

Rediscovering Sabbath, Week 2

Small Group Discussion Guide, week of Sept 18th

SEPT 18TH SERMON SUMMARY

REDISCOVERING SABBATH: REDEFINE

On 6 days God saw his good creation, and He rested on the 7th day to enjoy it. In order to experience Sabbath, and genuinely rest and enjoy it, we need to feel really good about our life (Phil 4:11-13).

- How can we feel good about our life? We can think about all that's good. (Phil. 4:8-9)
- What is good? Only God is good; therefore He defines what is good (Ps. 135:1; Deut. 32:4).
- The challenge for us is to grow in our ability to discern and redefine what is good. How do we do that? Here are 2 suggestions:
 1. Read our Bibles (Ps. 119:105) to be informed and reminded of what is good
 2. Pray (Ja. 1:5) to ask God for wisdom to discern what is good

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share one thing you own that makes you feel good, and why it makes you feel that way.
- 2a. Do you think most people you know feel good about their life? Explain.
 - b. What do you think that feeling (that life is good or not-good) is based on?

Read Philippians 4:8-9, 11-13

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. **9** Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. **12** I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **13** I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

3a. Paul is content and feeling good about his life. What part does circumstance play in his feeling of contentment? Look at v. 11-12; see also Phil 1:13 for more on Paul's situation.

b. How is our feeling of contentment usually affected by the situations in v. 12?

c. What other situations can you think of that affect our sense of contentment, or feeling good about life?

d. Explain how those situations could interfere with our enjoyment of Sabbath rest.

4. In Phil 4:8-9, Paul tells us how to feel good about our life even in difficult circumstances.

a. Think about one of the situations you discussed in Question 3. Describe how someone might apply v. 8-9 to it.

b. How does Paul challenge us to change our thinking, and redefine our idea of what is good? (Hint: Compare what we normally base our good feelings on, with v. 8-9.)

c. Some things do not appear good, but are: trials, suffering, death for a believer (James 1:2-4, Phil. 1:21). How are these good? Share a real life example if you can.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

5. Feeling good about your life can be challenging. What makes it challenging for you?

- Is it in how you view your circumstances?
- Is it in your personality or attitude?
- Is it in your sense of guilt or shame?
- Or something else?

6. How would redefining what is good, and feeling good about your life, help you enjoy Sabbath rest?

7. Erik gave us 2 suggestions to help us grow: read our Bibles, and pray. Share how this could help you feel good about your life, redefine what's good, and/or enjoy Sabbath rest.

8. How is God speaking to you through the messages, the study guide, or your small group discussion? How would you like to grow?

SABBATH PRACTICES AND EXERCISES

Each week you will be given some practical ideas and exercises to incorporate a time of Sabbath - use them (or not), or tweak, change, or adapt them in whatever way fits you.

Begin Again

In the Buddhist community of Plum Village, Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese monk, periodically rings a Mindfulness Bell. Upon hearing the bell, everyone stops, and takes three silent mindful breaths. Then they are Free to continue their work, awakened ever so slightly by the Sabbath pause of mindfulness. We can choose anything to stop us like this – the phone ringing, a stoplight when we are driving, whenever our hand touches a doorknob, before we eat or drink.

Choose one common act during your day to serve as a Sabbath pause. Whenever this arises – whenever you touch a doorknob or hear the phone – simply stop, take three silent, mindful breaks, and then go through the door or answer the phone. See how it changes you to take these tiny Sabbath moments each day.

Stopping to Rest

Choose one pleasurable activity that is easily done and takes little time. Leaf through a magazine, tear out a picture that you find appealing, and put it somewhere you will see it each day. Write a short poem about nothing of importance. Put a new flower in a cup by your bed. Take a walk around the block. Take a crayon and make a simple drawing of your room. Sing a song you know from beginning to end. Do something simple and playful. Let the power of a simple act of creativity stop you, slow your pace, interrupt your speed. Notice how willing (or not willing) you are to be stopped. Notice how it feels when you are.

(Excerpts from *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives* by Wayne Muller, p. 39,145-146.)