

STUDY GUIDE:

Extraordinary Life Series in Mark:

Sabbath, Signs, and Life. | Mark 2:23-3:6

Welcome to the adventure. We are on a journey to look deeply into what Jesus said, how he lived, and who he truly is through the Gospel of Mark. These guides are based off of our sermons which can always be found at www.rbpc.org/media/sermons.

For Starters

Calm your mind for a second. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly (really, do it).

- How are you doing with busyness, stress, time, and the pace of life?
- In regards to the balance of work and rest, do you feel like life is running you or that you are running life?

Sabbath, Jesus, and missing the point.

Get these verses ready to read when they come up below: Gen 2:1-3, Ex 20:8-11

Sabbath means rest, to cease working.

God modeled this rest from the very start of creation. (Gen. 2:1-3.)

- What do you think God did that day? Nothing?

Later, just after God rescued the Israelites out of slavery, where their value was only about how productive they were for Pharaoh, God introduces them to a *new life*.

He gives them this commandment, one of 'The Ten', about Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11).

- In the Israelite context of slavery, work, and value being directly proportionate to production, does this commandment make more sense to you? Does it relate to you?

Jesus hits the Sabbath scene.

Read Mark 2:23 through 3:6

- In regards to the Pharisees, how was the *letter* of the law lifted above the *spirit* or purpose of the law of Sabbath?
- What is 'lawful' on Sabbath? (read verse 3:4) Could rest with God save life?

I know this is a repeat, but *Sabbath means rest, to cease working*.

- When Jesus says that He is Lord of the Sabbath, what is he saying?
- How does your answer to that question expand your understanding of Matthew 11:28-30?

One of the great blessings of the gospel is that Jesus offers you rest that no one else, and nothing else, can or will.

Yokes, Oxen, and a Rabbi

A yoke is a wooden beam used to attach an ox to a heavy load.

Rabbi's also had yokes. A Rabbinic yoke is the unique teaching and rules, teachings, and challenges of the Rabbi. When a person followed a Rabbi, to become like them, you 'took on their yoke'. In both instances, yokes could be heavy and burdensome, or light and life giving. Sometimes we can make Jesus' teachings very heavy on our lives.

Read that Matthew 11:28-30 passage again.

- How heavy is Jesus' yoke for you? Does it feel like work?
- How can Jesus' teaching be life-giving & easy while still challenging & difficult?

Back to Sabbath.

So besides church, how do we do this? Here are some helpful ideas to help you consider a practice of Sabbath in your own lives:

Practices of Sabbath throughout history have included prayer, reading and reflecting on Scripture, spending time in nature and thanking God for beauty and breathing. Taking walks, but not for the purpose of burning calories.

Good advice: Figure out what is work for you and don't do it.

*"A man who works with his hands will sabbath with his mind.
A man who works with his mind will sabbath with his hands."*

-Abraham Joseph Heschel, Sabbath

Do you have an unplugged day? A day without email, text or social media? Are you enslaved to being connected?

More ideas: Have coffee with a friend. Read a book. Play with your kids and thank God for them. *Slow down and take in the good that God has given you.* Have dinner, wine, and unwind with friends. Tell stories and share life together. Sit in solitude with God by your side, converse with Him. Jesus models this habit too... maybe you could bring a journal into this time.

How does this hit you? What would you do on Sabbath?

What are your ideas and how do you remain 'God conscious' in those activities?

Tell your loved ones that they're a gift from God.

This is the key — it's not just about pleasure or rate sake of pleasure — All of this enjoyment is in the consciousness of being grateful to God for life and rest!

Sabbath is a gift from God for your soul, and Jesus is the Lord of Rest. I challenge you to try Sabbath and stop doing so that you can just be... and breathe.
The grace of Jesus loves who you be above what you do.

Close in Prayer

