

Forming a People - Part 7
A People Learning to Rest
Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15; Ex. 31:12-18
October 23, 2022

- I. The COMMANDMENT in the MIDDLE. (v.8-11; Deut 5:12-15)
 - A. REMEMBER this DAY... (v.8)
 - B. ...By SETTING it APART. (v.8,11)
 - C. This is to be DONE in COMMUNITY. (v.10)
 - 1. To FOLLOW the EXAMPLE set by God. (v.11)
 - 2. To LIVE a DIFFERENT way. (Deut. 5:15)

The “sabbath” has become one of those things we are aware of, but we often blissfully ignore. Or if we don’t ignore it, we tend toward legalism by marking it with a list of “do’s and don’ts” that tends to strip it of the power God intended it to have as He shapes us into His own image.

- 1. Kids Question: If you had a free day to do whatever you wanted what would you do?
- 2. What has your past experience been with the practice of sabbath? What things have guided you in your current understanding of sabbath?

- II. God GIVES some further EXPLANATION. (Ex. 31:12-18)
 - A. A SIGN of the COVENANT. (v.12-13,17)
 - B. A WAY to locate ultimate RESPONSIBILITY. (v.13)
 - C. A COMMAND to take SERIOUSLY. (v.14-15)
 - D. The SABBATH is to be a CELEBRATION. (v.16)

After the people heard the voice of God giving the commandments, Moses went up the mountain to hear the specifics of how these things were to play out. The last thing God explained to him before he headed back down the mountain with the tablets was the importance of the Sabbath. This middle commandment is important.

- 3. How might practicing sabbath function as a “sign of the covenant” in your own life? What is your life saying as you adopt a sabbath practice?
- 4. What stands out to most (and why) from Ex. 31:12-18?

- III. Why PUT this one in the MIDDLE? (Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21)
 - A. Receiving: It correctly ORIENTS us toward GOD. (Ex. 31:13)

B. Connecting: It LOCATES us within a COMMUNITY. (Ex. 20:10; 31:16; Dt. 5:14-15)

Why use this one to break up the other two sections. The first three commands are about relating to God, the last 6 are about relating to each other. This one that connects those two sections actually glues them together. It becomes a key in helping us live out the other nine.

5. What does it mean on a practical day to day basis that God is the one who makes you holy? Does that make us passive in our pursuit of God?
6. How might a consistent sabbath practice shape the way we related to the people around us? To material possessions?

IV. SUMMING up the SABBATH.

- A. **STOP - God can HANDLE this. (Ex. 31:13; Acts 17:24-25)**
- B. **REST - Sabbath is a GIFT. (Ex. 16:29; Mk. 2:27; Mt. 11:28-30)**
- C. **DELIGHT - A time to CELEBRATE (Ex. 31:16; Is. 58:13)**
- D. **WORSHIP - A day set apart to HONOUR God. (Ex. 20:10; Dt. 5:14)**

Can we boil all of this down into some mental hooks that we can hang our understanding of Sabbath on? You bet we can. These four words help us to understand the purpose of Sabbath. If you want to explore how to live these out on a weekly basis in your own life, why not join the Tuesday evening Sabbath series coming up this week.

7. How easy is it for you to stop and rest? To do nothing? What things in your life resist those two actions?
8. What activities bring you delight? Do those things honour God? In what ways? How might they play a role in your “sabbath”?

“Our patterns of work and rest reveal what we believe to be true about God and ourselves. God alone requires no limits on his activity. To rest is to acknowledge that we humans are limited by design. We are created for rest just as surely as we are created for labor. An inability or unwillingness to cease from our labours is a confession of unbelief, an admission that we view ourselves as creator and sustainer of our own universes.”

— Jen Wilkin, *Ten Words to Live by: Delighting in and Doing What God Commands*