

CRSWLK

# PAUSE



## **CROSSWALK**

## **PAUSE**

**Written by** Dr. Pastor Tim Gillespie - Lead Pastor, Crosswalk Church

Paddy McCoy - Lead Pastor, Crosswalk Church - Portland

Mike Rhynus - Discipleship & Service Pastor, Crosswalk Church - Redlands

Bryant Rodriguez

**Cover Design by** David Siahaan

**Typesetting by** David Siahaan

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Greetings,

Again, we are excited that you are continuing your spiritual journey with us. This series, we will be talking about something that is deeply close to our hearts; The Sabbath. You may have experienced sermon series on the Sabbath before, but perhaps not at Crosswalk. Our ethos is not to fight about a day, but revel in the gift that God gave us through the Sabbath. You will not hear a historical treatise on when a day of worship was changed, nor who did the changing. We don't need to squabble over who is right and who is wrong and why that matters.

Rather, we have assumed that you take the Scriptures as seriously as we do, and because of that the idea of the Sabbath is clear to you. Now, what does it mean in your life and how can we implement this blessing in a more profound manner becomes the question. We are very interested in what it means for a community to understand sabbath, how it relates to work, how it relates to relationships, and what it means for your commitment to God. We believe that a Sabbath is a resistance from the world around us, the prevailing culture, and from the busyness of life. It has been shown to have profound impacts on our health, longevity, and happiness. Because of these things, we will take the time to do justice to this concept that is so deeply held within scripture.

It is on that note that we take a look into what Sabbath is, and what it can be for each and every one of us, to our families, our careers, and our God. Thinking of Sabbath in a more appropriate way gives us the nudges that we need to remember the blessing, the resistance and the powerful gift that it truly is.

Thank you for coming along for the journey.

**Pastor Tim and the Series Guide Team**

# WEEK 1

Genesis 2:1-3

# Day 1

## Genesis 2:1-3

**1 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed.**

**2 On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work.**

**3 And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.**

This ends the Creation story told to us in the first chapter of Genesis. After the work of creation, there is a pause, a moment of rest, of peace, and of wellbeing.

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Why in the world would God need this? Was God tired, was God winded? Was God in desperate need of respite? Or was this idea of a pause, a sabbath, something that was more for us than it was for God?

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Is it possible that God understood that humanity needed something more from this life than simply working, eating, sleeping, and beginning it all again? Perhaps it was an act of grace that allowed for a time in our lives to Pause and rekindle what we really need in our lives?

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**1** What has the idea of \_\_\_\_\_  
Sabbath in creation \_\_\_\_\_  
meant to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**2** Are you in the habit of \_\_\_\_\_  
practicing a pause in \_\_\_\_\_  
your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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**3** What can you \_\_\_\_\_  
reorient in your life to \_\_\_\_\_  
create some space? \_\_\_\_\_  
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# Day 2

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. The Sabbath (FSG Classics) . Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Kindle Edition.

**“Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul. The world has our hands, but our soul belongs to Someone Else. Six days a week we seek to dominate the world, on the seventh day we try to dominate the self.”**

Much of this series comes from the thinking of this great theological rabbi and a counterpart who speaks of Sabbath from a Christian point of view.

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His premise that the Sabbath is a “Palace in Time” that is sacred and Holy, established by our heavenly parent for us, as a gift and a place to inhabit.

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**1** How do you inhabit this “palace” in your life?

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**2** Can we really “dominate the self”? And what would that look like in your life?

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**3** What practices are in place that change the way you experience this pause in your life?

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## Day 3

## Is taking a pause in your day or your week just laziness?

While this seems like a strange question, it was the prevailing thought over the centuries of Roman rule as they came to understand the Jewish abolition of work on one day a week.

Roman culture was based on efficiency and effectiveness. So to take a day when there was no consumption and no commerce would have seemed so out of step with the culture that this Jewish tradition would have been seen as indolent and subversive.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**1** Is your habit of taking \_\_\_\_\_  
a pause considered \_\_\_\_\_  
lazy by anyone else in \_\_\_\_\_  
your life who might \_\_\_\_\_  
not understand? \_\_\_\_\_

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**2** What makes your \_\_\_\_\_  
practice of Sabbath \_\_\_\_\_  
subversive from \_\_\_\_\_  
today's culture? \_\_\_\_\_

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**3** What does your \_\_\_\_\_  
Sabbath say about \_\_\_\_\_  
you? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Day 4

## How do you live your life?

I had a friend who wanted to become a nurse because he loved fishing! I didn't understand when he first said that to me. Then he went to explain that he wanted a job that would allow him the maximum time to fish. I had always thought you took a job that fulfilled your passions and made it feel like you "never worked a day in your life" because you loved your job so much.

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This conversation made me realize that some people work so that they can enjoy the time they are not working. In the same way, we need to understand that the weekdays were made for the sabbath, rather than the sabbath being made as respite and recovery for the workday.

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The idea of sabbath is to be the pinnacle of the week, not the recovery from it.

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**1** Does this change  
your thinking about  
the idea of a sabbath  
in your life?

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**2** What can you do  
to make that pause  
of the sabbath the  
climax of living, rather  
than the recovery  
from it?

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**3** What does the phrase  
“last in creation, first  
in intention” mean to  
you?

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## Day 5

**“Labor is a craft, but perfect rest is an art” (Heschel).**

Perfect rest comes from this idea of Shalom, or accord of body, mind, and imagination. But becoming an artist takes time and discipline. As well, the idea of taking a sabbath is a part time and discipline as well. Some of us may have grown up thinking a Sabbath was full of lists of things that we cannot and should not do, and it has been that to some extent. We sometimes understand the sabbath as a list of abstentions, or things we cannot do. This actually comes from the idea of Negative Theology, or the idea that we can't always say what God is, but we can say what God is not. Perhaps this is why we have experienced the Sabbath in a negative way.

Unfortunately, it was never really explained to us that we abstain from things to add other things. Joy, peace, hope, and even pause. These are the things that we add when we negate other things, like stress, anger, anxiety and frustration from our lives.

[illegible]

**1** What do you abstain  
from?

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**2** But what do you add  
in its place?

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**3** How can you explain  
to someone that  
abstentions actually  
mean additions?

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## Day 6

Three acts happened on that first Sabbath (Genesis 2:2-3).

- 1) God rested
- 2) God blessed
- 3) God hallowed.

Therefore, this prohibition from work was so that we could understand the blessings that had already been given through the sabbath. As we build our “Palace in Time” we need to understand the overwhelming blessing that has been placed on the concept of time being given back to God. It is a requirement because it is a blessing to be received. God is not interested in us ignoring the blessings that are given, and have been given since creation. The concept of Sabbath is extremely important for our wellbeing.

[illegible][illegible]

**1** What practices do \_\_\_\_\_  
you have in place to \_\_\_\_\_  
create downtime for \_\_\_\_\_  
yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

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**2** What can you do to \_\_\_\_\_  
inhabit your \_\_\_\_\_  
“Palace in Time?” \_\_\_\_\_

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**3** How does your \_\_\_\_\_  
schedule lend itself \_\_\_\_\_  
to downtime? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Day 7

## Week 1 of 5 Sermon Series Companion Guide

**Introduction** - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

### **OPEN**

What is your earliest memory of the Sabbath? Was it more knowledge-based or experiential?

Think about and share one or two of your best (or worst) memories of Sabbath.

### **HEAD** (digging into the passage)

- Read together Genesis 2:1-3, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that immediately pop-up.
- What is the importance of taking a day-off? Why did God “rest” from His work?
- What is the biggest difference between God’s actions on days 1-6 and day 7?
- What elements were present in God’s proclamation on day 7?

### **HEART** (lessons for us today/ application)

- What does “Sabbath” mean to you today? What does it mean in the wider culture? Are these meanings similar or dissimilar?
- If the first “holy” object in the history of the world is applied to time; how much emphasis are you placing on that space and time each week? What can/should you do differently to honor and recognize the holiness of the Sabbath?

### **HANDS** (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

- You may have grown up with a list of things you couldn’t do on the Sabbath. This week, try to think about and encounter the Sabbath

as a delight. Imagine new ways  
to experience the holiness and  
sanctity of this special day.

- What does/should Sabbath-keeping look like in our time and place? How can your life change or shift to see that happen?
- What do we need to do in our lives to realign ourselves with the beauty and holiness of Sabbath?

## LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week  
as a reminder)

“And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy...”

## Genesis 2:3

[illegible]

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## Notes

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# **WEEK 2**

# Day 8

## Work is good.

In fact, the civilization we belong to and thrive in has been built due to hard work, technological advancement, and simple ingenuity. These things lead us to a greater understanding of commerce, health, and even wellbeing. However, it is easy for us to consider that civilization is a bad thing, and that our faith will ultimately save us from our own evil invention.

However, a faith in God is not simply an escape, it is that we are more involved in the world by creating more love, joy, equity, happiness, and hope. Therefore, to stay in the world, we do need the pause that the sabbath gives us. Sometimes, a break is what we need in order to rejuvenate ourselves and prepare for the work that God has for us. While the sabbath is not simply respite, it certainly has that aspect to it.

**1** What part of modern civilization gets you down? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**2** Is there something you do to “sabbath” in your day? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
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**3** What is your best way to downshift? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Day 9

Adam was put into the Garden in order to steward it.  
(Dress it and keep it - Genesis 2:15).

That means that labor is not only the destiny of what we are to do, but there is a holy dignity to it as well. However, after he and Eve transgressed, labor became something else. In some respects, it became the misery of humanity. But the Sabbath is not a depreciation of that labor, rather it is an affirmation of it. It is a recognition of the dignity in which we work, and the sacred duty to which everyone is asked to take part, as much as he or she is able.

Our work is holy, regardless of what it is that we are finding to do with our hands. Therefore, take joy in your work, but also create structures that allow you to live independently from it.

This is the blessing of the Pause.

**1** Do you like what you \_\_\_\_\_  
do for a living? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**2** How do you find the \_\_\_\_\_  
sacred part of it? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**3** Can you ever truly un- \_\_\_\_\_  
plug from your work \_\_\_\_\_  
and find indepen- \_\_\_\_\_  
dence from it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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# Day 10

Living independently of technical civilization is the goal of a Sabbath.

To abstain from activity that aims at remaking or shaping the things of space should be our desire.

It is our opportunity to stop the struggle we have to create a space in this world for ourselves, to create a life and lifestyle in which we find our identity, and it is the time when we can live at peace with the world that creates so much struggle in our lives.

**1** When do you turn \_\_\_\_\_  
your phone off each \_\_\_\_\_  
day? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**2** How do you live \_\_\_\_\_  
independently of \_\_\_\_\_  
technical civilization? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**3** What seems to wear \_\_\_\_\_  
you down each day? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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# Day 11

Would you ever consider living in a cave to be away from all the worldly things?

There is a story of a 3rd or 4th century early church father who left his life in Alexandria to go out into the desert in order to find solace and communicate with God more profoundly. As the story goes, after 25 years or so, someone went looking for him. He was living in an abandoned castle in the middle of the Sinai desert.

The one who found him went back and told others about his discovery of this wise old desert father. When people started to make pilgrimages to see this man, they were met with rocks and curses, as this old sage did not go into the desert to be found, but to be away from the world.

**1** How can we find ourselves away from the world without having to go to the desert?

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**2** Have you ever wanted to run away from it all? What stopped you, what was attractive about the idea?

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**3** How can you find a way to retreat every day within the way you live your life?

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## Day 12

**Are we called to live away from the civilization where we find ourselves? Or are we called to find Sabbath within the spaces and places we inhabit and are called to?**

What makes us think that there is a greater holiness in separating ourselves from the lives we live than there is in engaging with those around us, and then finding time within those spaces to commune with God.

While finding a time to Sabbath takes intention, it doesn't necessarily mean that we leave all that we have behind.

[illegible]This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

**1** Where can you  
sabbath today?

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**2** What is the greatest  
moment in your day?

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**3** How do you  
remember to create  
space each day in  
your life?

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# Day 13

What kind of contentment do you gain with the work you take on each day?

Are you someone who works in compassion and healing? Someone who works in a field that brings joy to people? Are you someone who creates something new for the world to experience or use? What are the moments you find holy in your day and in your work?

It is true that God blesses our work and uses it for his ends as well. Work is something that has been given to us by God in order for us to be able to use our God given talents to both enrich our lives and the lives of others as well.

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**1** What do you love about your work?

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**2** How does your work express the love God has for his people?

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**3** How do you show others the importance of God's grace through your work?

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**Introduction** - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

## OPEN

What is one of your favorite Sabbath activities that helps you break free from the pace of the week and the pressures of your labor in order to find refreshment at the feet of Jesus?

## HEAD (digging into the passage)

- Read as a group Genesis 2: 15 and Exodus 20: 8-11 and share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you had as you read through the passage.
- In the beginning, was work/labor meant to be a blessing or a curse? How do you think it was a blessing?
- If work/labor was a blessing, why do you think God rested from it?
- When did the call to labor change from blessing to curse? What changed about it? (Read also Genesis 3: 17-19)

- One of the first things God does when He rescues the Israelites from Egypt is to remind them about the Sabbath. Why do you think He had to remind them?
- Exodus 20: 8 says to keep it holy. The word for “holy” means “set apart.” So how do we seek to set Sabbath apart from the other days a week?
- Why do you think God included your household and anyone living among you in the instructions for Sabbath?

## HEART (lessons for us today/ application)

- How would you define Sabbath to someone who knew nothing about it?
- Is Sabbath just a one day a week experience, or are there ways to

- “Sabbath” throughout the week? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Are there elements, or parts, of your daily work that you find are a blessing to you and/or to others? Are there elements that you don’t love to do but you have to do it anyway?
- In the NLT, it doesn’t say to stop working, but to stop your ordinary work. If work is subjective, and what is work for one person isn’t for another, then why do we spend so much time judging each other for what we do or don’t do on Sabbath? Could one activity bring me closer to God but not you and vice versa? Explain.

**HANDS** (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

- What joy can you find in your labor this week? What aspect of your day-to-day work this week can be a blessing to you and to others? How can you seek to have Sabbath moments, respite in God, while you work?

## **LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK**

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

“Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

(Matthew 11: 28-30, NLT)

“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.” (Colossians 3: 23, NLT)

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# **WEEK 3**

Exodus 5:4-19

# Day 15

## Exodus 5:4, 5

The Sabbath As Resistance

- 4** Pharaoh replied, “Moses and Aaron, why are you distracting the people from their tasks? Get back to work!
- 5** Look, there are many of your people in the land, and you are stopping them from their work.”

Why was Pharaoh upset? Moses and Aaron were creating disruption to the work that people were doing for him, and that was unconscionable to the culture at the time.

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Remember, the Israelites were not slaves when they came to Egypt, rather, they had been invited to share in the reserves that had been saved by Joseph when he was in charge and following God’s leading in his life.

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Therefore, in the ensuing years, the relationship between the Israelites and the Egyptians had taken a turn for the worse.

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**1** What distracts you \_\_\_\_\_  
from your work? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**2** Have you ever felt like \_\_\_\_\_  
a slave to your work? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**3** Does your boss seem \_\_\_\_\_  
like the Pharaoh at \_\_\_\_\_  
times? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

## Day 16

## Exodus 5:6-9

6 That same day Pharaoh sent this order to the Egyptian slave drivers and the Israelite foremen:

7 “Do not supply any more straw for making bricks. Make the people get it themselves!

8 But still require them to make the same number of bricks as before. Don't reduce the quota. They are lazy. That's why they are crying out, 'Let us go and offer sacrifices to our God.'

**9 Load them down with more work. Make them sweat! That will teach them to listen to lies!"**

As you can see, there was no thought to a Sabbath in the Pharaoh's words. The major theme of this pericope is production, and the relentless pursuit of it.

When the Israelites were not making their quota's they were called "lazy" and it seemed that they were not respected. Pharaoh even says "make them sweat" as if their work were not hard enough already.

What happens to us when we are demanded to keep up such a rigorous schedule in our work?

**1** What would you do if \_\_\_\_\_  
you found yourself in \_\_\_\_\_  
this situation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**2** Does your boss email \_\_\_\_\_  
or text you at home? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**3** Does work never stop \_\_\_\_\_  
for you? How do you \_\_\_\_\_  
push back on that \_\_\_\_\_  
idea? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Day 17

## Exodus 5:10-12

10 So the slave drivers and foremen went out and told the people: "This is what Pharaoh says: I will not provide any more straw for you.

11 Go and get it yourselves. Find it wherever you can. But you must produce just as many bricks as before!”

12 So the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt in search of stubble to use as straw.

You see, an Egyptian economy is always a scarcity economy. More and more with less and less. This is a very uncomfortable way to live, to work, and to exist. The Egyptians were forcing the Israelites to go into their own pocket, their own time, and their own families to come up with the materials in order to get the work done. Honestly, this reminds me of teachers who have to pay for their own supplies, or workers who have to get their own equipment to get the job done. This is a tough way to live, and it creates a sense of bondage to an organization that has a hard time making sure they pay a livable wage.

[illegible]

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**1** Is your work situation \_\_\_\_\_  
built on an Egyptian \_\_\_\_\_  
economy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2** Where are you having \_\_\_\_\_  
to struggle with \_\_\_\_\_  
doing more and more \_\_\_\_\_  
with less and less? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3** How can you begin to \_\_\_\_\_  
change this reality in \_\_\_\_\_  
your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Day 18

Exodus 5:13, 14

**13** Meanwhile, the Egyptian slave drivers continued to push hard. “Meet your daily quota of bricks, just as you did when we provided you with straw!” they demanded.

**14** Then they whipped the Israelite foremen they had put in charge of the work crews. “Why haven’t you met your quotas either yesterday or today?” they demanded.

Have you ever worked for someone who felt and treated you like this? There is nothing worse than being treated poorly in a job that you have given your life to.

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When you are taken for granted, when you are used and feel as if you are taken advantage of, all of these things create a sense of worthlessness that no one should feel from their work and their careers.

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Too often, the entities that we work for don’t understand that their workers are often part of the mission as well.

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**1** What can you do to help your employer change the way they treat their workers?

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**2** Are you an employer who needs to change your ways?

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**3** What is the mission of the organization you work for?

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## Day 19

## Exodus 5:15, 16

15 So the Israelite foremen went to Pharaoh and pleaded with him. “Please don’t treat your servants like this,” they begged.

16 “We are given no straw, but the slave drivers still demand, ‘Make bricks!’ We are being beaten, but it isn’t our fault! Your own people are to blame!”

Too many people have this sense of hopelessness in their work situation. But what does any of this have to do with the Sabbath? That is a fair question. The sabbath is the resistance that God has set in place to combat the idea that life is only about production and consumption. The truth is that life is about much more than this and we can live lives that are not bound to the endless cycle of production each and every day. It is sometimes hard to see this, as we live in a world that is defined so often by our jobs, our income, our acquisitions, and our consumption. But that is not the way things are supposed to be in the world that God created. We are destroying this planet and our own lives by this kind of living.

[illegible]

**1** What can you do to break the cycle that we see in the texts above?

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**2** How do we take back control of our lives from the production/consumption cycle?

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**3** How could a Sabbath break this chain?

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# Day 20

Exodus 5:17-19

**17 But Pharaoh shouted, “You’re just lazy! Lazy! That’s why you’re saying, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifices to the Lord.’**

**18 Now get back to work! No straw will be given to you, but you must still produce the full quota of bricks.”**

**19 The Israelite foremen could see that they were in serious trouble when they were told, “You must not reduce the number of bricks you make each day.”**

This story always reminds me that the organizations we work for will rarely see the error of their ways. The mission of the organization you work matters a great deal to how they will see their employees.

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What is the mission of the organization you work for? Do they value compassion, joy, balance and hope as much as they do a bottom line report? Do they believe that mission should always lead the margin?

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**1** What can you do to help them understand that we work in an economy of abundance, rather than an economy of scarcity?

**2** What is the greatest thing about where you work, and how can you leverage that to change the culture of it?

**3** Why do you think that God installed Sabbath into a work week?

**Introduction** - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

## OPEN

What is the most challenging job you've ever had? What aspects of the job made it so difficult? Have you ever had a "fun" workplace, and if so, what made it fun?

## HEAD (digging into the passage)

- Read together Exodus 5:1-4.  
Pharaoh and, by extension, Egypt, are often cited in the Bible as stand-ins for atheism. From these passages, why do you think they exemplify atheism?
- Read Exodus 5:5-9. This text seems to be a decree or statement issued towards the Egyptian taskmasters in charge of the Hebrews. How did Pharaoh make the Hebrews' labor harder? What were the reasons he used to justify the orders?
- Read Exodus 5:10-11. How did the taskmasters convey the new work conditions? Compare and contrast Pharaoh's order with the taskmasters. Why do you think they shortened Pharaoh's words?
- Who received punishment for the reduced productivity (v. 14)?
- The Israelite foremen approach Pharaoh and give a plea for compassion in Exodus 5:15-16. From the words they use, how would you describe their tone?
- Pharaoh continues to harden his heart towards the Israelites' requests. What does he think will "cure" the Israelites of their desire to go and sacrifice to the LORD? What do you make of Pharaoh's accusations?
- In Exodus 5:19-22, we get an epilogue to the narrative that

Pastor Tim is teaching this week. Although we won't be studying it in its entirety, notice that both the Israelite foremen and Moses are troubled by their experiences. As they entered the sabbath economy, they didn't expect to meet extreme resistance from the Egyptian economy.

**HEART** (lessons for us today/  
application)

- Who do you have authority or influence over today? When they bring requests to you, how do you react?
- Even if you can't meet every request that comes your way, are you the kind of person who responds with empathy?
- The Israelites were forced to scatter around Egypt, searching for the straw they needed to meet their brick quotas. They had no choice but to prioritize their productivity. How can we take back control of our lives from the production/consumption cycle?

- Has work ever become an idol that intentionally or unintentionally kept you away from "sacrificing to the LORD"?
- What are some of the ways our current economy wages war against sabbathing?
- Describe your ideal sabbath.

**HANDS** (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

- Laziness is used again and again in the Exodus 5 narrative to dismiss the requests from Moses and Aaron and the Israelite foremen. The Egyptian economy depends on massive amounts of consumption and production, which means that anything that breaks away will be shamed and attacked. But the sabbath reminds us that we are not machines. What rituals can we develop to protect us from pinning our worth on what we own and what we make?
- What can you or your small group commit to doing next week to lighten the burden of brickmaking on someone within your social circle?

## LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week  
as a reminder)

“Come to me, all of you who are weary  
and carry heavy burdens, and I will give  
you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let  
me teach you, because I am humble  
and gentle at heart, and you will find  
rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy  
to bear, and the burden I give you is  
light.”

(Matt 11:28-30)

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# **WEEK 4**

John 14

# Day 22

John 14:1-7

1 “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.

2 There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.

4 And you know the way to where I am going.”

5 “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

6 Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

7 If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”

To take a Sabbath is to fulfill the command that we see in verse 1 of chapter 14. “Trust in God, and trust also in me.”

To take on the Sabbath into your life and practice means that you are willing to trust that God has all of this in hand. It is to submit to his abundance, and to give in to his authority. Without the willingness to trust in God, Sabbath can become either a tool for spiritual superiority, or another notch in our belts of spiritual practice.

The sabbath is not so much a spiritual practice as it is a spiritual place of safety. You don’t “keep” the Sabbath, rather, you give it away.

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**1** What is the difference between keeping and giving away the Sabbath?

**2** What do your Sabbath's look like, where do you find yourself trusting in God?

**3** How can we keep trusting in God, through Jesus, and how does the Sabbath encourage this?

# Day 23

John 14:8-11

**8** Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

**9** Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?

**10** Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me.

**11** Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

The Sabbath is a time for us to recognize the connection between the father and the son in the trinity. Here, Jesus is charged to know that his disciples did not understand what they were looking for in him, and where he and the father aligned in their experience together. The Sabbath gives us the opportunity to see Jesus and to see the father in all they are, both together and apart. It gives us the space we need to know how deeply connected they are with each other, and how much they want to be connected with us.

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**1** How does the Sabbath help you connect with the Father and the son?

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**2** Where do you see the Father in the stories of Jesus on which you reflect?

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**3** Why does the sabbath give us such a great moment to reflect on their connection?

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## John 14:12-14

**14 Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!**

These two things are important as Jesus was Lord of the Sabbath and not subject to it. As well, in the same way that God did not need a sabbath after creation, but put it in place for us, Jesus shows us the incredible need that we have to be together with God, to make him a priority and to connect with others by showing us a more excellent way forward; the way of togetherness. We are blessed to be brought into the relationship that God has with Jesus. We are invited and given the authority and power to bless others as Jesus has blessed us.

[illegible]

**1** How can you be a blessing today?

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**2** What can you do to help others understand the power and expanse of Grace?

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**3** Is there a way that you can feel closer to those around you today?

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# Day 25

John 14:15-21

15 “If you love me, obey my commandments.

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you.

17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.

18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

19 Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live.

20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”

Here, Jesus engages the conversation about the Holy Spirit, and the permanent nature of the Spirit’s relationship to us. He will never leave us. This is intrinsic to the idea of the Sabbath due to the permanent nature of the sabbath in scripture.

In Isaiah (66:23) the Sabbath is mentioned as something that we will even

keep in the new earth. Therefore, the installation of the Holy Spirit as advocate, as well as the continued command to honor the Sabbath shows us the permanence of the relationship that God has established with us.

This mirrors the eternal relationship that Jesus has with the Father and Spirit due to their relationship in the trinity.

**1** Who is your oldest friend, how long have you known each other?

**2** What does this relationship give you?

**3** How can you establish relationships that will continue well past this life?

# Day 26

The Sabbath is a time to remember the greatest relationship that we have.

God is a God of relationships, as this value is expressed in the concept and reality of the Trinity. While the trinity can be a tough thing to get our heads around, it is definitely alluded to in scripture, and it holds a great deal of meaning and importance for us in the expression of what it means to be a believer. We can use the sabbath as a reminder to us of how much God is interested in our lives, in our loves, and in the orientation of our hearts.

This is a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines, similar to notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.[illegible]

**1** How can you most effectively use the sabbath to remember what God has done for you?

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**2** How can you boost your relationship with others during the Sabbath?

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**3** What do you love most about what God has given you, and how can you integrate that into your life and into your sabbath?

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# Day 27

These texts remind us of the perichoretic relationship that Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father have toward one another.

This means that they dwell together, they are mutually abiding in one another, and they are so close to be as one. The Sabbath, or taking time to remember these relationships, to pause and consider them, is a true gift and a blessing.

Without the Sabbath, our lives would be one endless rat race that we could never stop. However, because of the Sabbath we are deeply investing in one another, in God, and in what he has called us to.

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**1** How does the sabbath more closely connect us with God and others?

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**2** What is your best memory of the sabbath?

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**3** How can the sabbath be included in your spiritual practice more profoundly?

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**Introduction** - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

## OPEN

Think about and share a moment when you felt close to God. Where were you? What was happening? What was the result of that connection? Were you pleased? Satisfied? Left wanting more?

## HEAD (digging into the passage)

- Read together John 14, 17:1-5, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that immediately pop-up.
- Jesus had just shared some fairly troubling words with the disciples [he will be betrayed, denied, and then leave them] but then he says, 'Don't be troubled...' (14:1). What does Jesus invite his disciples to do in order to fight the urge to be troubled? How does that invitation impact us today?
- How does Jesus describe his "Father's house" in this passage? What image(s) does that provoke and what peace does it bring? Is that peace accessible here and now? How so?
- In 14:15 Jesus says, "If you love me, obey my commandments." How does your love for Jesus inform the way you live? When people look at your life and examine the way you live, do you think they can easily conclude that you love Jesus by the way you obey his commandments?
- Jesus introduces the Holy Spirit as another Counselor which can also be translated as comforter, encourager, or advocate. Which one of those titles speak to you the most today?

application)

**HANDS** (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

## LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week  
as a reminder)

“I will not abandon you as orphans--I will come to you...For I will live again, and you will, too. When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”

John 14:18-20

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# WEEK 5

# Day 29

# The Sabbath is the presence of God in the world.

It is a memorial in time in which we see God in ways that we have perhaps never seen before. It is a way in which we grab a hold of the reality of God, we see him exemplified in his perfection, and we adjust our schedules and our lives accordingly. It is a space in time where we find ourselves truly able to connect with God, with his attributes, and with his love for us. Without this day, we are truly missing a great portion of the incredible love that God has for us.

[illegible]This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

**1** How do you recognize the Sabbath in your weekly routine?

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**2** Pause means that we take a break. From what do you take a break on your Sabbath?

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**3** Is Sabbath, or at least the concept of it, relegated to once a week, or can you find time to Sabbath each day?

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# Day 30

## Why do we make a day Holy?

We are ramping up to the 4th of July this week, a day when Americans have a tendency to remember those things that at some point made this country special. While we could argue the many benefits and drawbacks of America today, this day is a memorialization of the history that has gone before. I remember the 4th of July in 1976, at our bicentennial, and the way we thought about our history. The difference between this holiday and the idea of the sabbath is that the sabbath is a celebration of the ongoing commitment that God has toward his people and their love back toward him.

[illegible][illegible]

**1** What is your favorite holiday, and what does it remember?

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**2** What do you try and remember on the Sabbath?

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**3** Are you concerned about the way you “Keep the Sabbath”?

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# Day 31

Many of us grew up in homes that “guarded the edges” of the Sabbath.

Many of us grew up in homes that “guarded the edges” of the Sabbath. They were deeply concerned with the rules that kept the Sabbath holy, but we seemed to have missed the blessing of the sabbath that is supposed to be inherent in it. In this way, we lost our sense of awe and wonder about the sabbath, and it became a burden, and not the good kind.

It became an exercise in patience, rather than joy. It was not something we looked forward to, but a time of anxiety, fear, and a sense that we might just be doing it wrong. This created a dread of the sabbath, and it is such a shame. To reexamine what the Sabbath is in our lives, in our practice, and in our faith is the only way to wrestle it back from the experiences of growing up.

**1** How was sabbath for  
you growing up?

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**2** Did you love it or  
dread it?

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**3** How can you  
recapture it's  
meaning in your life?

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# Day 32

**If a day could hold eternity, it is the Sabbath.**

It is a celebration of what God has done, what God is doing, and what God will do. Do we approach it in this way? The sabbath and eternity are made of the same stuff, the same reality. It is a mindset that allows for the eternal to touch our temporal lives. It is the poetry of heaven and the long look into eternity that creates a greater understanding of the reality of God and his people.

To diminish the idea of the sabbath and make it into nothing more than a day filled with rules is to diminish the eternity we find within. It is a sad state of affairs when we think we have dominion over the meaning and keeping of the Sabbath.

**1** When have you \_\_\_\_\_  
tried to subdue the \_\_\_\_\_  
sabbath in your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

**2** Where do you see \_\_\_\_\_  
God working most \_\_\_\_\_  
profoundly in your life \_\_\_\_\_  
on the sabbath? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

**3** What is the hope you \_\_\_\_\_  
find in this weekly \_\_\_\_\_  
connection with God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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# Day 33

Did you ever think that if you have a distaste for the sabbath you might have a distaste for the eternity we will taste in heaven?

“On earth as it is in heaven” are no simple words. They are a caution to us who seek the eternity that God has promised us. It is the recognition that God, in his wisdom, was willing to give us a moment of eternity in each week we live.

To access that eternity is to recognize that God has been working all along and is interested in creating the eternity promised within us. While all this seems a bit poetic, there is a truth we must recognize. God is with us, here and in eternity, and we should become comfortable with his presence.

**1** When do you feel the presence of God most profoundly?

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**2** What can you put into your life as practice that will remind you of his presence?

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**3** How can you connect your everyday life with eternity?

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# Day 34

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath* (FSG Classics). Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Kindle Edition.

**“There is much that philosophy could learn from the Bible. To the philosopher the idea of the good is the most exalted idea. But to the Bible the idea of the good is penultimate; it cannot exist without the holy. The good is the base, the holy is the summit. Things created in six days He considered good, the seventh day He made holy.”**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

**1** Why would we leave \_\_\_\_\_  
you with this quote? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**2** How can you lean \_\_\_\_\_  
into the Holy? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**3** Has this changed \_\_\_\_\_  
the way you want \_\_\_\_\_  
to experience the \_\_\_\_\_  
Sabbath in your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Introduction** - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

## OPEN

What is one of your favorite holidays of the year? Why is it one of your favorites? What traditions do you do on that holiday that helps you celebrate?

## HEAD (digging into the passage)

- Growing up, did you know about the Sabbath and if so, was it a good thing or a bad thing? Explain. If you didn't know, when did you learn and how did you learn about it?
- Read as a group I Samuel 7: 1-2 and share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you had as you read through the passage.
- What did the ark of the covenant represent to the Israelites?
- The Philistines had captured the ark and had it for 7 months, so for 7 months, the Israelites did not have the presence of God with them as they understood it. So did God leave them, or had they left God? Explain.
- If God's presence is not contained to a box, why do you think He allowed the ark to be a symbol of His presence?
- What do God's presence and Sabbath have to do with each other?

## HEART (lessons for us today/ application)

- The sin of the Israelites, as we continue to read about in I Samuel 7, was idolatry. How is practicing Sabbath able to help free us from our worship or dependence on

idols (could also read John 3:30 as a potential framework for what happens on Sabbath)?

- If Sabbath and eternity go together, why do you think some do not seem happy as they try to keep Sabbath holy?
- Why is it important to celebrate Sabbath as a relationship with the peace-giving presence of the Almighty, instead of relegating it to a list of do's and don'ts?
- If Sabbath contains an element of eternity, what about one of your favorite Sabbath activities could you see spending eternity doing? What would you want to do more of during the eternity Sabbath that you didn't get enough of this last Sabbath?
- What are some of your favorite ways to recognize and celebrate God's presence?

**HANDS** (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

- What are some practices that we could put into our daily lives this week to remind us that God's presence is always with us, and to Sabbath throughout the week as well as on the seventh-day?

### **LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK**

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

"...And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

(Matthew 28: 20, NLT)

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## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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