

## **“Sabbath”** *The Grind- week #1*

Your list of worries might not include food and clothing. Quite possibly the things concerning you are good things to take care of, but not at the expense of your spiritual health.

If you were to customize this verse, what would be on your “Isn’t life more than this?” list, those things that consume your time and energy and compete for your focus? Is there something on that list you can spend less time worrying about and working on, so that you can make more space for God and His kingdom?

### **WRAP-UP**

God created the Sabbath rest as a gift to us, so that we could draw closer to him and be refreshed both physically and spiritually. We should not let our fears cause us to miss out on that blessing by settling for an hour at church as a substitute for our “sabbath rest”. Take advantage of the gift offered to you by a loving God and draw near to Him. Intentionally create space for resting in the presence of God so that you are physically refreshed and growing spiritually.

### **Memory Verse**

*"Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.  
Exodus 20:8 NLT*

### **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more space)

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*Challenge-* Put time on your calendar to get away with God, not to study or even to pray, but just to draw near and be refreshed by His presence. Rest.

### **INTRODUCTION**

What is it that dictates the pace of your life? The world exerts pressure to do more, have more, be more than you are right now. We succumb by adding more into our schedules than we can juggle, stretching our budgets beyond what we can afford and expending more energy than is healthy. But this is not the way God intended us to live. When Israel was set free from slavery God established a new way of life. He told them to set aside time to rest. This was not an obligatory hoop to jump through, it was a gift which allowed them to grow in their relationship to a God who loved them. Let’s find out how can we embrace the gift and the one who offers it to us.

### **Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)**

When was the last time you took a vacation? Did you feel rested when you returned?

### **STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)**

#### **1. The Origin of the Sabbath**

*Exodus 16:22-23, 27-30 NLT - 22 On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much as usual--four quarts for each person instead of two. Then all the leaders of the community came and asked Moses for an explanation. 23 He told them, "This is what the LORD commanded: Tomorrow will be a day of complete rest, a holy Sabbath day set apart for the LORD. So bake or boil as much as you want today, and set aside what is left for tomorrow." ...27 Some of the people went out anyway on the seventh day, but they found no food. 28 The LORD asked Moses, "How long will these people refuse to obey my commands and instructions? 29 They must realize that the Sabbath is the LORD's gift to you. That is why he gives you a two-day supply on the sixth day, so there will be enough for two days. On the Sabbath day you must each stay in your place. Do not go out to pick up food on the seventh day." 30 So the people did not gather any food on the seventh day.*

After they escaped slavery in Egypt the Israelites faced an arduous journey through the wilderness with seemingly endless work required to survive. As slaves they had worked 24/7 but when God set them free He also provided an opportunity for them to rest. How did God’s special provision make it possible for the people to observe a day of complete

rest? (Ex 16:22) The sabbath not only gave them space to recover from their physical work, it was also “holy” or set apart for the Lord. It was intended to connect them to God and renew them spiritually. If God provided double their need on the sixth day, why do you think they went out to gather on the seventh day rather than resting? What miracles had they just witnessed as they were freed from Egypt? Why didn’t they trust God?

What are some of the ways God has demonstrated His faithful provision in your life? Are there areas that you need to trust Him with that you are still struggling to control?

## 2. The Law and the Sabbath

*Exodus 20:2-7 NLT - 2 "I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. 3 "You must not have any other god but me. 4 "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 5 You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected--even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. 6 But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands. 7 "You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.*

We are all familiar with the Ten commandments. Were you aware that the first four address our relationship with God, and the last six our relationship with others? Before He says “have no other gods before me”, how does God identify himself?

*Exodus 20:8-11 NLT - 8 "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 You have six days each week for your ordinary work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.*

The first two commandments set the context of observing the sabbath-God freed us from slavery, He loves us, and He is jealous over us. The fourth commandment calls us to regularly rest and observe a sabbath, but

do you feel you are taking full advantage of the gift God intended that to be?

What are some of the things that you find most difficult to set aside when you attempt to rest in God’s presence? If we let those things replace our time with God, are we returning to a type of slavery, and making them into idols?

Look at the fourth commandment and notice how thoroughly God intended the sabbath rest to be within your household. Now describe the conditions in which for you come closest to a complete rest from work and focused connection with God. Is it in a quiet room where you can open yourself to God’s presence, a stroll along a trail with nothing but the sounds of creation, or some other setting that enhances your undisturbed connection to God? Are you regularly creating space for that to happen?

## 3. Jesus and the Sabbath

*Mark 2:27-28 NLT - 27 Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!"*

When Jesus and his disciples broke off grain to eat on the Sabbath he was challenged by the Pharisees that he had broken the law. Jesus response brought the focus back on God’s intention for the Sabbath. What did he say about the purpose of the Sabbath? This is not one more item on your “to do” list to check off. The sabbath rest is meant to meet your needs.

You might fear that giving up time to spend with God will cause you to accomplish less, miss out or be left behind. Jesus addresses those fears in Matthew chapter 6. He says, “Don’t worry, isn’t life more than these things?”.

*Matthew 6:31-34 NLT - 31 "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' 32 These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. 33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. 34 "So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.*