

are created in the image of God. We are more than what we do and the Sabbath reminds us of that. Let us remember that we are more than what we do and we are created in the image of God. God worked and rested. When we rest, we honor God by imitating Him and by enjoying what He has created and by enjoying the people He has put into our lives. It's part of making room for life. Let us empty it first and then fill it with good things.

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Making Room For Life (2)
Making Room For Rest
Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 20:8-11, Jeremiah 17:21-22
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Many believe that time is like gold because it's as precious and important. In financial terms, gold is one of the valuable assets that a person can possess or own which defines wealth. Likewise, time is our most precious resource. Living a more fulfilling life is not determined by how much money we have, but how we use our time. Our spiritual health is also determined by the way we choose to use our time. Everything we do in time has a trade-off. When we decide to do something, we are deciding not to do something else. The choice of how we use time is fundamentally important.

The Bible teaches about the sacredness of time. It begins right at the very beginning of the Bible in the Creation story. Genesis 2:2-3 says, *"By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."* Time was the first thing set apart and called holy in the Bible. God rested on the seventh day and made it holy. It was a day set apart for ceasing and set apart for resting. In the Bible the first thing that was set apart and called holy was time. It began with God setting apart a time and a day when God rested from creation.

When God called a people to Himself, He made an arrangement with them in a covenant and in a relationship. Then He called them to set apart time. In Exodus 20:8-11 God says, *"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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 manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 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." It says remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. For six days we do all our work. But on the seventh day we are supposed to stop and to empty the day out. On the Sabbath day we are not supposed to do any work, neither us, nor our children, nor the animals. Everybody deserves a rest. We are supposed to set aside this time. It is set apart to the Lord. For six days God worked and created and then rested. So we are supposed to stop working on that one day. That is what God is telling Israel; to empty the day of work in order to fill it with good things. It isn't called to be an absolutely empty day or to be a day filled with religious obligations. It is supposed to be a culmination of the week. It is intended to be a day of focusing on the family. It focuses on joy and on God.

This is the most popular part of the law where God says, "Take a day off." But, Israel never really got this right. They got overly legalistic about it or they ignored it entirely. In fact, the prophets told Israel that they disobeyed God in not observing the Sabbath. What they pointed to was not that they were not doing proper religious things on the Sabbath, but they refused to stop engaging in commerce. Jeremiah 17:21-22 is one of the places. *"This is what the Lord says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your ancestors."* God told them to stop the commerce, the carrying of goods in and out of the city on just this one day.

The core of the idea of the Sabbath is the idea of trust. It's part of this covenant relationship with God. Every week there is a symbol of our trust in God, in our God-centeredness. The Sabbath is a symbol of that trust. It actually begins with dinner and with a time together as family. The Sabbath is not a time of what we do for God. It's a time of God protecting us. God is the provider of our

lives. What He gives is sufficient. We will seek Him, as we set apart a time and a day. The Sabbath is a day to restrain ourselves in order to discover ourselves. It is a day to rest from all the things we are doing on the other days. We rest from work in order to make time for family and for friends, to enjoy creation, and to see God.

Good work is worth fighting for and good rest is worth fighting for as well. That is what this is all about. Our need for rest is rooted in the way we have been created. The Sabbath is for us, not against us. We need to focus on the issue of resting. If you are in a family situation, make time for your family on this day. If you are not close to your family, make time to develop relationships and to reconcile with them. The key thing is that we have got to empty before we fill. We've got to take out all those things that are in the day-to-day life. We've got to get those things out – all the daily things that keep us busy, all the things that are a part of daily life. Just get it out and make some room. And then we decide what we put back in. And if we empty it first, then we can put it all in and it all fits. We've got to empty in order to fill it with the right things. So we maximize rest for the family and for friends. On this day of rest we will make sure that its focused on God, that it's got that social time with the right people, and that we rest and recreate and enjoy the creation that God has given.

Habit and ritual can be our friend. If we start the same time and the same way every time, it gives us a rhythm. Setting that rhythm can be such a strong part of our whole life together. Let us make the Sabbath as a rhythm of our lives and consecrate it as a holy time and a holy day. The Sabbath is to enjoy God, to enjoy our relationships, and to enjoy God's creation. It's to pull us out of all of the work so that we can see all of the rest. So it's time to put aside worry. It's time to get outside. It's time to laugh. And it's time to honor God. We are to set apart the Sabbath to the Lord. As God is a critical and central part of all of life, He is a central part of the Sabbath. We need the Sabbath. It's part of being truly human. We