

WEEKLY REFLECTION

On the seventh day of creation, God finished all the work He had done.

He finished, and rested—then He blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because of His *rest*.

This idea of rest is central to the Sabbath: in Exodus 16 (its first mention), Moses tells the people that the Sabbath is a day of “solemn rest.” (v.23) The same idea is echoed in Deuteronomy 5, where the people, their children, their slaves, and even their animals are commanded to refrain from doing any work to *rest*. (v.14) This rest is combined with remembrance—while they were slaves in Egypt, the Israelites could never rest. But now they rest and remember God, who brought them out of slavery in Egypt. Because of Him, they can finally rest. (v.15)

While the Sabbath requires physical rest, we shouldn’t stop there. The rest commanded in Deuteronomy included physical rest such as refraining from work or catching up on sleep, but the heart behind it is to be still—to stop, drop, and know that He is God. (Ps. 46:10) Just as the Israelites were commanded to worship weekly on the Sabbath, so too should we spend that time meditating and reflecting—*resting* in the presence of God.

For some people, rest may be stillness of movement. Others may enjoy moving their bodies! Ask yourself what brings you joy and delight as you reflect on God’s majesty and glory. Ask yourself what helps to remind you of His goodness and His promises. As long as we slow down and practice a stillness of heart to know that He is God, we may Sabbath in unique ways well-suited to how we are made.

In Genesis 2, the phrase “and there was evening and there was morning” is missing from the seventh day of creation, denoting that it has not ended. As you set out to Sabbath, ask God to remind you of His rest and reign, and the rest you can have in Him.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

What do your Sabbath days look like? What is an activity that you find restful and life-giving as you rest in the presence of God?

QUESTION TWO:

We see in Genesis 2 that Adam and Eve's first day after creation was a day of rest with the Lord. While we work to rest, they worked from a place of rest.

If we peel back the layers of our busy schedules, what is at the heart that prevents us from stopping and resting the way that we need to? How can we follow Adam and Eve's example of working from a place of rest, instead of the other way round?

QUESTION THREE:

If you don't have a habit of regularly observing the Sabbath, how can you carve out a day or a block of time for that? If you do, what is something you can do to enter into joyful and life-giving time with the Lord this week?

Don't forget to ask your small group to keep you accountable—whether it is the commitment to observing the Sabbath despite your busy schedule, or simply sharing the joy of the Lord as you spend time with Him.