

## Faith and Work - Part 3

### Work and Rest

#### **Biblical Overview of Rest and Sabbath**

- God rested after His work of creation. (Gen. 2:1-3)
- God commanded Israel to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.
  - This command was given in connection with God's work in creation. (Exod. 20:8-11).
  - This command was given in connection with God's work in redemption. (Deut. 5:12-15)
  - The Day of Atonement is also referred to as "a Sabbath of solemn rest." (Lev. 16:31)
  - There was not only a command for a weekly Sabbath, but also a Sabbath year every seven years (rest for the land) and the Year of Jubilee after "seven weeks of years" (rest and restoration). (Lev. 25)
  - Israel regularly violated the Sabbath and it was one of the reasons that they were sent into exile. (Jer. 17:21-27; Ezek. 20:12-24)
- Jesus taught on the topics of rest and Sabbath.
  - Jesus promised rest for the souls of those who would come to Him. (Matt. 11:28-30)
  - Jesus stated that He is Lord of the Sabbath. (Matt. 12:8)
  - Jesus stated that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27)
  - When being persecuted for healing on the Sabbath, Jesus stated, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." (John 5:17)
- New Testament authors reveal that the Sabbath found its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
  - The Sabbath, along with other things, was a shadow of things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. (Col. 2:16-17)
  - True rest is found in resting in Christ's work for us and will be fully experienced when He returns. (Heb. 3:7-4:11)
- The New Testament Church began to gather together on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2)

## Implications for Christians Concerning Work and Rest

- We are no longer under the Law of the Old Covenant, so the specific regulations regarding the Sabbath no longer apply.
- However, the principle of the Sabbath (regular rest and worship) is still important in our lives.
  - Regular rest from work is a way to remember our dependence on God and grow in our trust of God.
  - Rest should not be seen merely as a way to recharge and be more productive at work; it is an important time to delight in God and His work.
  - Therefore, our times of rest should be more than just inactivity; we should be intentional to keep the day holy and include times of worship.
  - Let's seek to keep the balance that God has given to us as a way to guard from being overworked and underworked.
- If we aren't resting in Jesus, we will never experience true rest.
  - "When your heart comes to hope in Christ and the future world he has guaranteed—when you are carrying his easy yoke—you finally have the power to work with a free heart. You can accept gladly whatever level of success and accomplishment God gives you in your vocation, because he has called you to it. You can work with passion and rest, knowing that ultimately the deepest desires of your heart—including your specific aspirations for your earthly work—will be fulfilled when you reach your true country, the new heavens and new earth. So in any time and place you can work with joy, satisfaction, and no regrets." - Tim Keller

## Practical Applications

- Be intentional to use your times of rest to delight in God. Let the shadow of physical rest point you to the substance of Christ.
- Take some time for sheer inactivity, but also include times of contemplative, recreational, and aesthetic rest.
- Consider whether you are an introvert or extrovert, but also seek to include both times of solitude and fellowship.
- Be thoughtful about different rhythms of rest (Israel had a Sabbath day and Sabbath year).
- A healthy balance of work and rest will probably look different during the various seasons of life, but should never be totally neglected.