

The High Calling

a bimonthly publication of The Francis Asbury Society

The Rest of Your Life

By Stan Key

Many scholars claim that the most influential autobiography ever written is Augustine's *Confessions*. The opening words of this spiritual classic introduce us to what his life message is all about: "Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are *restless* till they find their *rest* in you." This great soul chose to describe the deepest longings of his heart in terms of "rest." His autobiography explains how promiscuity, thievery, love of theater, and the pursuit of knowledge were unable to calm the tempest that defined his inner world. Augustine's story is an eloquent testimony to God's ability to lead a troubled soul to rest.

This issue of *The High Calling* is devoted to the subject of *rest*. A topic strangely neglected by preachers and theologians, the theme of rest is prominent in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Theologically, the biblical teaching on rest provides the foundation for understanding the doctrine of entire sanctification. A brief survey introduces us to the richness of this neglected term:

- "On the seventh day God finished his work... and he *rested*... So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy..." (Gn 2:2–3).
- "You [Cain] will be a *restless* wanderer on the earth" (Gn 4:12 NIV).



- "My presence will go with you, and I will give you *rest*" (Ex 33:14).
- "The Lord your God is providing you a place of *rest* and will give you this land" (Jos 1:13).

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The Rest of Faith

By Laurence W. Wood



In his book *Truly Ourselves, Truly the Spirit's: Reflections on Life in the Spirit* (Francis Asbury Press, 1989), Laurence Wood describes holiness in terms of Canaan rest, giving a fresh and dynamic perspective on the doctrine of entire sanctification. Abridged and slightly edited, the following article is taken from chapter 10, "The Spirit of Peace" (169–172).

The writer of Hebrews gives us a concrete illustration of the peace which was promised to Israel and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He defines this peace as "a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (4:9). Some have assumed that this rest refers to our life with God in the hereafter. But I agree with John Calvin and John Wesley that the writer had in mind the experience of faith for this life. John Calvin, as well as his contemporary representative in Karl Barth, believed that this level of rest referred to the perfection of the Christian life which we strive for now even if we don't experience it in this life.

John Wesley believed that the "rest of faith" referred to the purity of our love for God which is available for all believers today. I agree with Wesley. The offer of perfect peace is for real in this life. To think we have to postpone this experience of peace for the future life is to turn it into an idea which we can only imagine we have. But we don't have to be like the Stoics; this rest is available now through the Holy Spirit.

This rest is the fulfillment of the rest which the Israelites were supposed to have enjoyed in Canaan. One of the privileges of living in Canaan was peace and release from fear: "I will give peace in the land... and none shall make you afraid" (Lv 26:6). But rest did not come permanently to the Israelites in Canaan because they failed to live in the light of God's countenance (Nm 6:24–26); and they failed to have a perfect love for God (Dt 30:1–6).

The writer of Hebrews says that this rest is available today for those who live in Christ. He quotes Psalm 95:7–11 where the word *rest* is substituted for the word *land*. He is thinking of the kingdom of Christ as the fulfillment of the kingdom in Canaan. Just as Canaan symbolized rest from the anxieties of wandering in the wilderness, so does our life in Christ mean a rest "from our labors" and the barrenness of half-hearted commitment. Like the ancient Israelites, many believers lack a wholehearted relationship with Christ. They have made their exodus from the bondage of Egypt, but they haven't crossed over into the rest of Canaan. This is why the writer says that we must "strive" to enter this rest of faith (4:11).

"Let us strive to enter that rest" is a restatement of Joshua 4:10, when "the people passed over in haste." The Old Testament word for *striving* means the same as the New Testament word. It means to strive with eagerness and to do something in "haste." Phillips translates the passage this way:

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Rest Assured

By Hannah Whitall Smith (1832–1911)



With over two million copies sold, Hannah Whitall Smith's *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* has become a classic of devotional literature. First printed in 1870, this little book has helped tens of thousands of hungry saints enter in to a deeper experience of God's grace. In the third chapter, entitled "The Life Defined," (abridged and slightly edited below) Smith paints an unforgettable picture of the rest promised the children of God (Spire Books, 1979: 27–33).

What are the chief characteristics of what is sometimes called the Higher Christian Life, what I prefer to call the "life hid with Christ in God" and how does it differ from ordinary Christian experience? Its chief characteristics are an entire surrender to the Lord and a perfect trust in him, resulting in victory over sin and inward rest of soul. It differs from the lower range of Christian experience in that it causes us to let the Lord carry our burdens and manage our affairs instead of trying to do it ourselves.

Most Christians are like a man who was toiling along the road, bending under a heavy burden, when a wagon overtook him. The driver kindly offered to help him on his journey. He joyfully accepted the offer but when seated in the wagon, continued to bend beneath his burden, which he still kept on his shoulders. "Why do you not lay down your burden?" asked the kind-hearted driver. "Oh!" replied the man, "I feel that it is almost too much to ask you to carry me, and I could not think of letting you carry my burden too." And so many Christians, who have given themselves into the care and keeping of the Lord Jesus, still continue to bend beneath the weight of their burdens and often go weary and heavy-laden throughout the whole length of their journey.

When I speak of burdens, I mean everything that troubles us, whether spiritual or temporal. I mean, first of all, ourselves. The greatest burden we have to carry in life is self and it is the most difficult thing we have to manage. In laying down your burdens, therefore, the first one you must get rid of is yourself. You must hand yourself, with your temptations, your temperament, your feelings, and all your inward and outward experiences over into the care and keeping of God, and leave it all there. He made you, and therefore he understands you and knows how to manage you. You must trust him to do it.

Next, you must lay off every other burden – your health, your reputation, your Christian work, your houses, your children,

your business, your present, your future; everything, in short, that concerns you, whether inward or outward.

There are many other things that could be said about this life hid with Christ in God but the gist of the whole matter is this: abandon yourself to God, take your troubles to the Lord and *leave* them there. The soul that has discovered this secret of simple faith has found the key that will unlock the whole treasure house of God.

I am sure there is someone reading these words who hungers for just such a life as I have been describing. You long to be freed of the weary burden you carry. You would be delighted to hand over the management of your unmanageable self into the hands of one who is able to manage you. You are tired and weary and the rest I speak of looks unutterably sweet.

Think about the delicious sense of rest you experience when you go to bed at night after a day of great exertion and weariness.

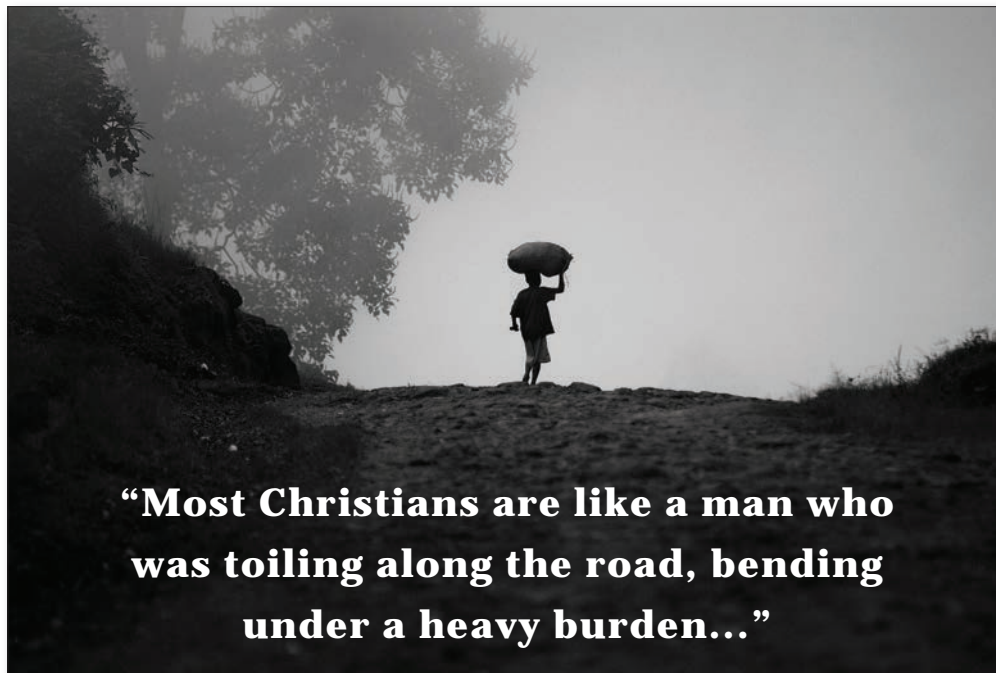
How delightful it is to relax every muscle and let your body go in a perfect abandonment of ease and comfort. You trust yourself to the bed in absolute confidence and it holds you up; without effort, strain, or even a thought on your part. You rest!

But suppose you doubt the strength and stability of your bed and dread each moment of the night thinking that the mattress will give

way beneath you and you will end up on the floor. Could you rest then? Every muscle would be strained in a fruitless effort to hold yourself up and you would get up in the morning with a greater weariness than if you had not gone to bed at all!

Let this analogy teach you what it means to rest in the Lord. Let your soul lie down upon the mattress of his sweet will as your body lies down in bed at night. Relax and let yourself go in perfect abandonment of ease and comfort, sure that, since it is he that holds you up, you are perfectly safe. Your part is simply to rest. His part is to sustain you; and he cannot fail.

"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you" (Isa. 26:3). This is the divine description of the life of faith about which I am writing. It is no speculative theory, neither is it a dream of romance. There *is* such a thing as having one's soul kept in perfect peace, now and here in this life; and childlike trust in God is the key to its attainment. ✠



The Sanctification of Time

By Mark Buchanan



In his book *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath* (Thomas Nelson, 2006), Mark Buchanan explains that Sabbath is so much more than a day off! It is only as we learn to sanctify time that we begin to discover the realities of entire sanctification. This article, abridged and slightly edited, is taken from the second chapter entitled “A Beautiful Mind: Stopping to Think Anew” (35–38).

One of the largest obstacles to true Sabbath-keeping is leisure. It is what cultural historian Witold Rybczynski calls “waiting for the weekend,” where we see work as only an extended interlude between our real lives. Leisure is what Sabbath becomes when we no longer know how to sanctify time. Leisure is Sabbath bereft of the sacred. It is a vacation—literally, a vacating, an evacuation. As Rybczynski sees it, leisure has become despotic in our age, enslaving us and exhausting us, demanding from us more than it gives.

We all know how unsatisfying mere leisure can be. We’ve all known what it’s like to return to the classroom or the workplace after a time spent in revelry or hibernation: typically, we go back weary and depressed, like jailbirds caught. The time away from work wasn’t time sanctified so much as time stolen, time when we escaped for a short-lived escapade.

The difference between this and Sabbath couldn’t be sharper. Sanctifying some time adds richness to all time, just as an hour with the one you love brings light and levity to the hours that follow. To spend time with the object of your desire is to emerge, not sullen and peevish, but elated and refreshed. You come away filled, not depleted.

The Greeks understood. Embedded in their language, expressed in two distinct words for “time,” is an intuition about the possibility of sanctified time. Time, they knew, has two faces, two natures. It exists in two separate realms, really, as two disparate dimensions, and we orient ourselves primarily to one or the other. One is sacred time, the other profane.

The first word is *chronos*—familiar to us because it’s the root of many of our own words: *chronology*, *chronicle*, *chronic*. It is the time of clock and calendar. The word derives from one of the gods in the Greek pantheon. Chronos was a nasty minor deity, a glutton and a cannibal who gorged himself on his own children. He was always consuming, never consummated. Goya depicted him in his work *Chronos Devouring His Children*. In the painting, Chronos is gaunt and ravenous, wild-eyed with

hunger. He crams a naked, bloody-stumped figure into his gaping mouth. Chronos is the presiding deity of the driven.

The second Greek word is *kairos*. This is time as gift, as opportunity, as season. It is time pregnant with purpose. In *kairos* time you ask, not “What time is it?” but “What is this time for?” Kairos is the servant of holy purpose. “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven,” Ecclesiastes says. “A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted... a time to weep, and a time to laugh... a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing... a time to keep, and a time to cast away... a time to keep silence, and a time to speak... a time for war, and a time for peace” (Eccl 3:1–8).

This year, this day, this hour, this moment—each is ripe for something: Play. Work. Sleep. Love. Worship. Listening. Each moment enfolds transcendence, lays hold of a significance beyond itself. Ecclesiastes sums it up this way: “He has made

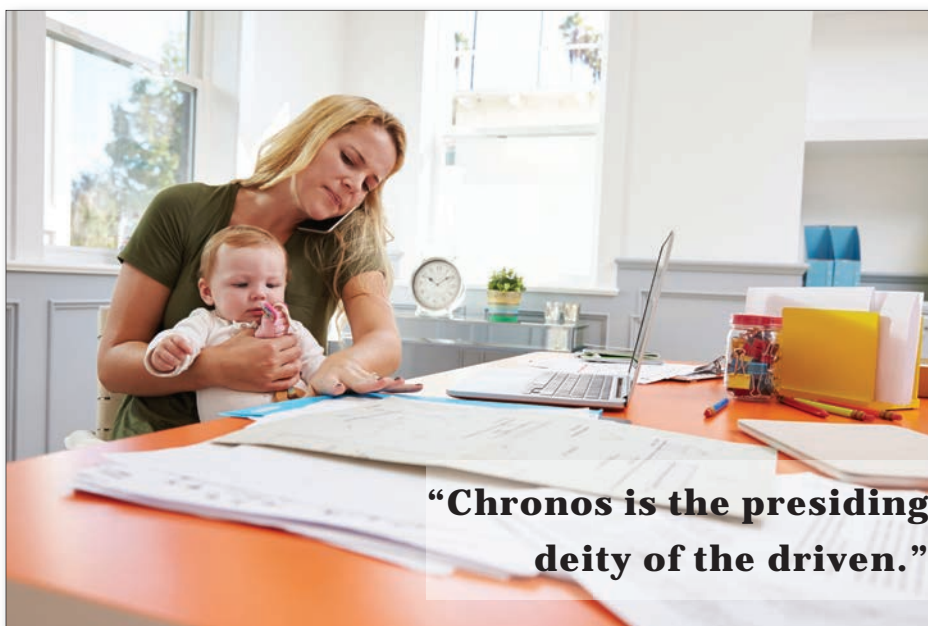
everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has set eternity into mans’ heart...” (3:11).

Chronos betrays us, always. It devours the beauty it creates. But sometimes *chronos* betrays itself: it stirs in us a longing for Something Else—Something that the beauty of things in time evokes but cannot satisfy. Either we end up as the man in Ecclesiastes did: driven, driven, driven, racing hard against *chronos*, desperate to

seize beauty but always grasping smoke, ashes, thorns. Or we learn to follow the scent of eternity in our hearts.

There’s an exercise that some pilots go through late in their flight training. The student pilot gets the plane airborne, at cruising altitude. Then the instructor places a loose-fitting, thick-woven sack over the student’s head, so the student can see nothing. The instructor takes the controls and starts stunt-piloting: He loops the loop. He pushes the plane skyward, then flips belly-up and swoops earthward. He rollicks and spirals, careens and nosedives, tailspins and wing-tilts. He gets the student utterly discombobulated. Then he puts the plane in a suicide dive, plucks the bag off the student’s head, and hands him the controls. His job: to get the plane back under control. The exercise is called Recovering from an Unusual Attitude.

To keep Sabbath, most of us first have to recover from an unusual attitude. We find ourselves disoriented, in vertigo. We’re dizzy with all our busyness and on a collision course. Maybe it’s time to change our minds: to stop feeding Chronos his own children and start sanctifying time. 🌿



“Chronos is the presiding deity of the driven.”

The Day Begins When You Go to Bed

By Eugene H. Peterson (1932–2018)



Presbyterian minister, scholar, author, and poet, Eugene Peterson writes insightfully about the importance of rest. In his book *Working the Angles* (Eerdmans, 1987), he points out that failure to keep a weekly Sabbath reveals we have reverted to a theology of works rather than grace; we may be orthodox in our doctrine but we are heretical in our practice! Abridged and slightly edited, the following article is taken from the third chapter, entitled “Prayer Time” (47–52).

Sabbath means quit. Stop. Take a break. Cool it. The word itself is about time, denoting our nonuse of it, what we usually call *wasting* time. The biblical context for understanding Sabbath is the Genesis week. Sabbath is the seventh and final day in which “God rested [*shabath*] from all his work that he had done...” (Gn 2:3). We reenter that sequence of days in which God spoke energy and matter into existence, and repeatedly come upon the refrain, “And there was evening and there was morning, one day... and there was evening and there was morning, a second day... and there was evening and there was morning”—on and on, six times.

This is the Hebrew way of understanding *day*; it is not ours. American days, most of them anyway, begin with an alarm clock ripping the predawn darkness and close, not with evening but several hours past that, when we turn off the electric lights. Because our definition of *day* is so different, we have to make an imaginative effort to understand the Hebrew phrase *evening and morning, one day*. More than idiomatic speech is involved here; there is a sense of rhythm. Day is the basic unit of God’s creative work; evening is the beginning of that day. It is the onset of God speaking light, stars, earth, vegetation, animals, man, woman into being. But it is also the time when we quit our activity and go to sleep. When it is evening “I lay me down to sleep and pray the Lord my soul to keep” and drift off into unconsciousness for the next six or eight or ten hours, a state in which I am absolutely nonproductive and have no cash value.

The Hebrew evening/morning sequence conditions us to the rhythms of grace. We go to sleep, and God begins his work. As we sleep he develops his covenant. We wake and are called out to participate in God’s creative action. We respond in faith, in work. But always grace is previous. Grace is primary. We wake into a world we didn’t make, into a salvation we didn’t earn. Evening: God begins, without our help, his creative day.

Morning: God calls us to enjoy and share and develop the work he initiated. Creation and covenant are sheer grace and there to greet us every morning. George MacDonald once wrote that sleep is God’s contrivance for giving us the help he cannot get into us when we are awake.

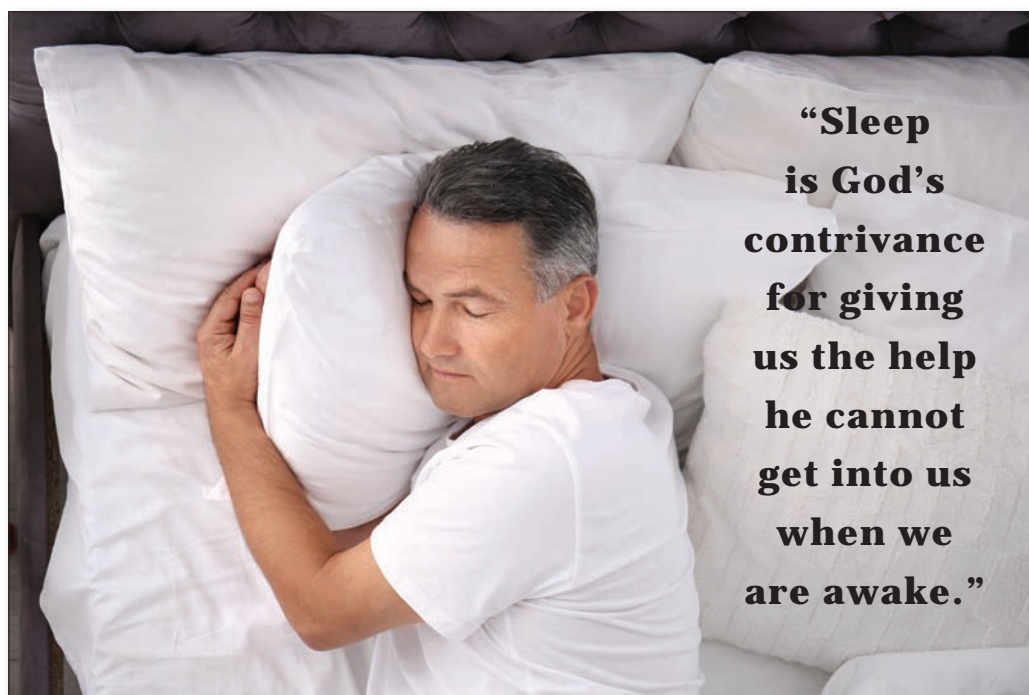
As this biblical Genesis rhythm works in me, I also discover something else: when I quit my day’s work, nothing essential stops. I prepare for sleep not with a feeling of exhausted frustration because there is so much yet undone and unfinished, but with expectancy. The day is about to begin! I go to sleep to get out of the way for awhile. I get into the rhythm of salvation. While we sleep, great and marvelous things, far beyond our capacities to invent or engineer, are in process—the moon marking the seasons, the lion roaring for its prey, the earthworms aerating the earth, the stars turning in their courses, the proteins repairing our muscles, our dreaming brains restoring a deeper sanity beneath the gossip and

scheming of our waking hours. Our work settles into the context of God’s work.

Sabbath extrapolates this basic, daily rhythm into the larger context of the month. The turning of the earth on its axis gives us the basic two-beat rhythm, evening/morning. The moon in its orbit introduces another rhythm, the twenty-eight-day month, marked by four

phases of seven days each. It is this larger rhythm, the rhythm of the seventh day, that we are commanded to observe. Sabbath-keeping presumes the daily rhythm, evening/morning. We can hardly avoid stopping our work each night as fatigue and sleep overtake us. But we can avoid stopping work on the seventh day, especially if things are gaining momentum. Keeping the weekly rhythm requires deliberate action. That is why the Sabbath is *commanded* and not just *suggested*.

In the two biblical versions of the Sabbath commandment, the commands are identical but the supporting reasons differ. The Exodus reason is that we are to keep a Sabbath because God kept it (Ex 20:8–11). God did his work in six days and then rested. If God sets apart one day to rest, we can too. There are some things that can be accomplished, even by God, only in a state of rest. The work/rest rhythm is built into the very structure of God’s interpenetration of reality. The precedent to quit doing and simply *be* is divine.

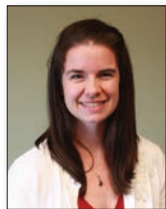


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Sabbath-Keeping 101

By Katie Diddle



Serving as the treasurer for The Francis Asbury Society since 2011, Katie has many interests that parallel her love of numbers, budgets, and reconciling the books. Besides being a wife and mother, she loves to cook, garden, read, and direct the handbell choir at her church. She also likes to write. This is her first contribution to *The High Calling*.

After church on a recent Sunday, my husband and daughter left town to visit family and I discovered I had the day to myself. I did *nothing*. I lay down on the couch and watched Netflix, while playing Solitaire on my phone. I thought: I am honoring the Sabbath; I am resting. But at the end of the day I felt drained and I was pretty sure that God was not impressed with my lame attempt to keep the fourth commandment. In fact, I felt *restless!*

A friend of mine grew up in a strict, fundamentalist church. She has rebelled against the legalism that accompanied the enforced “Sabbath observance” of her youth. Just the word “Sabbath” is a trigger because it is associated with shame and punishment.

God was the first to take a day of Sabbath rest after creating the heavens and the earth. Then he mandated the same for us. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex 20:8). I wonder how he keeps Sabbath. Surely he doesn’t binge out on Netflix or play Solitaire.

The Gospels show us how Jesus kept the Sabbath. He didn’t sit at home twiddling his thumbs or scrolling through Facebook. He moved about. He healed people. In fact, he got into trouble with the Pharisees repeatedly for his Sabbath “work.” So with Jesus as our example, we know that Sabbath rest is not inactivity. This makes me scrunch up my face in an inquisitive scowl: actively restful? Wouldn’t that be an oxymoron? But isn’t that the way it is with Truth? What seems upside-down to foolish me is perfectly right-side-up to God.



Sabbath rest is life-giving. When we are intentional and fully engaged, Sabbath activities help us connect to God and to others in meaningful ways. We create, wonder, invent, ponder, play and enjoy God and the life he has given us. True Sabbath rest is not “checking out” but rather being fully present. It is not inactivity but righteous activity. It is not laziness but the expression of love. Activities that make us numb, leave us empty, or cause us to “zone out” and forget where we are and who we are do not honor God or the Sabbath.

In *Little House in the Big Woods*, Laura Ingalls Wilder writes about growing up on the prairie. She remembers that on Sundays, she and her sister were not allowed to “run or shout or be noisy.” They could hold their rag dolls but had to speak softly to them. That was all they were allowed to do. The girls grew to dislike Sundays much the same way my friend has rebelled against the fundamentalist Sabbaths of her youth. The emptiness is what is off-putting. We were not made for “nothingness.” Buddhists might seek after this, but not Christians.

Jesus invites the weary and the burdened into his presence so that he can give them rest (Mt 11:28). The “rest” Jesus offers is not empty: it is full of *life* (Jn 10:10)! What if we started honoring the Sabbath, making it holy, by inviting Jesus into those activities that give us life, that increase our physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being? For some, connecting with family and friends will bring up the richness of God in them. For others, walking through nature or creating art will rejuvenate the soul. For yet others, the ones who can’t seem to stop moving for fear of what will happen if they do, true Sabbath rest will indeed mean snuggling up on the couch with a blanket and simply being still in the presence of God.

So this Sunday, I’ll be trying a different Sabbath rest. I’m going to do my best to be fully present to God, to others, and to myself. I’m going to set aside time for a walk and some prayerful introspection. I’ll play a game with my kids. And I’m going to read my Bible, because the best way to find rest is to find Jesus.

“We were not made for ‘nothingness.’”



We're Not in Kansas Anymore!

By Stan Key



Prior to coming to the Francis Asbury Society, Stan served as a missionary in France and a pastor in Albany, New York. In this article, he examines Jesus' most important statement about rest (Mt 11:28–30) and explores how this helps us better understand the deeper life.

Over and over again, the Old Testament describes the Land of Promise (Canaan) as a place of rest (Ex 33:14; Dt 12:9; Jos 1:13; 21:44; etc.). Because, for many people, the word “rest” conjures up a picture of inactivity and leisure, one might get the impression that crossing over the Jordan into Canaan means a hammock and a glass of cold lemonade. “Ahhh, we’ve finally arrived. The journey is over and now we can sit back, relax, and enjoy the milk and honey.”

Nothing could be further from the truth! Once they had entered Canaan, the people of God were confronted with a life of intense activity. There were cities to construct, crops to plant, and battles to fight. They had a nation to build. But how could the Land of Promise be a place of rest when there was so much work to do? Answering this question takes us to the very heart of what the deeper life is all about.

Building a kingdom in Canaan was very different from building cities in Egypt as slaves of Pharaoh. The toil of bondage was replaced by the happy challenge of being co-laborers with God! Obligatory labor was replaced by energetic creativity. The groans of oppression and defeat were replaced by the joyful shouts of victory. In *The Wizard of Oz* when Dorothy realized the tornado had taken her to a strange, new world, she looked at her dog and said, “Toto, I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore.” Something similar must have happened when the Hebrews entered the land God had chosen as their inheritance. Different from both Egypt and the wilderness, Canaan was life in a new dimension. Jesus describes this new kind of victorious living in Matthew 11:28–30:

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

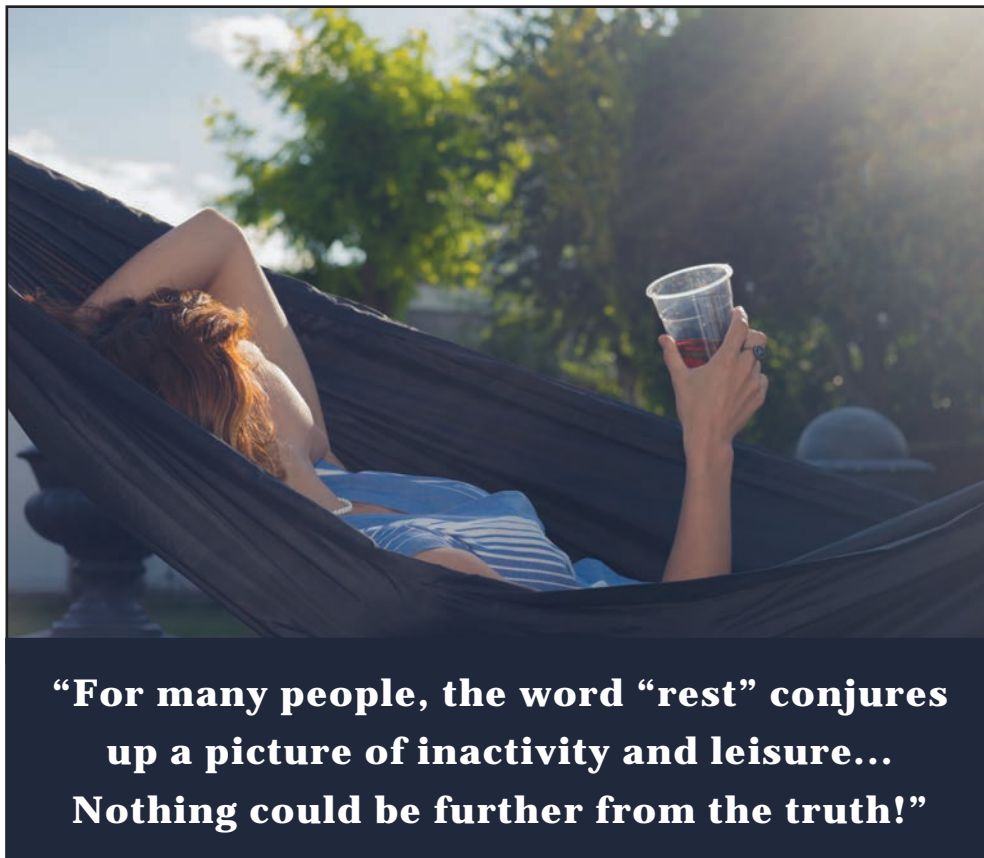
Jesus invites us to come over to where he lives and discover the oxymoronic reality of abundant living! Here heavy burdens are light and rest is promised to those who live under a yoke. We’re not in Kansas anymore! Let’s examine more closely this rest Jesus offers his disciples.

First of all, it is not a rest *from* work but a rest *in* work. There are both yokes and burdens in our promised inheritance, but they are very different from the yokes and burdens in our previous life. Here, with Jesus in control, yokes are easy and burdens are light. Perhaps the battle of Jericho is the best illustration of how this works (see Jos 6). Before entering Canaan, the Hebrews fought battles like everyone else. But in Canaan, the situation changed. Rather than taking swords and spears into battle, God instructed his people to take trumpets.

Rather than laying siege to the city, they just marched in circles around it. Then they shouted! The enemy is just as real as ever, but, in Canaan, the strategy is different—and much more effective (see 2 Cor 10:3–4)! Far from turning us into passive contemplatives, the life of entire sanctification transforms us into workers and soldiers who accomplish amazing exploits for God—without experiencing the fatigue and exhaustion we knew before.

Second, this rest is a blessed gift from God. Canaan is not called

the *Promised* Land for nothing! With an oath, God promised this glorious inheritance to his redeemed children, and we can be sure that God never fails to keep his promises. “Come to me,” Jesus said, “and *I will give* you rest.” The abundant life is a free gift of God’s grace, received by faith alone. There is a heresy that is alive and well today in the evangelical church that teaches we are justified by faith but sanctified by works. Though few would state the issue so brazenly, many nevertheless give the impression that living the abundant life is dependent on spiritual disciplines, church attendance, tithing, being in an accountability group, active participation in a ministry, etc. If we are falling short of victory and abundant living, these voices seem to say, “Try harder!” The Bible vigorously rejects such false notions and teaches that sanctification is by grace through faith just as justification is. “As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him” (Col 2:6).



“For many people, the word “rest” conjures up a picture of inactivity and leisure... Nothing could be further from the truth!”

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Where Are You on the Map of Salvation?

By Warren W. Wiersbe



Pastor, Bible teacher, conference speaker and prolific author, Warren Wiersbe's ministry has touched the lives of tens of thousands of people. Though not writing from a Wesleyan perspective (Wiersbe is a Baptist), he believes strongly in the possibility of victory over sin and laments that so few seem to find it. Abridged and slightly edited, the following article

is taken from his lay commentary on the book of *Joshua: Be Strong* (Victor Books, 1993: 15–20).

God called the Promised Land “a good land” (Dt 8:7–10) and contrasted it with the monotony and barrenness of Egypt (Dt 11:8–14). It was to be Israel's place of rest, her inheritance, and the dwelling place of God (Dt 12:9–11). After enduring slavery in Egypt and misery in the wilderness, the Jews would finally find rest in their Promised Land (Jos 1:13, 15; 11:23; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1). This concept of “rest” will show up again in Psalm 95:11 and Hebrews 4 as an illustration of the victory Christians can have if they give their all to the Lord.

It's unfortunate that some of our Christian songs have equated Israel's crossing the Jordan with the believer's dying and going to heaven, because this mistake brings confusion when you start interpreting the book of Joshua. “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” is a beloved spiritual, but I fear its imagery is not biblical. The hymns “On Jordan's Story Banks” and “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” perpetuate that same error.

The events recorded in the Book of Joshua have to do with the *life* of God's people and not their *death*! The book records battles, defeats, sins, and failures—none of which will take place in heaven. It illustrates how believers today can say good-bye to the old life and enter into their rich inheritance in Jesus Christ. It explains how we can meet our enemies and defeat them, and how to claim for ourselves all that we have in Jesus Christ (Eph 1:3). What Paul's letter to the Ephesians explains doctrinally, the book of Joshua illustrates practically. It shows us how to claim our *riches* in Christ.

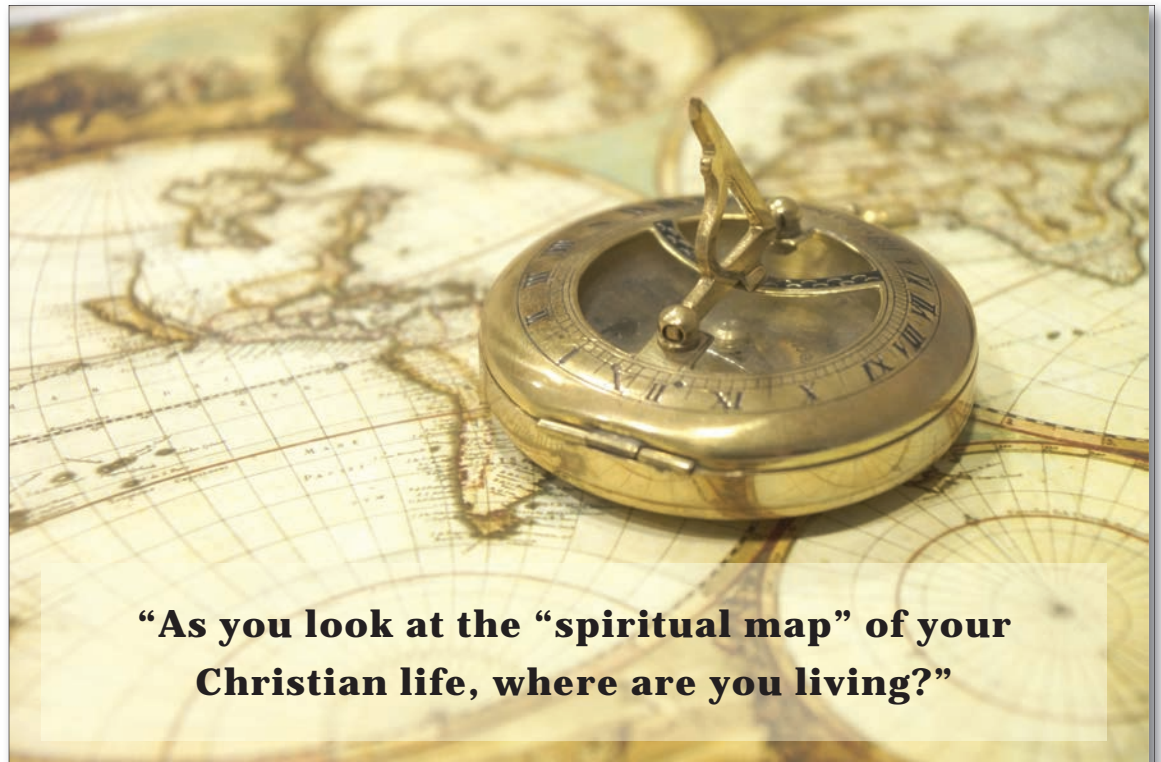
But it also shows us how to claim our *rest* in Christ. This is one of the major themes of the Book of Hebrews and is explained in chapters 3 and 4 of that epistle. In those chapters, we find four different “rests,” all of which are related: God's Sabbath rest after creating the worlds (Heb 4:4; Gn 2:2); the salvation rest we have in Christ (Heb 4:1, 3, 8–9; Mt 11:28–30); the believer's eternal rest in heaven (Heb 4:11); and the rest God gave Israel after their conquest of Canaan (Heb 3:7–19).

God's promise to Moses was, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest” (Ex 33:14). The Jews certainly had no

rest in Egypt or during their wilderness wanderings; but in the Promised Land, God would give them rest. This “Canaan rest” is a picture of the rest that Christian believers experience when they yield their all to Christ and claim their inheritance by faith.

The four geographic locations seen in the history of Israel illustrate four spiritual experiences. *Egypt* was the place of death and bondage from which Israel was delivered. They were delivered from death by the blood of the lamb and from bondage by the power of God who opened the Red Sea and took them across safely. This illustrates the salvation we have through faith in Jesus Christ.

The *wilderness* experience of Israel depicts believers who live in unbelief and disobedience and don't enter into the rest and riches of their inheritance in Christ, either because they don't know it's there or they know and refuse to enter. Like Israel,



they come to a crisis place (Kadesh Barnea), but refuse to obey the Lord and reject his will for their lives (Nm 13–14). They are delivered from Egypt, but Egypt is still in their hearts; and like the Jews, they have a desire to go back to the old life (Ex 16:1–3; Nm 11; 14:2–4; see Isa 30:3; 31:1). Instead of marching through life as conquerors, they meander through life as wanderers and never enjoy the fullness of what God has planned for them. It's this crowd that is especially addressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Canaan represents the Christian life as it ought to be: conflict and victory, faith and obedience, spiritual riches and rest. It's a life of faith, trusting Jesus Christ, our Joshua, the Captain of our salvation (Heb 2:10), to lead us from victory to victory (1 Jn 5:4–5). The victorious Christian life isn't a once-for-all triumph that ends all our problems. As pictured by Israel in the Book of Joshua, the victorious Christian life is a series of conflicts

Continued on page 10

The Deuteronomy reason for Sabbath-keeping is that our ancestors in Egypt went four hundred years without a vacation (Deut 5:15). Never a day off. The consequence: they were no longer considered persons but slaves. Hands. Work units. Not persons created in the image of God but equipment for making bricks and building pyramids. Humanity was defaced. Lest any of us do that to our neighbor or husband or wife or child or employee, we are commanded to keep a Sabbath. The moment we begin to see others in terms of what they can *do* rather than who they *are*, we mutilate humanity and violate community.

None of us has trouble with this theologically. We are compellingly articulate on the subject in our pulpits. Our theology is orthodox and biblical in these matters. It is not our theology that is deficient, but our technology—Sabbath-keeping is not a matter of belief but of using a tool (time). We are, most of us, Augustinians in our pulpits. We preach the sovereignty of our Lord, the primacy of grace, the glory of God: “By grace ye are saved... not of works, lest any man should boast.” But the minute we leave our pulpits we are Pelagians. In our committee meetings and our planning sessions, in our obsessive attempts to meet the expectations of people, in our anxiety to please, in our hurry to cover all the bases, we practice a theology that urges moral effort as the primary element in pleasing God.

The dogma produces the behavior characteristic of the North American pastor: if things aren’t good enough, they will improve if I work a little harder and get others to work harder. Pelagius was an unlikely heretic; Augustine an unlikely saint. By all accounts Pelagius was urbane, courteous, convincing. Everyone seems to have liked him immensely. Augustine squandered away his youth in immorality, had some kind of Freudian thing with his mother, and made a lot of enemies. But all our theological and pastoral masters agree that Augustine started from God’s grace and therefore had it right, and Pelagius started from human effort and therefore got it wrong. If we were as Augustinian out of the pulpit as we were in it, we would have no difficulty keeping Sabbath. Our closet Pelagianism may not get us excommunicated or burned at the stake, but it is catastrophic to the wholeness and health of the people of God. ✠

Q: Why is Chick-fil-A closed on Sunday?

A: The founder, Truett Cathy, [believed] that all franchised Chick-fil-A operators and restaurant employees should have an opportunity to rest, spend time with family and friends, and worship if they choose to do so. That’s why Chick-fil-A restaurants are closed on Sundays. It’s part of their recipe for success.

Third, this rest is something we must seek and find for ourselves. Jesus was precise in his wording: “*you will find rest for your souls.*” Though life in Canaan is a free gift, we must actively seek it. We tend to think of work and faith as opposites, where one makes the other unnecessary. But the Bible paints a different picture. “Faith without works is dead” (Jas 2:14–26). Paul sees no contradiction when he speaks of “the obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5; 16:26) any more than Jesus did when he said, “This is the work of God, that you believe...” (Jn 6:29). Perhaps it is the author of the book of Hebrews who puts the paradoxical nature of faith and works in its most poignant form: “Let us strive to enter that rest” (Heb 4:11). Strive to rest? It is as if he is telling us to work really hard at not working! The blessings of God are all free gifts of grace. Yes, and amen! However, the work of faith may be more difficult than you first imagined.

In his allegory *Pilgrim’s Regress*, C. S. Lewis tells the story of a pilgrim named John and his journey through a philosophical landscape in search of truth. The pivotal moment for John comes when he arrives at a body of water that he is unable to cross. Mother Kirk and Vertue step forward to help.

“What must I do?” said John.

“You must take off your rags,” said Mother Kirk, “and then you must dive into this water.”

“Alas,” said he, “I have never learned to dive.”

“There is nothing to learn,” said she. “The art of diving is not to do anything new but simply to cease doing something. You have only to let yourself go.”

“It is only necessary,” said Vertue, with a smile, “to abandon all efforts at self-preservation.”

“I think,” said John, “that I would rather jump.”

“If you jump,” said Mother Kirk, “you will be trying to save yourself and you may be hurt. As well, you would not go deep enough. You must dive so that you can go right down to the bottom of the pool: for you are not to come up again on this side. There is a tunnel in the cliff, far beneath the surface of the water, and it is through that that you must pass so that you may come up on the far side.”

“I see,” thought John to himself, “that they have brought me here to kill me.” But he began, nevertheless, to take off his clothes. When he was naked Mother Kirk bade him come to the edge of the pool. It was a long way down to the water...

After a long pause, Vertue said: “Come on, John; the longer we look at it the less we shall like it.” And with that John rubbed his hands, shut his eyes, despaired, and let himself go. It was not a good dive, but at least he reached the water head first.[†]

Entering into the rest of faith is not so much learning to *do* something as learning *not* to do something. Sometimes unlearning what we think we know is harder than learning what is true! It’s like diving: shut your eyes, let yourself go, and fall head first into the arms of God! ✠

[†] Eerdmans, 1992: 166–68 (abridged and slightly edited).

The Rest of Faith *continued from page 1*

“Let us then be eager to know this rest for ourselves.” The writer is urging us to make haste and not to waste any time in accepting the rest which God has promised us. The writer encourages us “today” to experience this rest (Heb 3:7, 15; 4:7). He uses the present tense in speaking of our entering this rest (Heb 4:1, 3, 6, 9–10). Nowhere does he say that we enter it by death. He shows that the rest spoken of is for the people of God, not for those on the outside of faith.

The writer is not engaging in fanciful allegory when he sees the rest initially secured by Joshua as a foretaste of the rest of faith which the exalted Christ gives (Heb 4:8). We have seen earlier that the history of the Old Testament was centered in the Exodus and Conquest. These two events brought into being the kingdom of Israel; we also saw how these events prefigured the resurrection of Jesus as the new Exodus and the reception of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost as the new Conquest.

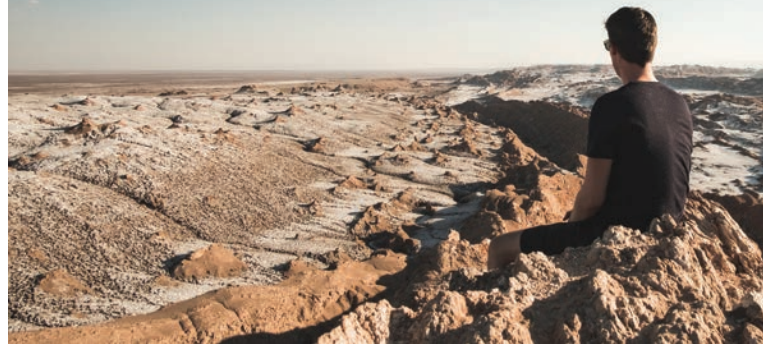
This is precisely the point which the writer to the Hebrews is making. Canaan is a type of spiritual rest which Christ offers us. Just as rest (peace) was a product of living in the kingdom in Canaan, so peace is the kingdom-quality of those who live in Christ.

This peace is a privilege of every believer. There is no need for anyone to wander about in the fears and troubles of spiritual

barrenness, for we are offered a rest through faith in the love of God. This does not mean that those who fail to enter this perfect rest are lost. Certainly Moses and the thousands of other Israelites who wandered in the wilderness because they failed to achieve this perfect rest are not a type of those who are eternally lost. This would be an awful thought! After all, only Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land out of the entire number of those who were delivered from Egypt.

The wilderness does not represent the bondage of sin in Egypt. It represents a release from bondage, but the wilderness experience symbolizes a barren spiritual life that is still plagued with doubts and fears. 🌿

“The wilderness experience symbolizes a barren spiritual life that is still plagued with doubts and fears.”



Lord, I Believe a Rest Remains

By Charles Wesley

*Lord, I believe a rest remains
To all thy people known;
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,
And thou art loved alone.*

*A rest where all our souls desire
Is fixed on things above;
Where fear, and sin, and grief expire,
Cast out by perfect love.*

*Safe in the way of life, above
Death, earth, and hell we rise;
We find, when perfected in love,
Our long-sought paradise.*

*O that I now the rest might know,
Believe and enter in!
Now, Savior, now the power bestow,
And let me cease from sin.*

*Remove this hardness from my heart,
This unbelief remove;
To me the rest of faith impart,
The Sabbath of thy love.*

The Rest of Your Life *continued from page 1*

- “The Lord [gave] rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies...” (Jos 23:1).
- “Truly my soul finds rest in God...” (Ps 62:1 NIV).
- “Therefore I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest’” (Ps 95:11).
- “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength...” (Isa 30:15 NIV).
- “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls...” (Jer 6:16).
- “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).
- “There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his” (Heb 4:9–10).
- “And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast...” (Rv 14:11).
- “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... that they may rest from their labors...” (Rv 14:13).

Many today, like Augustine, are plagued by troubled hearts. The French call it *ennui* and the Germans *angst*. Psychologists may choose labels such as depression, anxiety, attachment disorder, or burnout. God’s diagnosis, however, is more profound, and his solution goes much deeper: our hearts are rest-less till they find their rest in him! 🌿

The Blessed Gift of Sabbath

By J. I. Packer



Coming from a low-church Anglican and Calvinist tradition, J. I. Packer is considered one of the most influential evangelicals in North America. Among the many books he has authored is a volume that reflects his love and appreciation for the English Puritans, of whom one of their most distinctive characteristics was an observance of the Sabbath.

The following article is a slightly edited abridgment taken from Chapter 14, “The Puritan and the Lord’s Day,” of his book *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Crossway Books, 1990: 238–240).

In his commentary on Mark 2:27 (“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”), the non-conformist Puritan minister Matthew Henry (1662–1714) writes:

The Sabbath is a sacred and divine institution; but we must receive and embrace it as a privilege and a benefit, not as a task and a drudgery. First, God never designed it to be an imposition upon us and therefore we must not make it so... Secondly, God did design it to be an advantage to us and so we must make and improve it... The Sabbath is a day of holy work and communion with God, a day of praise and thanksgiving; and the rest from worldly business is therefore necessary... See here what a good Master we serve, all whose institutions are for our own benefit.

This quotation fairly sums up the Puritans’ approach to the Lord’s Day. Here we would merely underline three of Henry’s points and add a fourth by way of corollary.

1. *Sabbath-keeping means action, not inaction.* The Lord’s Day is not a day for idleness. We do not keep the Sabbath holy by lounging around doing nothing. We are to rest from



the business of our earthly calling in order to prosecute the business of our heavenly calling. If we do not spend the day doing the latter, we fail to keep it holy.

2. *Sabbath-keeping is not a tedious burden, but a joyful privilege.* The Sabbath is not a fast, but a feast, a day for rejoicing in the works of a gracious God and joy must be its temper throughout (see Isa 58:3). Those who say that they cannot find joy in the spiritual exercises of a Christian Sunday thereby show that there is something very wrong with them.
3. *Sabbath-keeping is not a useless labor, but a means of grace.* Because God commands us to set apart this day to seek his grace and blessing, we can be sure that he will be especially ready to confer his grace upon those who seek it. George Swinnock (1627–1673) waxed lyrical on the grace of the Christian Sabbath:
Hail thou that are highly favored of God, thou golden spot in the week, thou queen of days; the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among days... Oh how do men and women flutter up and down on the weekdays, as the dove on the waters, and can find no rest for their souls, till they come to thee their ark, till thou put forth thy hand and take them in!
4. *Sabbath-breaking brings chastisement, as does the abuse of any God-given privilege and means of grace.* Spiritual decline and material loss accrue to both individuals and communities for this sin. The good gifts of God may not be despised with impunity. ✠

Where Are You...? *continued from page 7*

and victories as we defeat one enemy after another and claim more of our inheritance to the glory of God. According to Joshua 11:23, the whole land was taken; but according to 13:1, there remained “very much land to be possessed.” Is this a contradiction? No, it’s the declaration of a basic spiritual truth: In Christ, we have all that we need for victorious Christian living, but we must possess our inheritance by faith, a step at a time (Jos 1:3). Joshua’s question to his people is a good question to ask the church today: “How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the Lord... has given you?” (Jos 18:3).

The fourth geographic location on Israel’s “spiritual map” is *Babylon*, where the nation endured seventy years of captivity because they disobeyed God and worshiped the idols of the pagan nations around them (see 2 Chr 36; Jer 39:8–10). When God’s children are willfully rebellious, their loving Father must chasten them until they learn to be submissive and obedient (Heb 12:1–11). When they confess their sins and forsake them, God will forgive and restore his children to fellowship and fruitfulness (1 Jn 1:9; 2 Cor 7:1).

As you look at your life and the life of the church where you fellowship, do you see yourself and your fellow believers wandering in the wilderness or conquering in the Promised Land? The wilderness march was an experience of delay, defeat, and death; but their experience in Canaan was one of life, power and victory. As you look at the “spiritual map” of your Christian life, where are you living? ✠

Be Still and Be

By Matthew Sleeth, MD



Have you ever wondered why fatigue and boredom characterize a society obsessed with time-saving devices, entertainment, and leisure? Matthew Sleeth suggests that the answer to this riddle is that we have forgotten the one commandment God told us to remember: Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy. Dr. Sleeth's prescription for a healthier life is also a means of grace, making possible a life of

holiness. The following article is from his book *24/6: A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life* (Tyndale House, 2012.) It is an abridged and slightly edited version of chapter 11, "Let the Celebration Begin" (143–57).

Maggie sat on the exam table looking as forlorn as anyone in North America. Great skeins of reddish hair framed her disheartened five-year-old face. Her shoulders were slumped and her cheeks tearstained. Her chart listed ear pain as the chief complaint. Maggie's father sat holding her twin in his lap. They looked identical:

hair, faces, misery, and all. "Do they both have an earache?" I queried.

"Not yet, but they will," their father explained. "They're mirror twins, and they do everything together, even getting sick. When Maggie gets an ear infection on the right, Lila will get one on the left. If this is like all the other ear infections they've had, in twenty-four hours they'll both have a fever and won't be able to keep anything down." He paused. "We told them that we'll have to cancel their birthday party tomorrow." Both Maggie and Lila's lower lips began to wobble in sync.

"Let's have a look," I said, as I took the otoscope off the wall. I gently took hold of Maggie's right ear and peered inside. The ear canal was swollen and the view of the eardrum was blocked. "It seems she's got a little rock in the canal," I said. "When did this start bothering her?"

"It was after they were swimming in the pond two days ago," her father answered. "At first we thought she'd just gotten water stuck in it but it kept getting worse. We figured it was another ear infection."

I got out the suctioning equipment and in a jiff we'd delivered the stone that had stirred off the bottom of the pond, lodged in her ear, and threatened to ruin her party. For the first time in two days, Maggie could hear out of the ear and had no pain.

I've seen the reaction of children and parents as I've pulled M&Ms, Legos, and pistachios from noses. I've flushed out everything from cockroaches to spiders from ear canals. But I had never seen the look that Maggie gave Lila when they realized the consequence of what had just happened. "Any reason they can't have their party tomorrow?" Dad asked for them. "No reason," I said, "as long as I get a birthday hug."

You may own the Chrysler Building, but brother, you haven't lived until you've been hugged—in stereo—by five-year-old girls who've just had their birthday party restored.

Sabbath is like a redeemed holiday (holy day) fifty-two times a year. It is a time to rejoice and celebrate. In a manner reminiscent of what happened to Maggie and Lila, Christ draws us aside on the Sabbath day. He touches our ears and says "*Ephphatha!*" (Be opened!) (see Mk 7:33–35). Stopping one

day a week improves our hearing. We can pick up the subtle chorus of heaven here on earth. God speaks through his Scriptures and the lives contained in them, but he also speaks through our lives, wives, children, parents, friends, nature, music, food, trials, and triumphs.

I've met many people who use the meditative practice of subtracting one word at a time from Psalm 46:10 to help them come to rest:



I gently took hold of Maggie's right ear and peered inside.

Be still, and know that I am God

Be still, and know that I am

Be still, and know that I

Be still, and know that

Be still, and know

Be still, and

Be still

Be

When we are young, like the twins Maggie and Lila, we instinctively know how to just *be*. As we grow older, we lose this ability. Sabbath is a time to transition from human *doings* to human *beings*. It is a day to celebrate a God who makes time for us to be with him. ✪

Ta, Ta, Ta, Tum!

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is perhaps the best-known and most-popular symphony ever written. Its four-note opening is recognizable to almost everyone and has fascinated musicians, historians and philosophers for the past two centuries. *Ta, ta, ta, tum!* Those four notes have been more analyzed than any other notes in human history.



But have you ever noticed that the greatest symphony ever written begins with a rest? In his delightful book *The First Four Notes: Beethoven's Fifth and the Human Imagination* (Knopf, 2012), Matthew Guerrieri writes: "the symphony begins, literally, with silence, an eighth rest slipped in before the first note... The music we hear is but one facet of the silence it comes out of" (5). This opening rest creates one of the most feared challenges for orchestra conductors everywhere. Perhaps it's no coincidence that the eighth rest resemble the trigger of gun!

Just as music is impossible without well-timed rests, so it is with our lives. To create the music God intends, God knows that our days must be punctuated with Spirit-led rests. This is the secret to the symphony God intends to play through our life! 🦋

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Philip Melanchthon once said to his friend Martin Luther, "Today, you and I shall discuss the governance of the universe." Luther replied, "No, today, you and I shall go fishing and leave the governance of the universe to God."

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The High Calling

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