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## A Slower Pace

# WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE WAY TO RELAX?

## The POINT > Rest is a gift from God.

### > EXODUS 20:8-11; 31:12-17

<sup>8</sup>“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

<sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

.....  
<sup>12</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, <sup>13</sup> “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep

my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. <sup>14</sup> You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

<sup>15</sup> Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death.

<sup>16</sup> Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. <sup>17</sup> It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”



# THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

## FACT:

A giraffe needs less than two hours of sleep per day to function. Brown bats, on the other hand, need almost 20 hours a day!<sup>1</sup>



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // BIBLE

Through the Bible, we know God Himself, and we know how He expects us to live in order to follow Christ and experience His blessing.

Today's teens are busier than ever before. You get up early, eat a Pop-Tart for breakfast as you're running out the door, and knock out the last bit of homework seconds before the bell rings. Then you rush from class to class with a 20-minute lunch stuck somewhere in the middle. After school, it's band or athletics, then home to hammer out more homework. And somewhere in the week, you make time for church or Bible study, family, and (if you're lucky) a movie or some video games with friends.

We all know people who say, perhaps with a sense of pride in their voices, "I am so busy." With this mindset, we often believe our busyness and productivity determine our worth. We equate "I'm busy" with "I'm doing something important." And this must mean that I am important.

If we're not careful, we can find ourselves cutting corners and putting off things that are actually important. However, productivity is not tied to the number of things we do, but the way we use our time. God has given us a gift called rest. On the surface, it may seem that a life of simplicity and meaningful rest would keep us from being productive. But that's not the case at all. We need to learn to slow down and enjoy the rest that God has given us as a gift.

## EXODUS 20:8-11

**1** Why do we often struggle to slow down and take a break?

**2** What distractions can keep us from resting and reflecting on the Sabbath?



*By setting apart the Sabbath, we declare to the world that we are dedicated to Christ, that we are set apart by Him, and that in Him we find ultimate rest.  
#BSFLsimplicity*

## EXODUS 31:12-14

**3** What does it mean to keep a day “holy”?

**4** By observing the Sabbath, what are we declaring about God?

**5** What might need to change so that your Sabbath practices improve your relationship with God?

## EXODUS 31:15-17

**6** How does Sabbath rest impact our relationship with God?

**7** How can we practically implement Sabbath rest?

**8** What does your Sabbath rest say about your relationship with God?



# LIVE IT OUT

## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // BIBLE

*Through the Bible, we know God Himself, and we know how He expects us to live in order to follow Christ and experience His blessing.*

We live in a relationship with God based on His promises to His people and His covenant with us. Essentially, we can sum this covenant up as: If you'll obey me, I will bless you. However, no man could ever obey God perfectly—that is, no man, except Jesus! Jesus fulfilled God's law perfectly, and because of His sacrifice, we now have access to God's blessings through our faith in Christ. It's not our obedience that earns God's favor. However, true faith in Christ means living as He did—in obedience to the Father. And further, we can know that all God's commands are meant for our good.

## > CHRIST

Throughout the week, most of us are very busy—with school, and homework, and practice, and chores, and on and on. And we often use this busyness as an excuse for not spending the time with God we know we should. This is no excuse, but thankfully, God built into our schedules a day intended for rest and for focusing on our relationship with Him.

**9** How does the Sabbath help you to remain close with God each week?

**10** How does busyness affect your relationship with God? What do you need to change?

**11** What do we stand to gain when we regularly observe a day of Sabbath rest?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

**BIBLE**

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

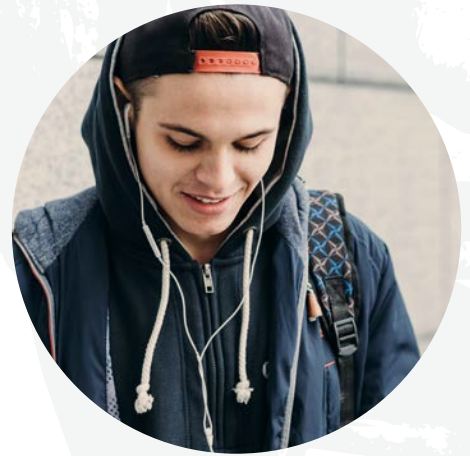
COMMUNITY  
& WORLD

## > COMMUNITY

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The Sabbath isn't just about physical rest and focusing on our personal relationship with God. It's also about growing in relationship with our church family. After all, the Christian life is lived out in community.

**12** How have you received rest, renewal, and encouragement from other Christians when you really needed it?



**13** Why is it so important that we spend time with our church family on the Sabbath?

**14** How will you help others find rest in Christ this week?

## > CULTURE

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When we're busy all the time, we essentially communicate that we trust in ourselves for the things we need. However, when we honor God by taking time to rest, we send the message that, despite the world's approach to work and provision, we trust in God.

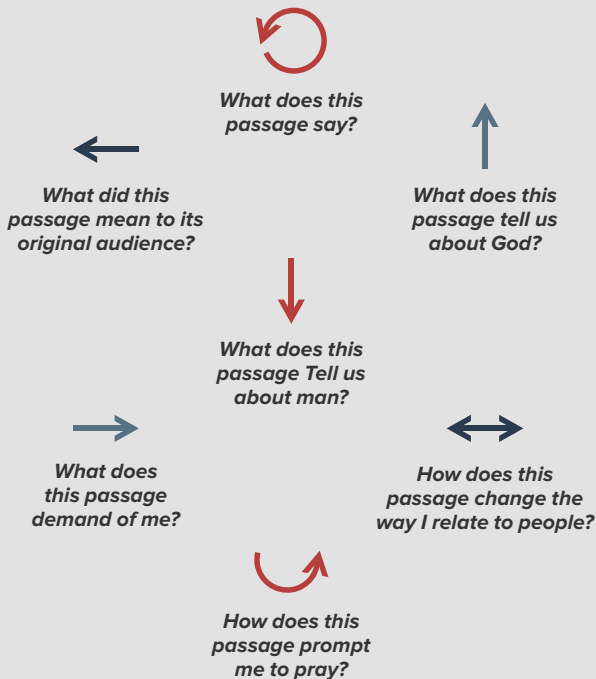
**15** How have you demonstrated trust in God for what you need?

**16** What will you do this week to leverage the Sabbath as a way to help a non-believing friend see who Jesus is?

# DAILY DEVOTIONS



## The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



## Day One

# MATTHEW 12:1-2

When God established creation, He worked for six days and rested on the seventh. He then commanded us to do the same—to work for six days, then take a sabbath. The consequences for violating this command were serious (Ex. 35:2). This included the harvesting of grain, at least on a large scale and for profit. However, the law explicitly stated “you may pluck heads of grain with your hand” when hungry (Deut. 23:25). But the Pharisees had twisted the law to add weight to the people and make themselves look better. Jesus didn’t go along with the way they’d manipulated others for generations, and this made them angry. So the Pharisees looked for opportunities to accuse Jesus and to discredit Him in the eyes of the people.

- **How did the Pharisees’ accusations fail to align with what Scripture really said?**
- **How do people do this today? Consider things that sound like they could be right, but aren’t truly representative of Scripture.**

## Day Two

# MATTHEW 12:3-4



According to the law, worship involved baking loaves of bread, which were to be set before the Lord, and only the priests were allowed to eat it (Lev. 24:5-9). However, in 1 Samuel, we read the story of David's fleeing from Saul and encountering Ahimelech the priest (1 Sam. 21:4-6). Tired and hungry, David asked the priest for food, but none was available—except for the bread which was set apart for worship and for the priests. Ahimelech offered the bread to David because he recognized that meeting David's real needs was better than following the ceremonial regulations. Jesus pointed to this as a picture of the spirit of the Sabbath—it's better to show love than to practice the ritual.

➤ **Why do you think God allowed Ahimelech to share the bread with David?**

➤ **When have you been tempted to practice a ritual, but it was empty in a sense?**

## Day Three

# MATTHEW 12:5-6

The Lord had forbidden work on the Sabbath, but the priests actually performed a form of labor every week when they replaced the old bread with fresh loaves on the Sabbath. In a sense, they “violate” the law, but according to the spirit of God's law, they are innocent. The purpose for God's establishing the law wasn't to make sure no one ever performed even the tiniest bit of work, but to point to the rest that would ultimately come through the promised Messiah. The temple, including all its ceremonial laws, had a purpose for a time, but these weren't the ultimate reality—Jesus is! However, the Pharisees were so caught up in the letter of the law, they missed the spirit of the law. And they were blind to the reality of Jesus standing right in front of them—the One who would provide eternal rest for God's people.

➤ **Worship at times involves working. For instance, when we serve at church, it could be considered “work.” Why is this okay?**

➤ **What was Jesus talking about when He said “something greater than the temple is here”?**

## Day Four

# MATTHEW 12:7

In Hosea 6:6, God said, “For I desire faithful love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” This was during the time when God’s people were responsible to live under the old covenant, and the law was of central importance. Yet God reminded His people that, as important as the law is, to love others is even more important than the sacrifices they offered for the forgiveness of their sins. When the Pharisees accused Jesus of violating the Sabbath, He pointed out that they’d totally missed what God had been trying to communicate all along. They’d accused Jesus—the only One who’s ever been truly innocent—of sinning against God. All because they were too prideful to hear what God was truly saying.

- **When have you realized you’ve misunderstood Scripture?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **How can you make sure you’re continually open to God’s voice?**

## Day Five

# MATTHEW 12:8



As the religious leaders among God’s people, the Pharisees were responsible to teach the law and hold people accountable to following the law. But because they were more concerned with the outward, ceremonial requirements than the internal, eternal implications, they became self-righteous, strict, and judgmental toward God’s people. Jesus, however, wasn’t only to oversee the administration of God’s law—He ruled over the Sabbath itself. Jesus, God in the flesh, was involved in the very establishing of the Sabbath. Therefore, it was His right to determine how it was to be carried out. Today, as always, we need to be concerned primarily with the spirit of the Sabbath. Specifically, because of Jesus who perfectly fulfilled God’s law, we can rest from our striving to earn God’s favor when we live by faith in Jesus.

- **Why does Jesus have the right to rule over the Sabbath?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **What does the Sabbath ultimately represent?**