



HIGHEST PRAISE APOSTOLIC CHURCH FALL CURRICULUM

SERIES: PRACTICING THE LIFE OF JESUS

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

LESSON: OBSERVING THE SABBATH

CONCEPTS OF THIS LESSON ARE DERIVED FROM DONALD WHITNEY'S BOOK, *SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE*

SERIES FOCUS: This series focuses on studying the life of Jesus Christ and finding practical applications for the life of every believer. How can I, as a follower of Christ, imitate Christ? How can we put into practice the life of Jesus, into our everyday lives?

LESSON FOCUS: This lesson focuses on the spiritual disciplines and benefits embracing and practicing the sabbath for spiritual growth.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome, everyone, to our third Bible study lesson on spiritual disciplines. Today, we're exploring the spiritual practice of the Sabbath. The practice of the Sabbath isn't too common nowadays. We often view the sabbath as a Jewish custom. But did you know that the Bible encourages us to sabbath regularly? Today we will explore this in more detail. Let's open with a brief prayer.

"Heavenly Father, as we gather to study and reflect on the practice of the Sabbath, we seek your guidance and understanding. Please help us to grow spiritually and draw closer to you through this discipline. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

UNDERSTANDING THE SABBATH

What exactly is Sabbath?

The Sabbath is defined as a day of rest and worship. The reality is that our souls need regular rest. This goes for everyone in the body of Christ. When we rest our soul is restored and we are given a renewed energy to engage and minister in the world around us.

THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

God's creation rest in Genesis.

- ⇒ **Genesis 2:1-3** – “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.”

Let's pause for a moment and appreciate what we just read. **God rested.**

If He rested, so must we. Not only did He rest, but He made that seventh day holy. This is actually the first time that the Bible uses the word “holy”. Rabbinic theologians view this as the principle of first mention. The idea is that when a word is first used in the scriptures, we can define the term around that context and apply it to other passages. So, what is God saying here?

Analogy: Your mom or grandma's china dishes are set aside for special dinners like Christmas or Thanksgiving, right? It would be strange to use beautiful china for taco Tuesday! This is what God means by making the seventh day “holy”. The day of the sabbath should be a special day from the ordinary days of work.

The Fourth Commandment.

- ⇒ **Exodus 20:8-11** – “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep 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, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

It's important to remember that the sabbath is a commandment. The same importance that we give the other commandments is the same we should give to the sabbath.

JESUS AND THE SABBATH

There is a misconception out there that Jesus didn't affirm the sabbath. This is not true. In fact, part of Jesus' ministry was to renew the practice of the sabbath back to its original purpose.

- A. Jesus healed people on the sabbath which was a strict violation by some Jewish leaders. By doing this Jesus emphasized that we should do good and show mercy on the sabbath. (*Mark 3:1-6*)
- B. Jesus declared Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath. Christ used the sabbath to establish His authority on earth. (*Mark 2:27-28*)
- C. Jesus reminds us that true rest is found in Him. He invited people to find spiritual rest and peace in Him. As we sabbath, we should keep this truth at the core of our practice. (*Matthew 11:28-30*)

BENEFITS OF OBSERVING THE SABBATH

- A. Taking a day to rest rejuvenates our body and soul. It gives us space to intentionally worship our God in peace.
- B. It creates a space for us to fellowship with our loved ones. Oftentimes, making time for fellowship can be overwhelming with our busy weeks. Sabbath makes a space, at the end of every week, for fellowship.
- C. Observing the sabbath is an act of obedience to God. God wants you and I to flourish. The command to rest is a gracious command.
- D. Fasting gives us the opportunity to prioritize our relationship with God. During the sabbath, we dedicate a whole day every week to worshipping and resting in Him. If we commit to this, it will change our relationship to God.

ADVICE ON OBSERVING THE SABBATH

- A. Practicing the sabbath can be a bit awkward. Start small. If fasting for 24 hours is too much, try it for half a day or a couple of hours.
- B. Think subtraction, not addition. Our lives are overly busy for so many of us. What can you cut out for just a day? Work emails? House projects?

- C. You will get what you put into it. The more that you give yourself over to practicing the sabbath, the more you will be transformed by the discipline. The opposite is also true.
- D. Sabbath is a spiritual discipline. It is a tool for spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is a slow and deep change that occurs in our hearts as believers over time. Think years not weeks.
- E. Make it a fun time for your family and/or friends. Have a big dinner, play board games, nap, and read a good book with your family. The goal is to enjoy the blessings that God has given us. This honors the Lord.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, practicing the Sabbath are valuable tools for our spiritual growth and deepening our relationship with God. Let's commit to integrating these disciplines into our lives and discovering the blessings they offer.

Closing Prayer:

“Heavenly Father, we thank you for the wisdom and guidance on observing the Sabbath. May these practices draw us closer to you and transform our hearts. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *Do you view the Sabbath as important? Why, or why not?*
2. *What are some practical ways that you can implement the Sabbath into your weekly routine?*
3. *What are some challenges that we have to overcome to practice the Sabbath?*

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK

- ⇒ Choose a specific day for Sabbath observance and share your experiences with the group next time.
- ⇒ Go over some of the passages of scripture that we went over today. Meditate on how they apply to your walk with God. Go over some of the passages of scripture that we went over today. Meditate on how they apply to your walk with God.