

30 Minutes of Theology: Sabbath

1st Feb 2026

‘Sabbath’ > related to ‘cease’ (shabat) and ‘seven’ (sheva)

- Rabbis identified 39 categories of work that must be avoided, based on Tabernacle construction tasks in Exodus

Two facets of Sabbath engagement:

1. Guarding (Deut 5:12) > abiding by the prohibitions
2. Remembering (Exod 20:8) > fulfilling the positive; ‘act in accordance with what’s true’
 - Celebrating God as: Creator, Revealer, Redeemer

Key Characteristics: Sabbath is...

1. for **All** > not merely a law for Israel; modelled in creation (Gen 2:1-3; Exod 31; Isaiah 56)
2. for **Fun** > occasion of provision; not a day of fasting from what *seems* necessary, but rather a day of feasting upon what is essential! (Exod 34:21, 24; Mark 2:27)
3. for **You** > you have limitations—you are not God! You are not a human production machine (Ps 127:2); rest is not utilitarian
4. for **Others** > extends to those in your sphere; your sabbath choices impact those around you (Deut 5:14; Exod 23:12)
5. for **Ever** > not just 24 hours, once a week (Exod 23:10-11 & Heb 4:9-11)
6. for **Real** > Israelites exiled due to failure to keep sabbath (Jer 17:21-23, 25:11, 29:10; 2 Chron 36:21); the rest can be taken away (Ps 95:10b-11)

Practice & Encouragements

- Take time every week to ‘remember’; keep it consistent
- You are not a human production machine: productivity/accomplishment is neither your identity nor the measure of your worth
- Time and energy are not scarce for God; what is undone by you is fine—the universe is on His shoulders (not yours)
- Put yourself in circumstances to trust His sovereignty and provision
- Sabbath is not just for doing whatever you want, but to experience the freedom He has purchased for you, enjoying a right relationship with the Lord, embracing your true identity and status

A Glimpse into the Hamlin Family’s Sabbath

- *None of this may work for you! We’re a family in a particular life stage, all introverts, etc.*
- Basic principle/filter > if it feels like obligation ('have to or else'), then it's not for today
- Every Saturday
- Requires preparation on Friday > dishes, laundry, meal plan, shopping, cleaning, tidying, removing distractions (drying rack, utility closet, laptop away, message notifications silenced)
- Slow morning > stay in PJs/onesie, extended time for journaling, fun family breakfast together, drinking a whole pot of nice looseleaf tea at the table, thankfulness journal
- Free time > reading, big toy setup, creativity, video games
- Simple outing? Invite others into part of the day?
- Family café > treat, family game
- Watch a film together?
- Dinner > cook together, or something easy (leftovers, etc.)
- What about...Gardening? Shopping? TV? Lesson prep?

Challenge

- Is Sabbath something you have to do or something you get to do? Is it something you want to do? Is sabbath something you need to do?
- What changes will you make in your week, in your expectations, in your choices, in your homelife, in your relationships in order to receive this gift from the Lord?
- How will your identity as freed, as not being a human production machine, become real to you and to those around you? How will you make choices to ensure those around you can rest and enter into their true identity?
- How will you place yourself in situations to see God's goodness, His sovereignty, His trustworthiness, and the lavishness of His provision?

Recommended Blog Posts & Books

<https://embracingfollowership.com/2015/08/31/your-thoughts-on-rest/>

<https://embracingfollowership.com/2016/09/20/5-gauges-for-your-followership/>

<https://embracingfollowership.com/2015/09/20/yes-or-no/>

<https://admitandexplore.wordpress.com/2012/02/11/under-a-rest/>

<https://admitandexplore.wordpress.com/2013/09/21/a-necessary-gift/>

Embracing Followership (ch 13: 'Rest as a Resource') & *Discussion Guide* (Study #5: 'Out of the Red Zone and into Godly Stewardship')

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/stores/Allen-Hamlin-Jr/author/B01A9H4MIY>

Sacred Rhythms (ch 8: 'Sabbath'; <https://amzn.eu/d/b0BPh0T>) and *Embracing Rhythms of Work and Rest* (<https://amzn.eu/d/gGgMw4s>; both by Ruth Haley Barton)

The Emotionally Healthy Leader (Peter Scazzero; ch 5) <https://amzn.eu/d/5gPvwps>

Keeping the Sabbath Wholly (Marva Dawn) <https://amzn.eu/d/cOFzlmU>

Living the Sabbath (Norman Wirzba) <https://amzn.eu/d/7ebSkih>

The Sabbath (Abraham Joshua Heschel) <https://amzn.eu/d/6g81bnw>

The Rest of God (Mark Buchanan) <https://amzn.eu/d/4gdi32C>

Subversive Sabbath (A.J. Swoboda) <https://amzn.eu/d/937gMFF>

Bible Project video on Sabbath <https://bibleproject.com/videos/sabbath-video/>

Previous EW Session on Work & Rest <https://embracingfollowership.com/ew-lent-course-work-part-2-23-3-2025/>

Website for this seminar with links, handouts, additional reflection questions, etc.
<https://embracingfollowership.com/blog-entries/resources/biblio/sabbath-seminar-1-feb-2026/>

