, or just napping and prayerfully resting in God; whatever your pathway is to God's peace and presence.

## Sabbath Reflection

SESSION 04: WORSHIP

After your Sabbath, take 10 minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions.

O1 Where did I feel resistance?
02 Where did I feel delight?

03 Where did I most experience God's nearness?

Continue to share what you are learning about God, Sabbath, and your spiritual journey with a close friend or community member.

Note: Be as specific as possible as you write. Bullet points are fine, but if you write it out in narrative form your brain will be able to process your insights in a more lasting way.