



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Series Theme: Liberated for Life
Text for the Week: Genesis 1:1-2, 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8—11; John 5:8-18
Message for the Week: Rest Well My Soul

Week Four
Sunday, January 29

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

When you were a child, were you ever limited in what you could do or not do on Sunday? How did that make you feel about Sunday?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Genesis 1:1-2, 2:2-3](#) and [Exodus 20:8-11](#) and [John 5:8-18](#) out loud.

(Clicking this link will bring you to multiple translations.)

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, take note of, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

At what time in biblical history did the seventh day become Sabbath (Check Exodus 16:23 for a hint)? When did seventh day worship become a Sunday celebration?

Why do you think God commanded us to rest on the Sabbath?

The Sabbath is all about putting our trust in God. Is trusting in God easy or difficult for you to do? Is keeping the Sabbath easy or difficult for you? Explain.

Rev. Kevin De Young wrote, "Resting one day in seven brought God glory because then He could prove that He was the one responsible for their sanctification, their sustenance, and their salvation." Does this statement change your thinking, or guide your thinking, into what we should be celebrating on the "festive day of rest?"

What do you need to do/not do on the Sabbath in order to enjoy and revel in the goodness and provision of God?

Try It:

Being able to practice and engage in Sabbath takes work. What do you need to do this week ahead of time in order to prepare and be ready to practice and enjoy the Sabbath?

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Pray this prayer together:

Loving Father in heaven. Thank you for your beautiful creation which you have given to us to enjoy. Everywhere we look or go we see evidence of your love for us. Every day we want to praise your glorious name. Forgive us for those times when we selfishly think we own it all and can do with it what we want, apart from your guidance. Thank you, Jesus, for fulfilling all the laws for us, so that we can undo the ropes of slavery to law, and rather live in the freedom of life you give to us.

In Jesus' great NAME, Amen.

Missional/Spiritual Practice for January: Making Room

During the month of January, you are invited and encouraged to engage in the missional practice of [Making Room](#). How do we make room? Each week, intentionally and prayerfully record and reflect on your purchases and time spent. Seek the Spirit's guidance in what you can eliminate to make room (i.e. increase your capacity) to deepen your ministry and share with others. "It is easy to say no when there is a deeper yes burning within" – Richard Foster

Consider repeating this practice weekly or several times a month. Invite several friends to join you in this practice and commit to sharing your decisions and experiences together. Support one another in prayer.

Genesis 1:1-2, 2:2-3 New International Version

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

² ² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

The Message

¹⁻² First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

²⁻⁴ By the seventh day God had finished his work. On the seventh day he rested from all his work. God blessed the seventh day. He made it a Holy Day because on that day he rested from his work, all the creating God had done. This is the story of how it all started, of Heaven and Earth when they were created.

Exodus 20:8-11 New International Version

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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.

The Message

⁸⁻¹¹ Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Work six days and do everything you need to do. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to God, your God. Don't do any work—not you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your servant, nor your maid, nor your animals, not even the foreign guest visiting in your town. For in six days God made Heaven, Earth, and sea, and everything in them; he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, God blessed the Sabbath day; he set it apart as a holy day.

John 5:8-11 New International Version

⁸ Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." ⁹ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, ¹⁰ and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."

¹¹ But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.' "

¹² So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"

¹³ The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

¹⁴ Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

¹⁶ So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. ¹⁷ In his defense Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working." ¹⁸ For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

The Message

⁸⁻⁹ Jesus said, "Get up, take your bedroll, start walking." The man was healed on the spot. He picked up his bedroll and walked off.

⁹⁻¹⁰ That day happened to be the Sabbath. The Jews stopped the healed man and said, "It's the Sabbath. You can't carry your bedroll around. It's against the rules."

¹¹ But he told them, "The man who made me well told me to. He said, 'Take your bedroll and start walking.'"

¹²⁻¹³ They asked, "Who gave you the order to take it up and start walking?" But the healed man didn't know, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd.

¹⁴ A little later Jesus found him in the Temple and said, "You look wonderful! You're well! Don't return to a sinning life or something worse might happen."

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ The man went back and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. That is why the Jews were out to get Jesus—because he did this kind of thing on the Sabbath.

¹⁷ But Jesus defended himself. "My Father is working straight through, even on the Sabbath. So am I."

¹⁸ That really set them off. The Jews were now not only out to expose him; they were out to *kill* him. Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was calling God his own Father, putting himself on a level with God.

Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 103

Q. What is God's will for you in the fourth commandment?

A. First, that the gospel ministry and education for it be maintained,¹ and that, especially on the festive day of rest, I diligently attend the assembly of God's people² to learn what God's Word teaches,³ to participate in the sacraments,⁴ to pray to God publicly,⁵ and to bring Christian offerings for the poor.⁶

Second, that every day of my life I rest from my evil ways, let the Lord work in me through his Spirit, and so begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.⁷

¹ [Deut. 6:4-9, 20-25; 1 Cor. 9:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:13-17; Tit. 1:5](#)

² [Deut. 12:5-12; Ps. 40:9-10; 68:26; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25](#)

³ [Rom. 10:14-17; 1 Cor. 14:31-32; 1 Tim. 4:13](#)

⁴ [1 Cor. 11:23-25](#)

⁵ [Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1](#)

⁶ [Ps. 50:14; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8 & 9](#)

⁷ [Isa. 66:23; Heb. 4:9-11](#)