

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.”*

If I was completely honest with you all right now, I would admit I can be a bit of a workaholic. I love to be active; I love to lose myself in my work, I love to engage my mind and make a mission out of what I do. I have a hard time going to sleep if I am not prepared for the following day. I like to be ready, prepared, and efficient. I have been this way since I was a kid.

I have worked in construction and building most of my life. Years ago, I worked with a top-rated remodeling company that focused on home additions and kitchen remodels. This is where I really broke my teeth in the industry and started to make a reputation for myself. I would work 8 hours at my main job and then do side jobs in the evening to make extra money for the family. Sometimes I wouldn't get home until 11 at night. I did this for years working Saturdays and nights doing side jobs. I hardly ever rested. Coupling this work schedule with raising small children I was not in great health to be the father and husband God had called me to be.

It wasn't until my mid thirties that I realized it wasn't about making a living, it was that I had made work and the trades into an idol in my life. I gave all my energy to doing construction jobs under the guise of supporting my family. While I did need to make a living, I didn't do it in a way that honored God. I have found that if I don't honor God, I can miss out on his blessing and provision.

God himself Set the Standard of Rest when he created the world. He worked for 6 days and then took the 7th to rest and enjoy His creation. The Bible is clear that we need to set aside consistent time in our lives to rest and enjoy the goodness of God. In fact, our sabbath rest is part of our worship to Him.

Why is this the hardest command to keep? Why do we strive so much to try to accomplish all the things we feel are so important? Do we not trust that God can accomplish them? Or is our effort our idol?

I want to challenge you and me today to go before the Lord and ask: “Am I rested? Have I honored the Sabbath rest?” So many of us work very hard in our personal lives and in our church lives that we can neglect the righteous rest God created for us. Read a book, take a nap, listen to your favorite music, let that project around the house sit for one more day, put your feet up with a bowl of popcorn and watch your favorite movie, write a letter to a grandchild or an old friend, or find a quiet space and let your brain turn off for a while. Life is meant to be slowed down at times and rest was created by God.

When we honor God in this way, we will be more effective on our days of work, and we will be a great witness to the world around us. God Set the Standard of rest-let's follow his example.

I love you and God loves you!

Pastor Eric