

## God and Rest April 23, 2006

### I. Introduction: Rest

A. *Please excuse the absence of my daughter. She has been suffering from a severe head cold. Since she has been home, she has consumed 18 doughnuts, three quart containers of orange juice, a half-gallon of cranberry juice, four two-liter bottles of Diet Coke, about 30 Pop-Tarts and all of the family's Christmas candy canes. MTV has been blasting incessantly. I had to extend my credit with Nynex due to the volume of her telephone calls. The house is knee-deep in used Kleenex. Today, FedEx delivered seven Chia Pets and four boxes containing the Clapper she ordered from the Home Shopping Channel. With the thermostat set at 78 degrees, I need extra fuel delivery, and the wallpaper has peeled off the bathroom wall as a result of her hourly "therapeutic" sauna baths. Our cat is in a state of shock from being repeatedly bombarded with Hall's mentholated cough drops. Although she is not exactly 100 percent yet, she will attend school today. Please do not send her home unless she lapses into a coma. I need a break.... she needed rest*

### II. God has great interest in Rest

A. Genesis 2:1-3 - God rested

1. Even though He never tires or is fatigued (Psalm 121:1-4)

B. Genesis 16:22-23, 29-30,

1. In gathering Manna they were to rest on the 7th day

2. Gen. 16:29 - the first time we see the word sabbath

**C. Ex. 20:8-11**

1. The 4th commandment extended sabbath rest to all work done for 6 days.

a) Heb. *shabbat* = rest, to cease from exertion and rest. It was a rest from food preparation.

**D. Leviticus 25:4, 26:34** - sabbath year

E. Lev. 23:24,39 -- three times a year they were to go up to Jerusalem

F. Lev. 25:10-13, a year of Jubilee every 50 years.

G. Cancelled along with the rest of the law of Moses

1. Eph. 2:11-18

2. Col. 2:13-14

### III. Jesus and the Sabbath

A. Luke 4:16 - Jesus kept the sabbath as was the Jewish custom.

1. He also gathered food on sabbath (Mt. 12:1ff)

2. He corrected religious leaders who rebuked him for doing good on the Sabbath, like healing.

B. Jesus was Lord of the Sabbath

1. Mark 2:25-28

2. Mark 3:1-4

C. Mt. 14:22-23, Jesus got alone for rejuvenation time with the Father.

1. Lu 6:12\* One of those days **Jesus** went out to a mountainside to **pray**, and spent the night praying to God.

2. Lu 9:28\* About eight days after **Jesus** said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to **pray**.

3. Illustration:

a) One man challenged another to an all-day wood chopping contest. The challenger worked very hard, stopping only for a brief lunch break. The other man had a leisurely lunch and took several breaks during the day. At the end of the day, the challenger was surprised and annoyed to find that the other fellow had chopped substantially more wood than he had. "I don't get it," he said. "Every time I checked, you were taking a rest, yet you chopped more wood than I did." "But you didn't notice," said the winning woodsman, "that I was sharpening my axe when I sat down to rest." When Jesus rested he was sharpening his axe, so to speak. When he went up into the mountain to be alone and to pray,

this enabled him to more clearly know the will of his Father. And whenever we spend some time alone with the Lord by praying and reading his Word, this enables us to be sharpened spiritually and to be made of use to the Lord. Sabbath rest shapes and molds us into instruments, or tools, to be used for God's glory and for his kingdom purposes.

**4. Mark 6:31,32, 46** - Come aside to a desert place for a while... go across the lake while Jesus went to pray.

D. Hebrews 4

1. The intended rest is still offered to Christians.
  - a) Takes the Word of God (4:2)
  - b) It takes Faith (4:3)
  - c) It takes obedient action (4:7)
  - d) We need to be diligent to enter this rest, it is not automatic (4:11)

**2. Mt. 11:28** - come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

IV. Application

A. We are in a culture of no rest.

1. mobile phones 24/7/365 we never get away.

B. Rest is more than vacation

1. Entering God's rest is more than simply doing as we please. Not that sitting in the sun and reading is wrong, thank God for lazy summer days and vacation. But if we think of Rest only as doing what we thought without thought of God we are not getting the rest that we need.
2. prayer is a vehicle of God's rejuvenation and grace in our lives
3. Rest comes on the inside... **Psalm 37:7,8**

**C. We must be diligent to enter His REST (Heb. 4:11)**

**1. Mt. 11:28,29** - take on his yoke and learn of Him... becoming his disciple.

2. Defining Rest:

- a) sins forgiven through the finished work of Jesus Christ (1John 1:9)
  - (1) A rest comes when a person trust the Lord and commits their life to Christ and walks with Him.
- b) Trusting God with our future ( Prov. 3:5,6)
- c) Contentment (1 Tim. 6:-12)
- d) Php 4:6-8 talks about the Peace of God.
- e) Rest we have with God for eternity
  - (1) 1 Peter 1:3-5

According to Charles Swindoll, "Two of the top prescribed medications in America are Valium and Tagamet. The former is a muscle relaxant to help people deal with stress. The latter stops the flow of hydro-chloric acid to ease a churning stomach plagued with ulcers. If pharmaceuticals are any barometer to where our culture is at emotionally, we're the most uptight, stressed-out, anxiety-ridden culture on the face of the earth. Why?

Because we've never learned how to rest. Probably because we've never understood what it really means to rest. We tend to equate rest with sleeping in on a rainy morning...with basking on the beach, while pouring sunscreen and poring over a best-seller... with an afternoon snooze on the couch to the soothing TV background music of marching bands and half-time activities. But the "rest" that Hebrews describes is quite different. We don't have to take off work to obtain it. Nor do we need to drive to the beach. Or spend any money. It is available all day, every day. And it's as close as a prayer!"

ILLUS: If you've ever been to Yellowstone National Park, you were probably given a piece of paper by a ranger at the park entrance. On it in big letters was the warning "Do Not Feed the Bears." You no sooner drive into the heart of the park, however, than you see people feeding the bears. When I first saw this I asked a ranger about

it. "Sir," he answered, "you have only a small part of the picture." He described how the park service personnel in the fall and winter have to carry away the bodies of dead bears -- bears who have lost their ability to fend for food. That's what's happening to us. -- Howard Hendricks too many do not walk in obedience, but in that which is right in their own eyes.

ILLUS: Several years ago, newspapers told how a new Navy jet fighter shot itself down. Flying at supersonic speed, it ran into cannon shells it had fired only a few seconds before. The jet was traveling too fast!

You are also traveling too fast, if you don't have time to worship God in regular church services, if you don't have time to read the Bible, if you don't have time to pray. If you're neglecting any of these, you're probably traveling too fast to hear the sound of God's voice. You can't tell whether you are in the center of His will. Better slow down before, like the jet, you shoot yourself down.

we take "working vacations," "working breakfasts," "working lunches," and "working dinners." He says we can never get away from our work, and he tells us, "Ask around: Who doesn't check voice messages and e-mail while on vacation . . . [or] before going to bed just in case a client or someone needs us?" I think we fail to recognize that the Lord of the entire universe had a day off -- and if God needed a day off, how much more do we need a day off?

[The] sabbath rest is not running away from life and its problems; it is an opportunity to receive grace to face them. It is a time to rely on God [and] a time to let God be God in one's living." We must remember Psalm 46:10, which says, "Be still, and know that I am God." We need to slow down if we are ever going to hear God's voice and to receive renewal from abiding in his presence. Sabbath rest is all about abiding in the peace of God's presence and receiving his grace to help us keep on going from day to day.

Take a day off to pray and spend time in God's word, and also to vegetate if you must. If you are someone who doesn't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you likely have a lot of unrest in your life. You are not only on the go all the time, but you are full of anxiety about your spiritual state of being -- by fretting about the question of whether you will go to heaven or to hell when you die. If you surrender your life to Jesus Christ this morning then you won't have to worry with that question any more. Jesus will come into your heart and wash you clean from your sins, he will lift your heavy burden, and he will give you the rest that comes with the assurance of eternal life.