

# Rhythms of the Soul

Title: Part 3 – No Days Off

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Transition: Band Continues as Brian Prays

## [PRAYER TIME]

Hey before you grab a seat go ahead and take 30 seconds to say “Hi” to some people around you, thank them for being here, tell them you were hoping they sat by your today. While everyone here in the house is saying “Hi” as always we want to take a moment to say “Hi” to you if you are joining us online or on our app. No matter what you might have going on in your life right now know that we are FOR you so let us know how we can pray. You can always submit a confidential prayer request from our app or website.

If you have a Bible with you today and want to follow along we are going to be in Genesis 2. Genesis is the first book of the Bible so that should be an easy one to find. It’s not like finding Lamentations or Philemon. True story, when I was in elementary school we had something called “sword drills.” Everyone would hold their Bible shut with their thumbs ready to go. Then the teacher would call out something like, “Zephaniah 3.” Then everyone would start flipping pages until they found it. The last person to find the passage would then get eliminated until one kid was the winner. How many of you know what I am talking about?

For the past few weeks now, we have been talking about the rhythms of a healthy soul. How many of you know we are living through an epidemic of sick souls? If you're just jumping in with us we have been talking about ordering our lives and our days around some practices to sustain us. Like a vine needs a trellis so our souls need some structure for the new life God is growing. If we want to be healthy a year from now, two years from now, 5 years from now then we have to establish some of these rhythms of a healthy soul.

I've titled this installment:

## **NO DAYS OFF**

Genesis chapter 2. If you are ready say, “Let’s go!”

**Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.**

If you've ever read the Book of Genesis it begins with in the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth... and then it goes on. And for the next six days it tells what God did, but then in chapter 2 it says, thus the heavens and the Earth were finished. Verse 2:

**<sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. <sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.**

**So, no days off...** How many of you have seen someone post that on their social usually with a gym or workout selfie? They post a carefully curated selfie to make themselves look optimally buff and post the hashtag #nodaysoff. Right? They have taken the weights off they were lifting and put some heavier plates on for the photo, come on we know you; you pick up a weight you can't curl but let's grab it for the photo. When you've got just the right amount of perspiration on your forehead, where you don't look like a full-on hot mess, but it's just enough to know you've been doing something right? You've got your gut sucked in, (or your butt poked out depending on your gender) you've got the angle right where it minimizes multiple chins, now you're ready, gonna post it “back up on my gym flow” or “rise and grind” or “no days off.” Am I bursting and bubbles today? We know you. I clicked on that hashtag and there are actually 6.4 million posts on Instagram! 6.4 million gym selfies... no... days... off.

I was thinking about that though, if only it that was something we threw out on the internet, and it wasn't actually a picture of how many of us live our lives. Too often we fall into the trap of living with no days off. AND as a result, there's a sense of fatigue that we all sort of live with now. We just sort of accept this low-grade anxiety as part of the new normal in our culture. We live with this spiritual and emotional dullness. There is this distance that we feel between us and God, between us and those that we love, and even with ourselves. We are disconnected from our own souls. AND **deep down we know there has to be a better way**, amen?

That's what I want us to explore today. That's why we began with Genesis 2. Because from the very beginning of creation God demonstrates for us the rhythms of rest. God created for six days but on the seventh day He rested, He took a sabbath, in the original Hebrew when it says, "God rested," the word rested is the word **Shabbat**. {Everyone say shabbat} God shabbat. It's a verb. Literally, it's a stop. God stopped from His work and chose to sabbath on this day. Later God would actually command His people to sabbath when He gave Moses the 10 Commandments. From the beginning God was trying to work this rhythm of rest into all of creation.

BUT that's not something we are good at today, is it? WHY? Thomas Edison, we have to thank him for this to some degree because he's the one who gave us the light bulb. Before Edison invented the light bulb the average American slept a little over 10 hours per night? Incredible, right? Fast forward to today and now we average around 6.7 hours per night. Some of you are like, "I wish I got 6.7 a night! That would be like a holiday for me!" But to think of 10 hours of sleep a night, that's why when you read history and you hear about someone getting up at 4:00 AM to feed the chickens you're like, "How did they do it?" They could do it because they went to bed at 5:30 in the winter when the sun goes down! You can only sit there with your candle stubs for so long, "What do you wanna do?" "I don't know, let's just go to bed." The sun's down. Let's just go to bed. It is the craziest thought ever.

My point is the rhythms and patterns of rest changed when we could artificially be in sunlight. And of course, **now** with the stream of blue light coming in from our phones, and tablets and TVs, we're able to be kept in what it amounts to torture! If you did it to a prisoner of war it's like, that's torture! Let's just keep 'em up all the time. No darkness. No rest. That's torture! But that's exactly what we're doing to ourselves.

In fact, one article I read said, quote, "*Studies have conclusively (not speculation, conclusively) linked sleeplessness to higher rates of irritability, anger, depression, and mental illness.*" It was Corrie Ten Boom who said:

**"If the devil cannot make us bad, he will just make us busy."**

And yet that's where we live, everything's a thousand miles an hour! We've got texts coming in, and notifications, and alarms, and reminders, and shows to watch, and places we gotta go, and things we have to buy, and we are just busy, busy, busy, always on, always going... AND we've accepted that this is just how it has to be. "This IS how it has to be, right?"

But God says, "No! There's something you can choose to do, you can choose to stop! Six days I've worked and now shabbat, six days I've created the world and now I will demonstrate what you need to do. You stop! Leave the work where it was, it'll be there when you come back. But now it's time to brunch and eat bacon and pancakes and sabbath and receive the gift of tranquility and rejuvenation from 24 glorious hours of rest."

God built our universe on the pattern of six days we labor followed by a day of rest. And to go against that and to think we can do better, and to think we know more, to go against how God set up the universe is to

do so at our own peril. God established a rhythm, a tempo, a cadence demonstrating for us how He designed life to function on this earth.

It's actually fascinating to research this because what they have found is any amount of time you work over 50 hours a week has zero impact on your level of productivity. It's true! Studies show you can work 50 hours a week or 70 hours a week but you're gonna accomplish the same amount. Why? There's a cadence to creation. Six days are for work, and then there's a day for rest, rejuvenation, and delight.

That's what the word Shabbat means, it means to stop *and delight*. That's what God wants for us, He wants for us to stop and delight in Him, delight in what has been done, and rest so that you have something for the week that is to come.

It's a rhythm and we fight against it at our own peril. The universe has a certain grain to it. When God tells us how His universe works, we can fight it, but in the end, we will lose. As Romans 2, verse 9 says (this is from the Message translation):

If you go against the grain, you get splinters, regardless of which neighborhood you're from, what your parents taught you, what schools you attended. But if you embrace the way God does things, there are wonderful payoffs.

I love that! Wayne Muller in his book on the Sabbath points this out when he says:

"If we do not allow for a rhythm of rest in our overly busy lives, illness becomes our Sabbath—our pneumonia, our cancer, our heart attack, our accidents create Sabbath for us."

When you don't take a sabbath, you are literally killing yourself. AND the data backs this up. In groundbreaking research published in National Geographic. A man named Dan Butner, who's a researcher, he published something called the secrets of long life. He just wanted to know what allows people to live longer. So, he went all across the world. He went to China, Japan, the Mediterranean and studied groups of people that live longer. But get this. When he was studying America, there was a surprising group of people that in America live longer than almost anybody else. You know who it is? It's a Christian denomination called the Seventh Day Adventist. We have Advent Health all over the Bay Area, that's part of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Seventh Day Adventist are very strict about taking one day off every seven and honoring the sabbath. On average this researcher found, get this, they lived 10 years longer than almost every other American! 10 years longer!

I want someone here to let the math sink in because you've been skeptical of God. And you've been skeptical of God's Word. This is not a Christian study. They live 10 years longer, people that take the Sabbath on a regular basis. BUT get this. If you took one day off every seven, over a lifetime, do you know what all those days add up to? Just over 10 years! God is telling us there is a spiritual principle, the way He designed you, the way He designed the fabric of our universe, that you must take a day off or you are literally stripping life from yourself every single time!

AND I get that some of you are like, "OK, OK... we get the point, but what is a Sabbath because all I know is from my childhood and the Sabbath was like the worst day of the week. We went to church twice a day, morning and night, it was like two a days but without the Gatorade. It was the worst." Others of you this is a totally foreign concept because you didn't grow up in a religious family, you just knew this is why you couldn't buy beer on Sunday!

SO, let break this down a little more. As I mentioned before, God models the Sabbath for us, and then later He makes it a law for His people when He gives the 10 Commandments to Moses in Exodus 20. Right there next to don't kill and steal and don't sleep with your neighbors wife God says this:

<sup>8</sup> "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. [Already people were forgetting that this was God's rhythm, so God says to remember by keeping it holy, that is set a part, different] <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. [Get this, can I blow your mind for a moment, God in His stopping from His labors was actually creating the seventh thing, which was this concept of shalom and wholeness and rest, even in God's stopping He was creating something that had never existed before! {MIND BLOWN} Then rest of verse 11] **Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.**

Not like the rest of the days. The rest of the days are for working, but not this day, this day is a day for delight, a day for wonder, a day to be replenished, a day to enjoy what you worked so hard the rest of those days for, a day to be still, a day to cease, a day to let things lie where they are as an act of trust in God.

SO, what exactly is the Sabbath? Here's something I put in my notes:

**The Sabbath is more than a day, but it's not less.** It's more than a day. But it's not less than a day. What do I mean by that? I mean we live on a different side of the cross from those who received the 10 Commandments. We are no longer under the law as Christ Followers. The book of Hebrews says all of the Old Testament law and ceremony, all that pointed to Jesus, and Jesus is our Sabbath day rest.

What does that mean exactly? Well, think about it this way. Adam is made on the sixth day, right? He's given life from the dust, and he goes, "Wow, this is amazing, who did all this, what's that over there, there is so much to see, why am I feeling like I can't keep my eyes open though?" Day seven, Adam wakes up, first full day alive and he's like, "Alright, first day, I'm sure we have lots to do!" God's like, "Actually, today's a day off." "What do you mean it's a day off? It's my first day. I gotta name some animals or something." God goes, "I finished all the work before you got here so let's make your first day a rest day." SO, Adam's first full day was a day of rest.

AND that's Jesus! You see, religion tells you to do, do more, do more, do more. Religion tells you what you have to do to earn God's favor. Jesus says, "No, no, no. I've done it all. I took care of it all. Now your job is to rest in what I've done." But Jesus, how can I rest? I didn't do anything. "That's the point. I took care of it! I paid your bill! It is finished! I took care of the work on the cross! Now you rest in your relationship with Me that I earned for you."

Hear me church, **grace isn't based on you, it's placed on you.** Religion says: behave and get saved. Grace says: just receive and believe what I took care of for you. So, Jesus is our sabbath day rest.

The Sabbath is more than a day. It's something that's meant to infect and invade every part of our lives. BUT it's not less than a day. It's like worship. Worship is more than singing, but it's not less than singing. Worship invades how we listen to the message, how we treat our neighbor on the other side of this, all of that. But it's not less than singing. Same thing with the Sabbath. It's more than a day, but not less than a day in that there is this whole template of six days we work and then one day we take a rest.

SO, two takeaways to write down this morning. Here's the first:

## **You were made to work.**

A Sabbath talk should not begin with the Sabbath because that's day seven. Let's talk for just a moment about day one through six, because one of the parts of this whole thing is what we do that qualifies us for the Sabbath. Exodus 20:

### **<sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work...**

God is telling His people that you need to work before you rest! You need to get good and tired, in a good way. There is good tired and bad tired, right? Good tired is your head hits the pillow and you're exhausted because you did a good day's work. You got something done. You accomplished something. You were fruitful in what you were seeking to do. So, you should work hard.

When you're not working and you're just idle, that's when you're positioned to fall for temptation. I saw an article back in January titled "Where are the Men?" It said that since Covid 7 million prime-age men have dropped out of the workforce nationally. That's not good! When you're not working you're positioned to fall for temptation.

So, we should work hard. We should be blessable, and we should be promotable. If you don't get a promotion, it shouldn't be because you don't work hard. It shouldn't be because you don't have a good attitude. You should work on your emotional intelligence. You should sharpen your skills. You should work hard and do so to the glory of God. The Apostle Paul explicitly says: (Col 3:23)

### **<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it wholeheartedly as though you were doing it for the Lord and not merely for people.**

You were made to work, and you should do it wholeheartedly as though you were working for God and not just a boss or manager. Adam, after his day off, Genesis 2:15:

### **<sup>15</sup> The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.**

Understand that this is pre sin and what is Adam doing? He's working!

Some of us have this dream of working like a dog, making a pile of cash, and retiring at 50 or 55. But that's not God's dream for you! You should always be contributing to making the world a better place. Work and responsibility are good for you. Read the book of Revelation. There are jobs on the new heaven and new earth!

If your dream is you lying on the beach for the rest of your life, that's a beer commercial. That's not a life! You want to work. There should be things and passions, even after you retire from a career, that you can pour yourself into, not just another idle day. "What am I gonna do today? I don't know, maybe I'll just go play golf again..." No because you'll be open to temptation, and you'll be living a life of quiet desperation before you know it. You were made to work.

NOW, on the other side when we're working, working, working, working your fingers to the bone, burning the candle at both ends, then we're also susceptible to temptation. Why? Because if you don't get rest where you should you'll look for it where you shouldn't! This is where you're just so fatigued that you binge watch show after show on Netflix instead of going to bed. You grab that third or fourth cocktail or glass of wine

every night. You are too tired for real romance, so you settle for the cheap, hollow, soul stripping imitation online. I'm just looking to things to dull me because I'm just so tired.

My point is we need to work hard to prevent temptation, but we also need to rest to prevent temptation. We have to figure out what keeps us at our best because when your tank is full, you see through the enemy's lies.

And that's the second point:

## **You were made to rest.**

You were made to rest. And even though we could do more, and even though we could find more things to pour ourselves into, we need to see rest as an important step in our taking care of our souls. This is the purpose of the Sabbath day of rest, to bake this into the rhythm of your week.

You're like, "OK, but like what am I going to do for 24 hours?" Well, how about this:

## **Worship, rest, rejuvenation, and delight.**

Worship, rest, rejuvenation, delight. Alright, so I probably should read my Bible or go to church... but what else am I gonna do for 22 hours and 45 minutes, right? Oh, I don't know how about sleep in, eat pancakes, go for a bike ride, read a book, take a nap, have some friends over, make love to your spouse... "Whoa Pastor Brian, you mean it should feel like a vacation?" YES! It should feel like a vacation!

What rejuvenates you? I am gonna just venture a guess and say, half a season of Yellowstone is not gonna leave you feeling wonderful, right? We don't ever finish six episodes of whatever and go, "You know what, I feel great right now!" No! It's like, "Where am I? What time is it? Where are my pants?" So, what rejuvenates you?

If you work with your hands all week, it might be that you need something for your mind on that day. If you work with your mind all week, you might need something with your hands. What might be restful for you might be very different for me. But the key is rest. The key is worship. The key is rejuvenation. The key is delight. So, what rejuvenates you?

## **{CUE SOUND}**

Traditionally, looking back to history, the Sabbath was honored with lighting of candles, worship, prayer, blessing your children. Parents, take a moment and bless your kids, speak life over them. Singing of songs, keeping silent, taking a walk, being in nature, reading scripture, making love. In the Jewish Talmud it was commanded that you make love on the Sabbath. If you're married! I see that look in your eye over there... Sharing a good meal. This is a day of delight. This is a day to look forward to. This is like Christmas without your uncle, right? This is a good day. This is a day to be excited for!

BUT word of warning, this takes preparation. It takes hard work to rest. I know that sounds like an oxymoron. "Bro, you're preaching is sus." Nah, it's in the Bible! Hebrews 4:

**<sup>9</sup> There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; <sup>10</sup> for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. [Now verse 11, pay attention here] <sup>11</sup> Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.**

What does that mean for us? It means planning and organizing for the Sabbath. It means tinkering around with our schedules. Because if we are not careful we will use the Sabbath as just another day to get caught up on the work that we don't get paid to do like laundry and yard work and cleaning the house and changing the oil in the car that's 6,000 miles over due, right?

So, what do we do with those things? Well, praise God that you live in America because we have a two-day weekend! A day to get caught up and prepare for a day of rest. And I hear some of you, "Well, I don't, I'm a waitress or I'm a nurse or..." Look, I get it. Do I look like I'm resting right now? This is not my day off! I've been up since 4:45 am, this is not my idea of Sabbath! "But it's the Lord's Day." Well, it's my most stressful day of the week!

So, what do we do? We tweak. We experiment. It's more than a day, but it's not less than a day. So, your Sabbath could be Wednesday or Tuesday. For our family we do our best to make Friday at sundown to Saturday at sundown our Sabbath because by that time I'm back working on my message. The point is that we figure it out. We make every effort to enter that rest. You've got five days working for your boss, a day where you just do the stuff that you just gotta do but it's still work, that's six. Then you make every effort to let one of your days just be an absolute thrill and sleep in and wear sweat pants and eat carbs. Do things that are good for you on the inside.

One Jewish Rabbi said it like this:

**We should start the Sabbath by declaring this over our lives. Today I am going to pamper my soul.**

I don't know if you are wired like me or not where you need productivity, you need to check stuff off your to-do list, but check this off your box today... I pampered my soul! "Hey, what'd you do yesterday?" Pampered my soul. "What? You had a pamper party. Why didn't I get invited?" Because you stressed me out, that's why!

The point is you will figure it out if you try and toy around with things. Get lost, in a good way. Wander, in a good way.

AND don't give into the consumeristic, consumption mindset of our day. There's lots of days for Ikea. There's lots of days for Target. But don't make it this day. To quote Wayne Mueller again, he said:

**"Sabbath is a time to stop, to refrain from being seduced by our desires. To stop working, stop making money, stop spending money. See what you have. Look around. Listen to your life. Do you really need more than this? Spend a day with your family, instead of buying a new coffee maker today, make coffee in the old one."**

The Sabbath day is a day to take delight in what you worked so hard for those other six days. So many of us are working so hard but you're not enjoying any of what you're working hard for! Look around and see, take delight in what's right there.

Because your company doesn't care about your soul. Someone told me one time, "Brian your church doesn't care if you drive your marriage and family into the ground." Plenty of pastors have forfeited their marriages at the altar of ministry and have burnt their families into smolders because there's always gonna be more to do. So, we have to choose to fight for our souls because no one else is going to! Amen?

