

**Series Big Idea:** We all need more of God in our lives. Every struggle and every need is best answered by a bit more of God. And that may, in the end, be our biggest problem. How do we make more room for God in our lives? For thousands of years, God's people have learned and practiced ways to allow God to have more influence. In this series we'll look at four vital practices that allow God to transform our characters and guide us in how we approach our circumstances. By practicing any or all of these four spiritual activities, we'll discover that it is possible and thrilling to allow God more say in our lives.

**Message Big Idea:** We fill our lives which leaves too little time or energy for God. God made us pause and rest. We need to put the brakes on and slow down enough to recharge our spiritual, physical and emotional batteries. While the Sabbath is no longer a law to follow, we need to re-learn the sabbath principle. The sabbath principle is about making time for God on a daily, weekly, quarterly and yearly basis. It is in these times what we allow God to refresh us and grow us for the work he has us to do. So we must develop and engage a series of sabbaths that keep us open to God and refreshed for his purposes.

**Main Idea:** Put the brakes on so you don't miss God.

**Main Text:** Exodus 20:8-11

**Supporting texts:** Mark 2:27; Isaiah 40:28

**Links:**

**Reflection/Discussion Questions:**

1. How are you currently experiencing a full, busy, hurried, fast passed or distracted life? How do you usually react when your life is like that?
2. What causes your internal battery to run low? What usually drains you of energy and leaves you tired or empty?
3. How do you try to recharge your battery? What best brings you refreshment and restores your energy and passion?
4. When you think about the Sabbath, what ideas or thoughts come to your mind? How do you understand Sabbath rest? Why is a Sabbath rest system important for making room for God?
5. Glen suggests that we all need to have a Sabbath system of rest to recharge us physically and spiritually. What are you currently doing to take a Sabbath rest? How is it going? Is it regular and does it recharge you?
6. What do you need to add or start to make your Sabbath rest better or more refreshing and recharging?

### **Screen Information:**

Half screen: (bring 4 phrases up 1 at a time)

#1 - No other gods

#2 - No images (no fake gods)

#3 - Don't damage God's name

#4 - Keep the Sabbath

Slide: Exodus 20:8-11 (pg. 52)

Slide: Put the brakes on so you don't miss God

Slide: Put the brakes on so you don't miss God

Slide: A principle of rest, remembrance and reflection

Slide: Mark 2:27 - "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

Slide: Put the brakes on so you don't miss God

Half screen:

My Sabbath system:

Daily

Weekly

Quarterly

Yearly

Half-slide: Card screenshot

Slide: Put the brakes on so you don't miss God

### **Message:**

We are in our second week of a series we've called *Making Room*. In this series we are looking at four spiritual practices that will help us make more room for God. Most of us want to grow our faith. Most of us want to be transformed to be more and more like Jesus. Most of us want a better, deeper, more authentic and more satisfying relationship with God. And that is what God wants as well. So today, the next two Sundays and in our Lent Service on February 14th we'll look at four practices that will allow God to have a greater influence and impact in our lives.

What we'll look at isn't new and I would even say it is not profoundly new. But we need to be reminded of what we struggle to do. What we are going to talk about are things we know we need to do but don't do consistently. And like I said last week, making room for God is something that is not only important, but it is vital and if we ignore this, we do so to our own spiritual danger.

Here are the great enemies to the spiritual life we want and what hinders making ample room for God to change and morph us. They are hurry, busyness, distractions, and a full life. We talked about this last week and if you missed the opening message of this series you can watch it online. You see, hurry, busyness and even our necessary work and responsibilities over time can eat away at our souls and leaves us dry and empty. Carl Jung once said; "Hurry is not of the devil, it is the devil."

We live in a fast world - fast food, fast delivery, fast lines and fast approval. We want to get what we need fast and the process should be efficient. We are driven by a need to

accomplish more in less time. And proof of our value for fast and efficient shows up in our impatience. We get angry at waiting for others like when the light turns green and the person doesn't move instantly or like when we finish the sentences of people who take too long to get to the point. We try to multitask! And even our identity is found in our production which means that I think I'm "okay" when I get more done. Our activity becomes our identity. I am what I do. And that is so dangerous. Because if our activity is limited to our production and our production is subpar - then our identity takes a serious blow. The frantic nature of our lives leaves us tired, empty, sick, and depressed. I hope I've encouraged you so far and you feel uplifted!

Most us have smartphones. You have to take time to charge it. If I wait until it gets to under 10% battery, guess what, it automatically shuts down! We have to charge it before it gets too low or it is useless. The same is true with us as humans. We can't let our physical, emotional and spiritual batteries get too low or we are useless or worse.

And guess what, if I let my phone battery get too low, it takes a long time to charge it back up! The lower the charge, the more time it takes to recharge. And that is also true of human beings. While we don't have a little meter like our phone that tells us we are running on empty, the symptoms are always available and they are usually seen by others first. Like tiredness, eruptions in anger, depression and more. And when our batteries are low, it is nearly impossible to love God and others as we know we should and want. Love takes time. Faith takes time. True spirituality can't be hurried. These things are rarely efficient. A real relationship with God requires time and some has to be quality time like any relationship requires.

So God gave us the solution. Here is God's prescription. He has the cure for our busy and full lives. Put on the brakes! Slow down! Stop! Rest! I call this the principle of the Sabbath. What I want to explore today is the idea of Sabbath. This is the first of four practices that will help us make more room for God.

God gave Moses and the people of Israel Ten Commandments. Can you name them? Let me help you. **#1 - No other gods. #2 - No images (no fake gods). #3 - Don't damage God's name.** We learned it as don't take God's name in vain which means don't diminish the true God by using a name that makes him less than he is. In other words, don't damage God's reputation by the way you speak and live. Then comes **#4 - Keep the Sabbath.** The first three commands are all about loving and worshipping the one true God. We are to give our undivided devotion to him alone. We are to honor him always. But the fourth commandment is to rest! Love God. Be devoted to God. Honor God. Then rest! And the first three are hard to do without the fourth - resting.

Let's read the actual words found in Exodus 20:8-11 (pg. 52 - NIV) - **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.***

Work six days and then rest on the seventh. But there is so much more here. Yes, God gives us permission to not go 24/7/365. Sabbath time becomes holy not just because of what we don't do, but because of what we do as we stop being busy! Practicing the Sabbath is to be a holy time - a time to put the brakes on in order to focus on our Holy God and our own holiness.

Here's what I think the Sabbath principle means. This is my focus and main point today: **Put the brakes on so you don't miss God.** We are to pause at least once a week to slow down and rest long enough to remember our relationship with God and take time to gaze on God and reflect on how our relationship with God is going. God told his people to keep the Sabbath because they needed weekly physical rest to recharge their physical and spiritual batteries. During that rest, we need to stop and remember the commitment we made to God and his commitment to us and reflect on how our relationship is going. That's what makes it holy. So here's our challenge - keep the Sabbath principle - **Put the brakes on so you don't miss God.**

Before I go further, let me make sure we are clear. Let me share what we are NOT talking about regarding the Sabbath. I'm not talking about a religious rule. Today we are not required by law to keep the Jewish weekly observance of no work from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. And we are not suggesting that Sunday is the new Christian sabbath. This is a principle not a law. It is not a particular day with a long list of rules of what you cannot do. Rather, it is **A principle of rest, remembrance and reflection.** It is not a religious law and practice tied to one specific day or time.

Here's what's interesting. All of the Ten Commandments are repeated as commands for the church to obey in the New Testament except the Sabbath law - nine out of the ten. So while keeping the Sabbath on Friday evening is no longer a binding spiritual law on us, it is still a valid and wise principle to live by. Jesus said in **Mark 2:27 - "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."** God didn't give us this as a law to be a burden, but as a principle to help us. We need rest and the ability it gives to remember and reflect on God! Let's look deeper at the Sabbath as a principle.

The principle of the sabbath comes from creation. God worked six days to create an amazing and complex world. Wow! Then, the GOD of the universe, who never gets tired or needs a vacation rested! Why? It wasn't because he was tired! Isaiah 40:28 states that God never grows faint or gets weary. The Hebrew word for Sabbath is "shabbat." The word "shabbat" also means to cease or to stop. God created the world, it was very good and on the seventh day he stopped creating. Not because he was tired, but because he was finished. The idea here is more like this: when he finished, he paused and reflected on how good his creation was. Now, while we limited humans get tired and need rest, we also need to stop creating and pause and reflect on how good God is! We need to pause and reflect on all that God did over the last week or so. We pause to remember all the good he gave us and the good Father that he is. We put the brakes

on so we can reflect not on what we did, but on who God is and what he did! We rest in order to remember and reflect on God, the one who created us and gave us life and loves us and allows us to live.

There are several reasons why God commanded the Sabbath originally in Exodus 20:8. We need at least a day to take a break from our regular work. This day is not a time of doing absolutely nothing, just not work! This can be really hard for certain people like business owners. But great companies, like Chick-fil-A close on Sundays and other restaurants close on Mondays. And stay at home moms or dads that is your work (and more). And you can't just ignore your preschoolers for 24 hours or someone will call 911. But you too need a rest and you have to figure out how by using a babysitter, trading child care, having your spouse or family watch the kids, etc. No matter your situation, you have to find a way to rest because if you don't, you won't be the best for your kids, your spouse, your employees or customers and for God.

The second reason is best understood as a question. Can you trust God to run the world for a day? Owners, moms and dads, employees and students - can you rest for awhile and trust God to take care of things? The Sabbath principle is a reminder that we actually do need to trust God more than we take matters into our own hands.

A year ago we made the decision to cancel our Saturday night service. One of several reasons was that our volunteers and staff needed a sabbath rest. With working and serving on Saturday and Sunday, it made it very difficult to truly have a day of rest. We moved the Saturday night service to a Sunday 1pm service so our services could be on one day. There was some risk to this change, but it was the right thing to do. It has made a huge difference for so many of us. It was the right thing to in order to practice what I'm preaching about.

So what do we do for a Sabbath rest? Remember it doesn't have to be a certain day. Mine is usually a Friday. It doesn't have to be exactly twenty-four hours starting at a certain hour. To practice the Sabbath means we - **Put the brakes on so you don't miss God.** Okay, but what do I do and not do? What kind of work do I pause from in order to rest? What does it look like to stop and reflect regularly?

Here's a few practical ideas for what we might do during our sabbath rest. What is refreshing and recharging will be different for each unique individual. For some it will be spending time alone. For others that time is better with people. It might include read a book, take time to sit and think, journal some of your thoughts, embrace an unscheduled day or plan some fun, engage in a hobby without making it work, take a hike, watch a movie or visit a museum, or have dinner with someone. For some couples the sabbath rest includes a date night. Stay at home moms and dads, use nap time for your own rest time.

Here's what I've come to believe and here's how I put the the Sabbath principle into practice. I've established a series of Sabbaths: daily, weekly, quarterly, yearly. You

don't have to copy my system, but I think it is worth considering. Here's **My Sabbath system:**

**Daily** - We need daily time with God. I take regular time in the mornings and after work. I use the morning time for prayer and reading God's Word. When I come home, as often as possible, I go out back to what I call "My gratitude chair." [sitting in chair]. Weather permitting, I love to sit out back in the shade and just pray, reflect and make it a point to practice gratitude. I've also learned it really helps to have clearly identified places to make space for God. So I have a easy chair in my den for my morning time and my gratitude chair out back in the shade. Some like the kitchen table. Pick a place and make it regular. I use my chairs to put the brakes on each day - before and after work.

**Weekly** - I do my very best to take a day off every week. Short of an emergency I don't do church work on that day. We need a day to take a break from the regular daily work schedule. Use your day off as family time, hobby time, or just "me" time. I like to read, ride my bike or take a hike or do fun projects on my day off.

**Quarterly** - I schedule a day of prayer once a quarter. I'll be honest, this has been the hardest for me to do. Knowing that, I actually just scheduled my quarterly prayer days for 2018 and cleared my calendar to make sure they happen. A day of prayer is taking the major part of a day just to talk to God. Sometimes I go up to Mt. Lemmon, or I'll take a long hike or sometimes I'll just enjoy long prayer times on my patio and then move to other locations. Sometimes I'll read a Psalm or other scripture and pray through it as I read it.

**Yearly** - I use my vacation to take a long break. It is usually in June. That's why you don't see me preaching in June. I don't think there is any excuse for not taking a vacation, unless you are physically unable. You don't have to spend lots of money. Most of my June vacation is spent right here at home. But I totally unplug from the world of work and the stress involved. I've done this faithfully for the last ten years. And every June I come out of it refreshed and renewed and my batteries are recharged!

Now, let's be honest. I'll bet a bunch of us are saying to ourselves something like this? "Glen, that system of Sabbaths sounds great. But who has the time. I'm too busy." Yep! That's the problem. We are too busy. Our lives are too full and it is God who most often gets crowded out. And in our busyness we don't take care of ourselves! Most of us think we are too busy to make more room for God. But you can change that. Look, God made us and knows us. That's why he taught us to take seriously the need for Sabbaths. He wants the best for us. This isn't my idea, it is God's idea. I've just shared with you some ways to live it out. In the end, it is between you and God. You have to figure out how you'll make more room for God! If you don't have a plan or system, it won't happen!

I want to challenge you to actually start making your own system or plan for Sabbath rest and reflection. What is your plan or system that will insure that you practice Sabbaths? What will you do to - **Put the brakes on so you don't miss God?** You don't have to do all four parts of my system right away, but start with at least one. As you leave, we have My Sabbath System papers in the prayer walls in the lobby. **[half screen shot & URL]** For those of you with us live online, we have a digital download.

The paper has the four seasons of Sabbaths: Daily, Weekly, Quarterly and Yearly. As you leave grab one and take some time this week to write down when you are going to do one or more of these, where and how. Do at least one of the four, but try to do as many as you can. Be specific with when, where and how. That's your homework this week - make a plan to include or better your Sabbath plan. Share your ideas with your family or life group for accountability.

Take a moment now to quietly reflect on how you might make time to stop, rest, and reflect. Decide when and how often (daily, weekly, quarterly, yearly) and how you might use that time. Make the commitment to start a regular sabbath rest. Then I'll close in prayer.

Here's what Jesus said. It was his invitation to you to rest. Listen to his words in the Message version found in Matthew 11:28-30 - ***“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”*** Jesus has given us the invitation. **Put the brakes on so you don't miss God.**

**Pray and Dismiss** (reminding folks to pick up a Sabbath System paper.)