

## WEEK 3: ROOTED IN REST – TRUSTING GOD WITH YOUR BODY AND SOUL

**Scripture References:** Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 6:31; Psalm 23:1-3

**Focus:** Biblical rest is not laziness—it's a holy rhythm. God invites us to find rest for our bodies, minds, and souls by trusting His provision, practicing Sabbath, and releasing our burdens.

**Opening Prayer:** "Father, thank You for calling us into rest. Quiet our minds and hearts as we learn about the importance of trusting You with every part of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen."

**Icebreaker:** "What does rest look like for you? Do you find it easy or hard to slow down?"

### **Read: Exodus 20:8-11**

*"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

**Summary:** Rest is both a command and a gift. In Exodus, Sabbath is modeled after God's own rest. Jesus invites the weary to take His yoke and find rest for their souls. Resting is an act of trust in God's provision and timing.

The Sabbath was rooted in creation. God, who never tires, rested to model a rhythm of restoration. The Sabbath isn't about checking out but checking in with God. It's a weekly act of trust that God can run the world without us.

### **Modern Illustration:**

Think of a phone constantly used but never recharged. Without regular Sabbath, we spiritually drain until we crash.

**Relevant Statistic:** 55% of Americans don't use their vacation time (Glassdoor, 2022).

**Discussion Questions:**

- What stands out to you in the Sabbath command?
- Why do you think God commands rest instead of just recommending it?
- What are signs you may be spiritually or emotionally drained?

**Read:**

- **Matthew 11:28-30:** *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*
- **Mark 6:31:** *Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."*

Jesus calls the weary to Himself—not to more work, but to rest. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. In Mark 6, even the disciples needed time away to rest. Real rest comes not just from stopping, but from being with Jesus.

**Modern Illustration:**

In Japan, the word *karōshi* means "death by overwork." In contrast, Sabbath is God's way of protecting our health and hearts for renewal.

**Discussion Questions:**

- What "yokes" or burdens are you carrying that feel heavy?
- How have you experienced soul-level rest in the past?
- What would it look like to intentionally create time for rest with Jesus this week?

**Read: Psalm 23:1-3**

*The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, <sup>3</sup> he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.*

The Good Shepherd leads us beside still waters—not rushing waves. He restores our soul. This isn't just about physical rest but emotional and spiritual healing. Following God's lead means embracing rhythms that restore rather than deplete.

**Modern Illustration:**

Think of a stressed-out person sitting at a lake with no phone, just stillness. That's a picture of the peace God wants to offer regularly.

**Discussion Questions:**

- What does “He restores my soul” mean to you?
- What areas of your life feel overextended?
- How can you build regular rest into your weekly rhythm?
- How can we encourage each other to protect time for God-centered rest?

**Exercise:** Challenge group members to pick up their Bibles and hold them out in one hand, with their arm parallel to the floor. See who can maintain that posture for the longest amount of time. What seems light and manageable initially can become burdensome - and even catastrophic - if the attempt is sustained without rest.

**Potential Additional Discussion Questions:**

- Start by trying to define “rest”. Is there a difference between physical rest and Godly rest? Does rest always mean going home and lying on the couch?
- How would you describe your current rest rhythms?
- What makes rest hard for you?
- What does Sabbath look like for you now?
- How is rest a spiritual act of trust?
- Is there such a thing as too much rest? Explain.
- What do you learn about God from His rest command?
- What might change if you prioritized rest more?
- What fills you up spiritually and physically?
- How can rest restore both your desire and ability to serve?
- What boundary would help you protect rest?
- How can we support one another in this?

**Exodus 20:8-11 Commentary**

20:8–11 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy (20:8; see 31:12–17). The Sabbath day concept is predicated on what God did at creation. He made the world in six days; then He rested on the seventh (20:11). Clearly, the all-powerful God didn’t “rest” because He was tired. Rather, He rested so that He could enjoy what He had done: “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good indeed” (Genesis 1:31). Likewise, after six days of work, we are also called to rest and enjoy the fruit of our labor. This is a valuable means of helping ourselves to avoid becoming so busy and preoccupied that we forget what God has done too.

God also made the Sabbath so that His people would be reminded of His sovereignty. The seventh day is a Sabbath to the *LORD* (20:10). He is in charge; we live under His rule. He is the One who brought order out of chaos (Genesis 1:1–2).

The author of Hebrews, writing to Christians, reminds us that “a Sabbath rest remains for God’s people” (Hebrews 4:9). But the early Christians did not gather for worship on the Jewish Sabbath—Saturday, the official seventh day of the week. They gathered for worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, because it was on that day that Jesus was raised from the dead. He is “Lord of the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:8), and He promises rest for His weary people (see Matthew 11:28). Though we in the New Testament era are not tied down to keeping a specific Sabbath day (see Colossians 2:16), there remains a principle of Sabbath rest for the people of God. We willingly “enter” that rest by faith, trusting God and living obediently in accordance with our faith (see Hebrews 3:18–4:3, 11).

### **Matthew 11:28-30 Commentary**

11:28 Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened. If life is weighing you down—if the burden you’re carrying is too much to bear—come to Jesus. Why? Because only He can give you rest. In view here is the invitation to salvation. To rest is to put your burdens in God’s hands and enjoy His provision of forgiveness and eternal life.

11:29 Take up my yoke and learn from Me. Once you’ve come to Jesus, He invites you to hook up to Him as a disciple. A yoke is a wooden bar harnessed to the necks of a pair of oxen to bring them under submission and enable them to do the work that the farmer has for them. To train younger oxen, farmers would yoke them to older, experienced oxen. It provided growth and development.

Hooking to Jesus’s “yoke” enables you to learn how to live. Therein you will find rest. When you come to Jesus, He *gives* you rest in terms of your salvation. When you accept the yoke of discipleship, you *find* rest and experience it in your daily life.

11:30 My yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Following Jesus won’t make every problem in your life disappear. Jesus didn’t say you would no longer have burdens if you hitched to Him. He said their weight would decrease. A suitcase packed full may be too heavy to carry. But, if the case has wheels, your burden will become lighter though your circumstances haven’t changed. God can put wheels on your burdens so that you can deal with them more easily.

### **Mark 6:30-31 Commentary**

6:30–31 After their mission to proclaim the Kingdom in word and deed (see 6:7–13), the apostles returned to Jesus and reported to Him everything that had happened (6:30). Jesus commanded them to go away with Him to rest

and eat (6:31). Sometimes, the most spiritual thing you can do is get some sleep. We need the reminder that we are created beings; we're not God. The fact that we need rest is a reminder that we are dependent on the One Who "does not slumber or sleep" (Psalm 121:4).

### **Psalm 23:1-3 Commentary**

23:1 The *LORD* is my shepherd. David was familiar with tending sheep. After all, he used to do the job (see 1 Samuel 16:11–12; 17:15, 34–37). He knew firsthand what it was for a shepherd to protect and provide for sheep, so he describes his relationship to God in those terms. What David had been for his sheep, God had been to him. Notice that the Lord wasn't a mere generic shepherd to David; He was David's personal shepherd. He calls Him "my shepherd." As a result, David confidently confesses, I have what I need. Because God had covered all of David's needs, he recognized that he lacked nothing.

Some Christians have trusted God to save them for eternity, but they don't have much confidence that He can provide for them in history. David's beautiful, poetic testimony can help instill in us the confidence that He can. Having declared the Lord to be His shepherd, David proceeds in the remainder of the psalm to explain how God met all his needs.

23:2–3 God met David's *spiritual* needs. Just as a shepherd gives sheep rest in green pastures and refreshes them with quiet waters (23:2), so God had done spiritually to David. The cares and struggles of this world can leave us exhausted. Such times are opportunities to learn about our dependence on the Lord. He provides spiritual refreshment and restoration. He renews our life (23:3).

God met David's *directional* needs. He leads me along the right paths (23:3). Sheep are prone to wander and become lost; they need guidance. Many cars today have navigational systems. If you deviate from the best route to reach your destination, the system will warn you to return to the right road. Through His Word and His Spirit, God leads us along the right paths in life—and reroutes us when we foolishly become wayward. Why? For His name's sake (23:3)—that is, so that others can hear us say, "My God has brought me here."

**Closing Challenge:** Choose one day this week to unplug for 3–4 hours and spend it resting, reading, or enjoying time with God.

**Closing Prayer:** "Lord, thank You for offering us rest. Help us to lay down our burdens and find refreshment in You. Teach us to slow down and enjoy Your presence. Amen."