

Chapter 19 - Rest

1. Take a few minutes to reflect on the story.
 - A) When we read the gospels, it's easy to get the impression that Jesus was always on the go. Feasting here, doing miracles there, teaching his disciples in private and the crowds in the temple court or on a mountainside. Reflect on the times when Jesus was alone with His Father.
 - B) "Sabbath" was an important part of Jewish culture in Jesus' time and the Pharisees were always on the lookout for violators whom they could prosecute. (Not resting on the Sabbath was against the law!) How would your life be different if you were forced to take regular time off?
 - C) Jesus shocked everyone with His saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." If Jesus were to visit our generation in the flesh and mingle with us for three years, what do you think He would say to us about rest?

2. For some of us, the idea of relaxing activity or, worse yet, inactivity seems to be outright ungodly. Not only do we insist on being productive ourselves, we expect everyone around us to be hard at it continually, as well. Write down your personal response to the idea of "Sabbath" and the way you live it out. (If you're an overcommitted type, this might be more about how you hope to live it out.)

3. Using a concordance (either book or online) do a little study on "Sabbath" on your own. Jot down anything that particularly strikes you about its role in the Jewish community.

4. Comment on this quotation from the book: "Sabbath is not a reward for us getting all of our work done." How does this fit with the way you've always thought of "Sabbath" or rest? How does this fit into God's instructions for "Sabbath" in the Old Testament?

5. In this chapter, I suggests that “the Sabbath principle” (the need for regular rest) predates the law of Moses where it was established as an ordinance. Accepting that in the 21st century we live such fragmented lives that a formal “Sabbath” for everyone is out of the question, write down the practical steps you can take to live out this valuable principle.

6. Just as a partial fast has some benefit, so a partial “Sabbath” is better than nothing. Consider taking a break from some things that have a tendency to control your life. Can you live a day (or at least a few hours) without electronic media, your phone (especially mobile), your car, or some other thing or practice which controls a lot of your life? Give it your best attempt and write down your reflections on the exercise. Were you able to find rest or did it heighten anxiety for you?

7. I mention two pitfalls in relation to rest: sloth and legalism. Reflect on your personal tendencies and make a note or two about which you think would be the greater temptation for you. Then write down what you think you could do to conquer that temptation as you follow the principle of Sabbath in a healthy way.

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8. Join me in a brief fantasy. Imagine that you have a whole day stretched out before you. You can do whatever you want with the exception that whatever you choose must not contribute directly to providing for your daily needs. What would you do? (If you are one of those blessed people who already do this regularly, jot down the things you typically do on your “Sabbath.”)
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For Group Leaders:

By now you and your group has bonded at a fairly deep level. You feel comfortable and unthreatened by each other. Consider this session to be a well earned “group rest.” Keep your study time short and enjoy some down time together. (A little celebration wouldn’t be amiss either.)

Be sure to congratulate everyone for having hung in there for the duration. Even if you’ve cherry-picked just a few chapters and you’ve come to the end of whatever series of sessions you’ve put together, I’d love to hear from you.

If you send me an email at ron@fbhinternational.com, I’ll get back to you with my personal thanks for having blessed me by using this book to help you in your walk with God.

Live a refreshed life!