

# Rest

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, so good morning to you that are here with us for the first time. Thanks for letting us have that little family moment. Those of you who are listening online, glad you can listen in. We are in the last installment of our Fruitful Series.

And I know, I'm so sorry. We're all probably sad that it's coming to an end. But next week, we're gonna be jumping into Advent, which we love this time of year. And so we just wanna say, man, hopefully with this Fruitful Series, it's been helpful for you and just letting the gospel speak to you in your life and the various aspects of our lives.

And today we're gonna talk about an important one and one we can all relate to and one that is meaningful and significant to all of us, and that's work and rest. Now we can think like, man, work and rest, these aren't very spiritual topics, are they?

We might wonder how the gospel could speak meaningfully into either one of those things, but actually God cares very deeply about both. I mean, think about this. He set the pattern and example for his creation and how it's meant to operate with work and rest rhythms.

In the very beginning, this is how he introduces himself. He's a creating God. And what does he do? He created all things in six days and then rests on the seventh, which if you think about it, it's fascinating that our standard of time measurement, one of the significant ones is a 24-hour day and a seven-day week.

[ 1 : 27 ] The Bible begins with establishing a work and rest rhythm because that is how God ordained his creation to work. And so it is good to work and it is good to rest.

And this rhythm that God set up, it's not arbitrary, right? It's not like, well, I guess we just do that because we have to tell time somehow. No, there are real ramifications if rhythms of work and rest are ignored.

I mean, think about this. If you're a farmer, I don't know if we have any farmers in the room. I'm guessing not too many, but farmers know you can ruin a field by perpetually sowing and harvesting it.

At some point, you have to let the ground rest. Why? So nutrients in the soil can recover and renew. And if you don't do that, if you overuse a field and never let it rest, it won't produce great crops.

And at some point it'll be so depleted, it'll be hard to grow anything. Now, one of the most curious rest rhythms God mandated for Israel was actually with regard to the ground, right?

[ 2 : 30 ] He wanted to let the ground rest every seventh year. In Leviticus 25, three to five, it says, for six years, you shall sow your field. And for six years, you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits.

But in the seventh year, there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.

You shall not reap what grows of itself in your harvest or gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.

Now, this is very intriguing, right? A whole year of doing nothing. And this was an important law that God mandated his people to follow. And he gave it to his people when they came into the promised land and gave it to them as an inheritance.

God said, don't overwork the land, it needs rest. And we're a lot like that, right? If we overwork and never rest, we don't have much to give.

[ 3 : 40 ] Now, having a Sabbath year, I mean, that sounds pretty amazing. Like, sign me up for that, right? Now, it may have worked back then in the context like a whole nation being on board with that, but like, that's not us today.

I'm guessing your bosses or your clients wouldn't be getting on board with a whole year off, right? Like, hey, you know what? I'm just gonna push pause on this project. See you in a year. Is that cool?

They're probably not gonna say, yeah, sure, it sounds great, go for it. The point the Bible is making here, it's not prescriptive. It's not saying, hey, you gotta do it this way or else. It's actually what it is.

It's showing us a principle. It's bringing us into an important principle. Sabbath rest is for your benefit. But here's the thing. That benefit, interestingly enough, it's about you, but it's more than just about you.

See, Exodus 23, 10 to 11, it talks about this Sabbath year of rest again, but it puts a different spin on it. It says, for six years, you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, but the seventh year, you shall let it rest and lie fallow.

[ 4 : 45 ] Why? That the poor of your people may eat, and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat, your beasts of burden. You shall do likewise with your vineyard and with your olive orchard.

And what this verse is telling us is that when you rest well, others around you benefit too. Let me just say this. I don't know how you are, but let me just do some confessing here.

I know what happens to me when I overwork and I start to feel burnout. I get grumpy. I get tired. I get resentful. Like, I get resentful to not wanna help anybody.

I mope around feeling sorry for myself. I get cynical about a lot of things. Just to be honest, like, man, Jess, it sounds like you're a miserable person to be around. Yeah, I'm a miserable person to be around when I get burnout and I don't wrestle well.

Now, what I just confessed is very real, but it should give us pause to think more deeply about rest and its impact, not just on our bodies, but on our souls.

[ 5 : 48 ] All those things that I talked about, those attitudes and emotions that are coming out of my heart are being manifested through my body in countenance, actions, and words towards others that affect others.

And here's my point. What you do with your body affects your soul. That is absolutely true. See, the Bible tells us that we are integrated beings.

God made us body and he made us soul. And those things are so integrated, what you do to one will affect the other. You know, I counseled a married couple years and years and years ago.

They're not in this room, so don't start thinking like, who is he talking about? And when I met with them, they were like, man, our marriage is not in a good place. And they started listing all their marriage problems, right?

It was, I feel ignored. I don't feel loved. There's anger. There's bitterness. There's withdrawal. The romance is gone. We don't have time for each other. So what I decided to do and something I learned from biblical counseling is just before you run into, you know, start rebuking the demons, it's like sometimes these things just have practical roots to them.

- [ 6 : 55 ] And you got to ask those kind of questions. So I asked them, well, why don't you tell me what your typical week looks like? Well, they were both working over 60 hours a week.
- On top of that, they were in a life stage where one of them was taking care of ailing parents who lived hours away. They also wanted to uphold a certain lifestyle that put them in debt so they had to work hard to pay for the debt for a nice home, new cars.
- They had boat. They had a boat. Like there was just a lot of stuff going on. And because of that, they never took vacation with each other, like for more than a few days.
- On paper, here's the thing, they were doing all the good Christian things, daily devotions, Sunday church, community group, right? Check, check, check.
- Guess what? Guess what their problem was? They were absolutely exhausted. That's what their real problem was. They had overextended themselves.
- [ 7 : 55 ] They were too exhausted to care well for each other or to look out for each other. They had run too hard for too long. They had zero nutrients left in their body and soul.
- And the time that they were giving to Jesus was being quickly drained away by their overcommitted and overfunctioning lifestyle that made no room for rest.
- So they did what people do and they overworked too long. They went into survival mode. And you know what? Survivors are selfish. When you have nothing left to give, you end up living for yourself, which is opposite to the way of Jesus.
- It really is. He didn't come to live for himself. He came to pour himself out for the sake of others. He came to live for the sake of others and to serve them. And he did that well. And you know what he did?
- He rested. He kept the Sabbath day. It says they went into the synagogue as was his custom. He pushed pause on ministry.
- [ 8 : 57 ] We literally see him sending crowds away. He would frequently steal away to quiet places and solitary places to pray and to be with the Father. See, Jesus being fully God was also fully man, which means he shared in our weakness.
- And we also know from Luke 4 is that he was full of the Holy Spirit and did his ministry in the power of the Spirit. But with all that going for him, he didn't go against God's immutable law of work and rest.
- He didn't presume that he was above it. See, the Holy Spirit isn't going to bless a lifestyle that goes against the grain of God's eternal law.
- That couple I counseled, they didn't need a fresh infusion of God's power to keep them going. They needed a fresh infusion of God's wisdom to live with healthy Sabbath rhythms.
- That's what they needed. Now, you may be wondering, okay, Jess, that sounds great. Now, what are healthy Sabbath rhythms? Great question. So let's define that more clearly.
- [ 10 : 07 ] When I talk about Sabbath rhythms, I'm talking about the rhythms of rest that flow with the natural ordering of time. We need rest daily. We need rest weekly.
- And we need rest seasonally. Actually, God, when he gave Israel his law, he put those very rhythms into the order of their life.
- All right? When you think about this, now this is the most common one we all get. There's daily rest, right? So we work all day, and what do we do? We go to sleep. That's a form of, that's a rhythm of Sabbath. And despite what you may think you need, most bodies need eight to 12 hours of sleep to renew, for your mind to renew and your body to renew.
- That's just how it is. Then there's weekly, right? God said, from the very beginning, you need a day off.

You need a day set apart, devoted to not doing anything and focusing on me and your relationship with me and with the people of God. And then there's the seasonal rest.

[ 11 : 15 ] Well, what does that look like? Well, that could be extended vacation. One to two weeks at a time, two to three times a year, if that's possible for you and your job. Think about this.

God implemented festivals that occurred at different points along the Israel's calendar year, right? Those were times of traveling, of not doing work, of coming together and feasting and celebrating together.

And those festivals were a week long every single time. Now, when you look into the law of God, what you begin to do, you begin to notice how strategic God is being with his people, right?

He's building these rhythms and what he's doing, he's establishing him at the center of those things. Every time there is a rhythm of rest put in for Israel to follow, it's bringing them to God and centering themselves in the person of God.

These holy days and festivals were set apart to him. God was ordering their lives around putting him first because he knows that is how we thrive the best.

[ 12 : 23 ] Now, I've heard it said that when you go against the grain of God's design, you end up getting splinters. And God designed his creation, especially for humans, to thrive by keeping Sabbath rhythms.

And if we ignore it or go against it or go our own way, we end up with a life full of splinters. And here's the thing, if you don't Sabbath, it is going to catch up to you.

Second Chronicles 36, we're at a time in Israel's history where they were defeated by the king of Babylon and taken into exile. And it says this, he, the king, took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia.

to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate, it kept Sabbath to fulfill 70 years.

Now, this looks crazy. And you might think, man, is this saying what it seems to be saying? Yeah. And it's a little shocking. You wouldn't think God would bring such severe punishment just because his people refused to follow his pattern of rest.

[ 13 : 41 ] But the land needed rest and so God is giving it the rest it missed out on under Israel's poor oversight. And here's the thing for you and me. We oversee our bodies and their rest like God calls us to manage it.

And when we ignore rest, the rest that we need, it's gonna come back and bite us. It will come out in our bodies.

We get sick. All right? When we choose not to rest, our bodies get to a place where it forces us to. Stress and lack of rest are very common contributors to the early breakdown of our bodies.

One commentator said the commandment Israel broke the most often was failure to keep the Sabbath. But apparently, the land was keeping score and so was God.

And so he responded. And when we ignore Sabbath rhythms, our bodies keep the score. Now, we would be wise to proactively Sabbath for the health of our body and soul.

[ 14 : 50 ] We benefit personally. We're healthier and happier. And our relationships benefit. We don't step into survivor mode. We'll have more to give away.

Now, you would think convincing people to rest wouldn't be such a hard sell, right? Like telling people, hey, you know what? Just take a day off. It is so surprising how hard it is for us to rest in our day and age.

And the reason is is because I think we have a very broken relationship with work. Now, some of you are thinking like, man, Jess, you must have met my boss. I do have a broken relationship with my work.

That's not what I mean. I don't mean that, you know, you have a tough situation. And I don't even mean that you aren't putting in the appropriate effort for your work.

The main problem isn't what we put into our work. It's what we try to get out of our work. Work is good until it becomes our God. What do I mean by that?

[ 15 : 50 ] Work in and of itself is a good thing. God made man to work from day one. That was like pre-fall. Like he gave us work to do. He said we should produce.

We get to create new things. We get to invent. We get to cultivate the created world and bring order to it. God gave us work to bring the world into its full potential.

He kind of gave us this template to work with. And we get to be his co-laborers with him. After the seventh day of creation, we're living in the eighth day of creation with God.

But sin in our hearts, what it does, it takes good things like work and turns them into God things, which means that we end up putting them on the same level as God or we put them above God.

And that can happen with work too. But here's the question for us. How do you and I know when we've slipped into that? How do we know when we've done that?

[ 16 : 49 ] Well, let's look at a Bible story. Luke 10, Luke chapter 10, verse 38. This is a story Jesus entering into a house. Now, as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.

And she had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?

Tell her then to help me. But the Lord answered her, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary.

Mary has chosen the good portion which will not be taken away from her. You know, at first glance we can read that passage and see, my man, Jesus is anti-work here.

No. He did say Mary picked the good portion, the right thing to do. And he, you know, he picked the good portion. He's not saying Mary picked the right thing, Martha picked the wrong thing.

[ 17 : 56 ] He just tells Martha like she picked the good portion. He never tells Martha, Martha, stop working. Because work isn't the problem. The problem isn't Martha working.

The problem is what Martha is trying to get from her work. Now to understand this we need to dive into the context surrounding this story because remember this takes place in a context.

It takes place in this little village called Bethany. And that little village called Bethany was two miles from Jerusalem. Bethany was a very small village. Most likely the population at that time was just a few hundred people.

So this picture shows us a rendering of what Bethany most likely look like from what they could tell from the ruins. I mean that's pretty small. Right? You know so often when we think about villages we kind of impose our understanding of how we live onto those ancient contexts.

Right? But you can tell that's not sprawled suburbia. Right? That looks more like apartment living. But that's how they lived back then. They lived very close to one another right on top of one another.

[ 19 : 04 ] And so Mary grew up in this small town and people did life so closely knit together because of that. And so everybody knew each other. Everybody was up in each other's business as we like to say today.

And so when something happened news would spread quickly. Now here's another let me add to this context here. You have this important figure Jesus coming to eat in Mary and Martha's home.

Jesus is kind of a rising star in the religious world so to speak. He had crowds of multiple thousands searching him out to be healed. He is already considered a great teacher.

Needless to say Jesus is a well known figure at this point. Now think about this. Let's step into Mary and Martha's shoes right now. What do you suppose it meant for Jesus to accept an invitation to eat in their house in a very small town?

In those days when a great figure of any kind ate in a home it would bring honor to that home. Imagine actually this is true for us today.

[ 20 : 09 ] Imagine think of your hero whether that's a Patrick Mahomes or like a Tim Keller or a Billy Graham if they said I'm coming to your house today to eat with you. Like you're probably not keeping that one quiet right?

That one's going up on Instagram or Facebook pretty quick. And in the church you'd probably gain some prestige with some of those guys like a Billy Graham or a Tim Keller coming and eating with you.

People would want to know like why did they choose you? What makes you so special? So you can start to see how Mary and Martha had their social capital boosted by Jesus' visit. And the news about this would have spread quickly throughout Bethany.

So everything is going great from their perspective so far right? But now the pressure's on. You're hosting an important figure and that came with all kinds of expectations.

Like here's an example. Jesus is in the home of a Pharisee named Simon who had invited men to eat with him. And Jesus through the course of the dinner some stuff had happened and then turning toward the woman he said to Simon do you see this woman?

[ 21 : 15 ] And he says to Simon you know I entered your house you gave me no water for my feet. She's wet my hair with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss a greeting and kiss.

But from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil. But she's anointed my feet with ointment. See hosting meant cooking it meant cleaning it meant all those other rituals of hospitality that we just read right?

Water to clean people's feet a greeting a kiss of greeting oil which is like kind of like cologne so I mean people didn't have deodorant and they probably didn't smell that nice walking around right? And so all those things.

See these two sisters have welcomed Jesus into their home. Now they got a lot of work to do. They didn't have door dash or ovens or stoves or microwaves or maids.

Domestic work took time and it took elbow grease it really did. And if you wanted to host a big party and impress guests you were going to have to work hard and that's Martha. That's Martha right there.

[ 22 : 21 ] She is working hard. Much serving it says about her. Right? But something has happened in Martha's heart. This blessing of receiving Jesus into her home it's become a burden.

Why? And it really isn't the amount of work. It's what Martha is trying to get from the work. See if Martha pulls off being the hostess with the mostess she gets exalted.

She gains social capital with her neighbors good reputation. Maybe even that spreads into the surrounding villages and even into Jerusalem. See she isn't working to bless Jesus.

She's working to bless herself. She is using work as a functional savior. And we do the same thing. We can treat work like a savior that brings freedom from debt secures our future provides the luxuries and pleasures we desire gives us social capital and the list can go on and on and on and on.

The problem is that there is only one good savior and anything besides Jesus that we turn into a savior becomes a terrible master. See work isn't the problem it's our hearts.

[ 23 : 33 ] Work can be a source of joy and satisfaction it just can't be your ultimate source of joy and satisfaction. Jesus said to Martha that Mary has chosen the good portion.

He wasn't minimizing her work and her effort he was just placing it in the appropriate hierarchy. Anything you try to put at the same level of Jesus or above Jesus will end up ruling over you.

And when anything is equal to you or bigger than Jesus you will end up with a heart filled that is anxious and troubled. And what does that mean?

Well that word anxious it means to care with intensity which sounds like a good thing right? Think of Michael Scott like you know what are your weaknesses? Oh I work too hard and I care too much right?

But actually you could be anxious about the wrong things you can care in too intensely about the wrong things and then what does it mean to be troubled? Well it means your soul is full of noise and confusion.

[ 24 : 38 ] Martha what is happening to her she is dysregulated in her soul because she is intensely caring about the wrong things. Her reputation is on the line she is sensing that she is losing something that isn't just important to her it's absolutely necessary.

She has to have it her desire has become a demand and what happens in this internalized fear comes out as externalized anger toward her sister and towards Jesus it's their fault.

And here's the thing anger is just a secondary emotion to fear. When it seems like we are losing something that we think we need or deserve we fight to hold on to it and that will come out as anger and anger has two faces attack and withdrawal.

We can externalize the anger by fighting to get what we want or we internalize the anger and we retreat and we remove ourselves to punish the other person.

Notice what Martha was willing to do to save her own reputation. She attacks Mary's publicly. She condemns Mary judges her actions and her motives.

[ 26 : 00 ] Lord do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone tell her then to help me. Martha Martha Martha Martha Martha we can relate to her can't we?

Martha is drowning in her own insufficiency to earn what she felt she deserved and she needed. Functional savers will always do that to us. They will demand more than we can give and when work is your God it will demand more than you can give to it.

It will end up using you and abusing you. And often what we do is then we turn that into using and abusing others. Now that's the bad news. Here's the good news.

You can find joy and freedom in work by putting it in its proper place. Now a big part of that would be to practice rhythms of rest.

Because when we rest we are saying no to getting our identity and our needs and our security and our reputation from our work. When we rest we are stepping out of doing and into being.

[ 27 : 10 ] When we rest in Jesus like Mary was doing we choose the good portion. But that doesn't mean Jesus is only around when we rest. And this is the beauty of the redemption that we have in Jesus Christ that the gospel gives us.

Colossians 3:22. He's writing to a church and some in these church they are bond servants which means that in those days that was like a boss to employee relationship very similar.

Bond servants obey in everything those who are your earthly masters. Not by way of eye service as people pleasers but with sincerity of heart fearing the Lord. Whatever you do work heartily as for the Lord and not for men.

Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus cares about our work.

Especially what we are working for and who we are working for. Martha was working for herself. She was working to earn value and meaning.

[ 28 : 16 ] Her selfish desires became terrible masters but in Jesus we are set free from those selfish desires. We are set free from the need to earn our value and needing from the work that we do.

We are free to reject the message that building bigger storehouses and having more money will make us happy. We are free to reject the message that you are what you do. We are free to reject the message that I'm only as important as my job title tells me I am or the salary man says I am.

We are free to reject the message that peace comes through a healthy 401k. today. We are no longer a bondservant to those masters.

We don't fear them. Why? Because we fear the Lord. The Lord has given us, he has made us a way to become sons of a good father who has secured an inheritance for us.

Jesus secured that for us. That reward can't be taken away or lost by our failures or future catastrophes and that is the freedom of the gospel. The work Jesus did releases us from having to earn value and purpose and meaning in our own work because all those things, your value, your purpose and your meaning, meaning that is found in him.

[ 29 : 39 ] And in this freedom, you can take Jesus into work with you. You can work serving him as your Lord who has given you everything that you really need. Now, let me just help us out here.

This just doesn't happen. This kind of like stepping into freedom and living in that freedom, it's just not like heard the message and now I'm good to go now.

You have to be intentional about this in order to keep the Lord front and center in your mind. Because it is very easy to slip back into the old ways of thinking and behaving. And the best way to keep the Lord front and center is putting him first.

Putting him first in your day. We're almost done. I'm going to end with this. There is a reason God sent the manna to his people in the morning. He was teaching his people an object lesson.

And we can learn from that. God's people practice getting their daily bread first thing in the morning. They started their day by putting God first and receiving his grace.

[ 30 : 42 ] And you know what? He supplied enough to last for the whole day. And if you're going to live in Jesus' freedom, that places work in its right place and keeps him at the center, you have to feast on the bread of life that will carry you through the day.

You can see, now there's two ways to see this. You can see that as an imposition or you could see this as a pathway of grace, a means of grace. God's grace, it comes freely.

But in our life, in our sanctification, you have to reach out and receive that free gift. God didn't put manna into the mouths of his people.



They had to go out and get it. He gave them all that they needed and they had one simple thing to do. They had to do the little bit of going out and gathering it. And the more you go out and you gather on a regular basis, the goodness of God and his mercy and his grace, the more you do this, the more you begin to feel the integration of God's rest.

And that comes and flows into your work. Instead of your being flowing from what you do, now your doing flows from your being. Which is sealed in the work of Jesus Christ.

[ 32 : 01 ] As we're filled with the fullness of God through the Spirit. And that is what it's like to live under Jesus' light and easy yoke. And one day, we are going to experience that integration of work and rest perfectly.

We will enter into God's rest. God calls his eternal life his rest. And you know what? There, we're still going to be doing some work. But you know what it's in the context of? His rest.

His work. His rest. Fully integrated into who we are. Because it will be free from the trappings of sin and the futility of sin's curse.

Amen. As the band comes up and we look to respond, I just want to say this. In a moment, we're going to take communion. And I want to speak to those in the room who might not yet be a follower of Jesus. And you know, your response isn't to come to the communion table.

It's first to come to the one that it points to. There is nothing you can do to earn salvation in Jesus. It is a free gift received by faith.

[ 33 : 07 ] And perhaps you're here and you're feeling weary. Perhaps you're here and you feel burnt out. You're anxious and you're troubled because you've lived a life and you lived according to the principles that told you, man, if you work hard enough and you get all these things that has been promised to you through work, that you're going to be happy and you're going to be satisfied and you're going to be fulfilled.

And you've come and you've tried to drink of that fountain and you found out that and it didn't satisfy at all. And you're here and you're empty. And I want to call you to come to the one who can satisfy you.

His name is Jesus Christ. And when you drink of the waters of his salvation and when you put on his yoke that is easy and light, it is refreshing.

You find that actually in him, you have all that you need. And so I want to hold out to you that Jesus came and he died on a cross. He did the work that you can never do.

So you could rest in his work. He lived a life you couldn't live. He died a death that you couldn't die. And as all he's calling you to do is say yes and amen to that. I believe in Jesus be my Lord and Savior.

[ 34 : 25 ] In a moment, there's going to be opportunity for you to respond to that and to help you with that. There's going to be a prayer up on the screen that you can pray. Now, if you're here and you're already a follower of Jesus, I want to ask us, how is the Holy Spirit leading you to respond?

Because we are going to take communion in a moment, but the Bible says before you come to the table, examine your hearts. God's grace. And so we're going to take time to do that. And I want to give you time to just spend time listening to God and letting him lead you in response to his grace and his truth.

Now, I'm going to close this moment. And so we're going to do that. And then what I'll do is at the end of that time of examination, I'll close it with prayer and then I'll release us to taking communion.

Okay. So let's just spend some time doing business with God right now.