

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

Session 3: Sabbath

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: Honoring the sabbath is a decree from God that allows us to rest and recharge without guilt.

Head Change: To know that sabbath is a divinely ordained rhythm we're called to practice.

Heart Change: To feel peace rather than guilt when we decide to rest for a day.

Life Change: To worship God through keeping the sabbath on a regular basis.

OPEN

How do you typically spend your days off? How do you fill up your days when you don't have to work?

For many people, taking a day off means running errands, working on personal projects, or possibly working more. Unfortunately, our culture tells us that staying busy is much better than doing nothing and makes us feel guilty for resting.

In this session, John Mark is going to discuss what the sabbath really is and why practicing the sabbath will help us be present with Jesus and enjoy the life he has given us.

A series of 20 horizontal lines for handwritten notes.

VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in John Mark Comer’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

What word did John Mark say is the most literal translation of sabbath?

According to John Mark, what are the four movements of sabbath, and why is each one important?

How does taking a sabbath impact our spiritual lives? Why is sabbath about much more than refusing to work?

Watch Session 3: Sabbath (11 minutes).

Lined writing area consisting of multiple horizontal lines for taking notes.

REVIEW

We're used to associating sabbath with the idea of rest.

What comes to mind when you think of the sabbath? How have you participated in the sabbath in the past?

We live in a culture that values the grind. Never taking a day off is respected—almost a sign of success. Taking a day off sounds like a bad idea to many people. **In what ways have you ever felt guilty for taking days off from work? How do you feel when you have unfinished work but try to rest anyways?**

John Mark walked us through four definitions of *sabbath*, each of which gives us an idea of what it means to truly rest. The most literal translation of *sabbath* is “to stop.” The sabbath is a day we stop working and stop hustling. **What makes it difficult for you to stop, even for a couple of hours?**

The second translation of *sabbath* is rest—physical, mental, and emotional rejuvenation. Rest does include sleeping, but it is more than that. True rest is actively trusting God with your worries, setting aside problems that need solving. “When I rest, I’m not wasting time,” John Mark said. “If I am, I’m wasting time on God and resting in him.” **When was the last time you took a day away from your schedule and pressing responsibilities? What do you think it would look like for you to actively rest in Jesus?**

The third translation of *sabbath* is “delight.” The sabbath is meant to be a celebration, a party, or a holiday. It is a day where you can enjoy life to the fullest. **Consider the question John Mark asked us: “What could you do for a 24-hour period that would bring you deep, soul-level, throbbing joy?”**

John Mark explained that he and his family “pleasure stack” on the sabbath, using the day to eat fun foods, play games, or prioritize special experiences together. **What could it look like for you to “pleasure stack” on your next sabbath?**

The last translation of *sabbath* John Mark shared was “worship.” For this reason, Sunday may be the best day for you to practice the sabbath. No matter which day you choose, John Mark encouraged us to think of the sabbath

Horizontal lines for writing responses.

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Sometimes, we think of the sabbath as an optional practice or we put it at the bottom of our list of priorities. But the sabbath is a gift that God prioritizes and has called us to experience. Read Genesis 2:1–3.

What are some of the adjectives used to describe the sabbath in these verses? What makes the sabbath different than all the other days?

Whether we honor the sabbath or not, this day has been set apart by God as holy. **Is the sabbath a special part of your week? In what ways do you treat sabbath as special or set apart?**

In what ways does God resting from his work help you understand the importance of humankind resting from work?

Of all the days God created, he only blessed and set apart the sabbath day. It was important to him that one day be rejuvenating. **What could it look like for you to trust in God’s blessing of honoring the sabbath?**

Finding time to observe the sabbath is important. It should be a normal part of our lifestyle—but we should remember that it is a gift rather than a new way to be legalistic. Read Matthew 12:1–14.

The Pharisees believed that all labor of any kind was forbidden on the sabbath, even if it helped people in need. In this passage, they asked Jesus if a life-giving activity on the sabbath was acceptable to God. **What reason does Jesus give for good deeds being lawful for the sabbath?**

Jesus understood that the sabbath was meant to bless humanity, not keep them from God’s provision. There’s no need to feel guilty if an emergency arises on your sabbath. **In what ways can being too strict on your off-day cause problems and stress? What do Jesus’s actions show us about the intent of the sabbath?**

The Pharisees had defined the sabbath so strictly that they would have rather allowed someone to suffer instead of seeing them whole and healthy. Their effort to protect the sabbath had become a cold, legalistic list of rules.

Horizontal lines for writing answers to the questions.

While it is helpful to set up some boundaries to protect your sabbath, you should not become so strict that it creates anxiety in you or pain in others. **In what ways could you protect your sabbath from the demands of life? How could you guard yourself against legalism so that you and those around you could enjoy the blessing of the sabbath?**

Jesus reminds us that the sabbath is made for our good and his glory. We should not approach the sabbath thinking that if we practice it wrongly, God will be disappointed or angry with us. God loves us and has blessed us with a day of rest, delight, worship. **What could you do to remind yourself that the sabbath is a gift for you?**

LAST WORD

Keeping the sabbath is not just a good idea; it's a command from God. God wants us to rest after a long week of work and to trust him with all our time.

Integrating the sabbath as a normal part of your week might be difficult at first, especially if you're not used to regular rest. Start slow and do everything you can to ensure that your next sabbath is as successful as it can be—and if it's not, that's okay. Just try again the following week to enjoy God's day of rest.

DEEPER WALK

Read: Read the chapter "Sabbath" in Part Three of John Mark's book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*.

Discover: Explore the ways you and your family or friends could enjoy the sabbath. How would each of you want to enjoy that day?

Act: Commit to taking a day of sabbath sometime in the next week and, as best as you can, refrain from working and guard your time from mindless distractions.

Memorize: Memorize Mark 2:27, "And he said to them, 'The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.'"