

Rediscovering Sabbath, Week 5

Small Group Discussion Guide, week of Oct 9th

OCTOBER 9TH SERMON SUMMARY

REDISCOVERING SABBATH: REDIRECT (EXODUS 20:1-17)

The Sabbath was designed to build and protect community. In Egypt, there was an idolatrous focus on work, and the Israelites were devalued and mistreated. The Ten Commandments show us a clear connection between relationship with God, relationship with people, and Sabbath.

How does the Sabbath help us to love people, and value relationships more?

- The Sabbath sets limits on our idolatrous focus on work and striving, which leads to devaluing people and community. (Ezek. 20:16, 20). It is a conscious act of rebellion against the idolatry of stuff, breaking the cycle of idolatry.
- The Sabbath refocuses us on the value of people and relationships, so that work and wealth do not come before loving and valuing people

We can invest in people, and be careful of "striving" activity - not just work, but the things we do to gain wealth, status, admiration, whatever we idolize.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share anything you have tried in the last few weeks to experience Sabbath rest.
2. Discuss one or both of these questions:
 - What stood out to you or impacted you in the message?
 - What stood out to you about the structure or context of the Ten Commandments?

READ EXODUS 20:1-11, the first half of the Ten Commandments

1 And God spoke all these words:

2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3 "You shall have no other gods before me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. **5** You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, **6** but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. **9** Six days you shall labor and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. **11** For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

3a. Describe what idolatry meant in ancient times, in Egypt and for the Israelites.

b. What does it mean that God is a jealous God, in v. 5?

c. Jealousy in people is usually a negative characteristic. Since God is good, how do you think God’s jealousy is a good quality? (Discuss before reading the *Note on next page.)

4. Think about idolatry for Israel and how it applies to us today. Christians are not required to follow the Ten Commandments, but we can learn from them.

a. What are some things you, or people you know, are tempted to idolize?

b. Compare idolatry for Israel and for us today: how is it similar, or different?

c. What principles of the 3rd commandment do you think we can apply today?

5. Think about a specific idolatry (a love of _____) as you answer the following:

a. How does it lead us to devalue people and see them as distractions, competitors, objects?

b. How does it distract us from our true goals of loving and valuing people?

c. How does Sabbath break the cycle of idolatry and help us love people?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

6. Is there an area of idolatry that you feel convicted about? Share as much (or as little) as you feel comfortable sharing about this.

7. Share one way that Sabbath could help you to do any of the following:

- Rebel against an idolatrous way of life
- View people differently, elevate their value
- Love people and invest in them – friends, family, people in need
- Build and protect community

8. How do you feel God is speaking to you through the message or your small group discussion?

*Note for Question 3c: Jealousy is a sin when it is a desire for something that does not belong to you. Worship, belongs to God alone, for only He is truly worthy of it. God is rightly jealous when worship, praise, honor, or adoration is given to idols. It is like the jealousy of Paul in 2 Cor 11:2: “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy...”

SABBATH PRACTICES AND EXERCISES

Each week you will be given some practical ideas and exercises to incorporate a time of Sabbath - use them (or not), or tweak, change, or adapt them in whatever way fits you.

Blessing

My friend Ethan celebrates the Sabbath meal with his wife and daughter. It is traditional, before the meal begins, to put your hand on your children and give them a blessing. Ethan says this is his favorite moment of the Sabbath.

There are many ways to offer your blessing. You may bless your children, your spouse, your friend, by placing your hand on their head, and offering a prayer for their healing, their well-being, their happiness. Let them feel the truth of your prayer in their bodies. When this happens, many report feeling the physical blessing enter their body. It is as precious as it is free – completely gratuitous.

Another practice invites us to bless strangers quietly, secretly. Offer it out loud or silently to people you notice on the street, in the market, on the road. “May you be happy; may you be at peace.” Feel the blessing move through your body as you offer it. Notice how you both might receive some benefit from the blessing. Gently, almost without effort, each and every blessing becomes a Sabbath.

(Excerpt from *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives* by Wayne Muller, p. 46-47.)