

Sabbath Rest  
God's Institution  
By Robin Davenport, Guest Writer

Today's Treasure

***Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day. So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.***

***Genesis 1:31-2:1-3 NLT***

I have always wondered why God needed to rest after He completed creation. Why would the Creator need to rest? He is the author of strength. He is the source of strength for the weary. He is the Almighty. If He needs to rest, then who listens to our prayers throughout the night, and who sustains creation? When reasoning God's need to rest, I concluded that He did not need to rest, but rather He instituted rest for mankind. Jesus said that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man. All of creation and the Sabbath were made for man.

Every step of creation was built one upon another to create an environment that would meet the needs of his crowning creation, mankind. With every word He spoke, life came into being as he meticulously designed a world with the ability to procreate and sustain the life of mankind. Mankind would be able to interact with creation through his senses of smell, sight, touch, taste, and hearing. The crowning touch was that man would be able to walk and talk with God.

God created boundaries of time through days and nights with the sun to govern the day and the moon to govern the night. God finished His six days of creative work with complete satisfaction. Then He instituted rest by setting the seventh day apart as a blessed and holy day. Rest means to cease or desist. God gave man a day to rest and desist from all work. A day to stop and take time to worship. A time to be still and know that He is God.

LIFE GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

Rest has been a difficult discipline for me to practice through the years. I used to proudly wear the badge of work-aholic without even realizing the pride stretched across my chest as I assessed all that I had completed in a day, week, month, or year. I was addicted to work and achievement. This addiction left me with an unquenchable thirst to experience more and more. This thirst drove me to seek worldly waters that had no ability to nourish and replenish. These worldly waters left me exhausted, dehydrated, and in a backslidden state that was governed by my sinful flesh.

As I came to myself and returned to my Heavenly Father, His unconditional love and forgiveness overwhelmed my heart. I experienced nourishment and was replenished as I sat at His feet and worshiped. I was learning how to cease, desist, and be still as God had instituted through the Sabbath. I still have a drive that needs to be governed by the Holy Spirit instead of my flesh. Through time and life's experiences, God continues to mold me in the discipline of Sabbath rest.

Even in ministry, we can find ourselves governed by our fleshly desires to perform. I believe it is the discipline of Sabbath rest that brings our pride to the surface as we cease from our labors and focus on the one who is Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus Christ.

#### PRAYER

Father, thank you for the gift of the Sabbath rest. Help us remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Remind us that we were not created for the Sabbath, but that the Sabbath was created for us so that we can cease, desist, and be still before you. Please search our hearts and bring any fleshly pride to the surface as we practice the discipline of Sabbath rest.

In Jesus' name. Amen