

Rock Solid Men

What Is Sabbath, Why Does It Matter, and How Do You Do It?

Edited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. Please turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter two. We are in the series Rock Solid Men. This is the last of the six sessions. Then, next week, Brett Clemmer, who is the author of this book along with a woman in our office, Jamie Turco, developed this series, will be doing a wrap up. That should be very interesting next week. We're going to do two shout outs today. I flipped them. We'll start with the area director shout out, going to Larry Niggli in San Diego. Larry says, "I am passionate about being an area director because I have personally seen the incredible value of the discipleship process in my own life, and I want to share that value and encouragement with other men's discipleship leaders." That's Larry, another handsome guy. We put these pictures up here because they're all so nice looking.

Then, today's group shout out goes to the Friday Morning Bible study, 10 men who meet in Albert McCullough's home, he's the leader, on Fridays at 10:00 AM. He says, "We are a group looking to understand God's purpose for us." I wonder if you would join me in giving all of these men a very warm, rousing Man in the Mirror welcome. Yeah. One, two, three, hoorah. Welcome, men. We are glad to have you with us, to be part of this study.

Session six: What is Sabbath? Why does it matter? How do you do it? Again, as each week we've given you the outline for what we're going to do, we have the theme verse for the series, "Be on guard, stand firm in the faith. Be men of courage. Be strong and do everything in love." Then, we have these five parts of each week. The first part is a passage, the Biblical part. The second is a Rock Solid tool. A third is a Rock Solid challenge. Then, you will talk about it. Then, there's an activity idea in the brochure.

We have, again, this week, gosh, they're black and white this week. We've downgraded it from color to black and white. If you didn't bring your book this morning, there are a few extra sheets with the two pages on the tables. First up, what is Sabbath, and why does it matter? I'll just go ahead and put the rest of this stuff up here as well, I guess. We'll talk about it. Genesis chapter two verse two. What is Sabbath? "By the seventh day, God had finished the work he had been doing. On the seventh day, he rested," or Sabbath. This is the root word for Sabbath. Sabbath is S-A-B-B-A-T-H. Right? This is S-A-B-A-T-H. It's the root word for Sabbath. "He rested from all his work. 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."

Part of what Sabbath is is it's part of God's creation. When you think about the world calendar, why are there seven days on a world calendar in a week? It's because the entire world calendar comes back to Genesis chapter one. This is the source of the seven-day week that we have. It's part of God's nature. We have Sabbath because rest is part of God's nature. Then, if you would, turn to Deuteronomy chapter five verse 12. This is right in the middle of the 10 commandments. Someone wrote a satirical tract about this and said, "I believe in all nine of the 10 commandments." They were trying to draw attention to the fact that the observation of the Sabbath had fallen into, not disuse, but maybe a little abuse. Verse 12,

and, by the way, it's the longest of all the 10 commandments. I don't know what that means, but now you know.

"Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy as the Lord your God has suggested to you." Again, it's not the 10 suggestions. It's the 10 commandments. By the way, the 10 commandments are considered moral law, God's moral law. There are three kinds of law in the Old Testament, ceremonial, judicial, and moral. The ceremonial laws have passed. The judicial laws have been replaced by the current legal system. Then, I can't think of a single orthodox theologian who does not consider the 10 commandments to be the moral law, which is still in place. "Observe the Sabbath. Keep it holy as the Lord has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the 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 or employee, nor your ox, your donkey, or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns." Basically, what he's trying to do is say everybody and everything. These are examples.

"So that your male and female servants may rest as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, the Lord your God has strongly recommended that you observe the Sabbath day." No, "The Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day." Two things to take away, well, many things to take away. First of all, Sabbath, what does it literally mean? It means to cease from work and to rest, to desist from what you're doing. Basically, this command is a cease and desist order. We have cease and desist laws in our country. This is a cease and desist law, but instead of thinking of it as something you have to do, think of it as something you get to do. God has made it legal for you to take a day and rest. Not only that, it is actually morally wrong not to take a rest. It is morally wrong not to take this Sabbath rest. It's against the law. You're actually breaking the law when you don't observe a Sabbath.

Now, what that Sabbath is and how you do it, we'll get there. You may have had a particular iteration of Sabbath pop into your mind, that it's this, this, this and that, and everybody needs to do this, this, and that. That's actually not the case. We'll get into that as we go through the lesson. With that said, this text says two things, Deuteronomy. It says, first of all, it is a time to rest. Then, secondly, down in verse 15, it says remember. The Sabbath is about not only rest, but it's about remembering. Then, what is it that we want to remember? Well, we all have these four little voices in our heads that are competing for our attention. I'm pretty sure we've talked about this before because I remember Keith, our MC, just loved this idea. We have four voices in our heads. We have the world. We have the flesh, our own sinful natures. We have the devil, and we have the Spirit.

It just is very difficult to distinguish who's talking to you if you're going so fast that you don't have enough time to pause and to rest and to remember the goodness and the greatness of God. God is good, and he is great. If you think about every attribute of God, any attribute, you could pop them out right now. God is omnipotent. Well, it either falls under the rubric that he's good or he's great. He's omnipotent. That's that he's great. God is love. That's part of his goodness. God is merciful. That's part of his goodness. God knows everything. God has all power. God is everywhere. That's part of his greatness. Everything about God is either good or great. That's why we teach our little children to say in their grace, "God is good. God is great," because everything is either part of God's goodness or greatness.

These are the things that God wants us to remember. He knows that we need to take times to Sabbath in order to not only rest but also to remember how good and how great our God is. I'm starting to talk

here about it, but what is the problem that God is trying to solve by giving us the Sabbath in 2019? Well, one of the problems is this. I don't know if you're aware of this. This booklet was built around a book that I wrote called A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines. I was reading a chapter on Sabbath in the book. I completely just forgot what I was going to say. Really, it's not my loss. You think it's my loss. It's actually your loss because it was really going to be cool, whatever it is that I was going to say. I remembered. I had it in my notes.

I talked about this idea of... I gave an illustration of a guy who was just really busy, couldn't be there for his kids, and was working too late, barking at his wife, neglecting his kids. I said we ought to coin a new term for this. We ought to call it rest interval dysfunction. It didn't catch on because I didn't even remember it until I read the book. I think it is a very nice way of talking about what it means when we don't observe Sabbath. We end up with rest interval dysfunction. We become touchy. We sharpen our words. We don't remember. We don't rest. We forget how good and how great God has been to us, and we end up in the pity party of the present. The Westminster Confession of Faith, very famous. The English Parliament in the mid-1600s formed the Westminster Assembly. They wanted to develop a system for English government. The Anglican church was the official religion of England. They came up in 1646 with the Westminster Confession of Faith.

There are quite a few things in there that today we would understand to be not accurate or not worthy, but it is a fantastic document. In the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the first question is... Anybody remember? Any of you Presbyterians remember? What is the chief purpose of man? Now you remember, right? How many of you remember the answer? The chief purpose of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. This fits in so nicely with the problem that we're trying to solve by recommending that we observe Sabbath, that we take advantage of this fact that it's actually legal to take some time off because this is what gives us the time to glorify God. By the way, what does it mean to glorify God? We always talk about we want to make sure we bring glory to God. We want to glorify God. What does that mean? To glorify God is to increase his greatness, so to increase his greatness in our minds as well as in the world. In order to do that, we need times to remember. That's what this whole idea of Sabbath is about. We're answering the question, "What is Sabbath?"

Why does it matter? Here's the question. Are you suffering from rest interval dysfunction? Why does it matter? Well, it matters because you are valuable to God. What makes you valuable? What makes you valuable to God is the fact that he's simply created you. You do not have to do anything in order to make God happy. You do not have to do anything to earn enough merit for God to love you. You do not have to do anything for God to want to have a relationship with you. God loves you. God loves me. God loves us because he made us. We're part of the creation too. God wants you and I to lead, watch for it. God wants us to lead, hear it. God wants us to lead, don't miss this. God wants each of us to lead a Biblically rhythmic life. God wants each of us to lead a Biblically rhythmic life. Gosh, that should have been the Big Idea, but it's not.

The point of that is that you cannot lead a Biblically rhythmic life without Sabbath. Not only is it illegal, it's not possible. It's not that it's just not advisable. It's impossible. With that in mind, the Big Idea for the day is NOT, Have you set boundaries that allow you to rest and remember how good and great is our God? That's not it. That's not the Big Idea. See, the thing is that is an analytical question. That helps you analyze. Have you set boundaries that allow you to rest and remember how good and great is our God? You would be able to look that over and say yes or no, and then walk out of here and this talk would never make one twit of difference in your life. Today we're going for more of an application-

oriented Big Idea. The Big Idea today is: **Where will you set the boundaries that allow you to rest and remember how good and great is our God?** Where will you set your boundaries?

We've established what the Sabbath is. We've talked about why it's important. We've talked about the problem that we're trying to solve. We've got an idea here that because it is important, we need to set boundaries that allow us to rest and remember how good and great. God is good. God is great, and we thank him for this food. How good and great is our God? Now, we want to answer the question: What can we gain from Sabbath that can be gained no other way? For this, I'm going to ask you to turn from Mark chapter two verse 23. I just love talking about these things. I'm back trying to use my new Bible. Some of you know I bought a new Bible, a four-pound Bible. Look at how thick that sucker is. It's a study Bible. The problem is that the light in here is medium. It's not high. It would be no problem reading this, but with the three point font that they use, I thought I'd try to... I've been reading out of my computer Bible.

What did I say, Mark chapter two verse 23? Yeah. "One Sabbath," there we are, Sabbath, "Jesus was going through the grain fields. As his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain." The Pharisees who took a very legalistic approach to Sabbath... Part of reading this text to you is to go against legalism. "The Pharisees said to him, 'Look. Why are they doing what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath?'" There were ceremonial laws that the Pharisees observed and demanded that others observe on the Sabbath in order to be a good Christian boy. You couldn't be a good boy if you didn't do those things. Today, we reject the ceremonial law or it just doesn't apply to us. Then, on verse 25, "Jesus answered, 'Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abiathar, the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat, and he also gave some to his companions.'"

There's another passage in Mark that parallels this. Right before, it talks about Jesus healing on the Sabbath, doing good works on the Sabbath. "Who of you if you had an ox that fell in the ditch on the Sabbath wouldn't rescue the ox?" Doing good on the Sabbath. Then, verse 25, "Then he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. The Son of Man is even Lord of the Sabbath.'" Did you get that? The Sabbath is made for man. God made the Sabbath as a time for you and I to be able to rest and remember. Man is not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath is made for man. That's what Jesus says. The first thing that we can gain is taking advantage of something special that's been made just for you and I, a day to rest and remember. Matthew chapter 11 verse 28, if you want to go there, you can do that. I don't think I even marked that one in my own Bible.

I've said here before, and I'll probably say it again, but if I was a pastor, which I will never be... God bless pastors. The way we treat them, I don't think I could ever let you treat me like that. I want to income from someplace else. You can't boss me around like you boss those guys around and gals. Anyway, I talk to a lot of pastors after they've been broken and beaten up by you guys. Sometimes you guys really irritate me. I love you too most of the time. If I was a pastor, I would have a banner over my church, "Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you more work to do.'" Actually, that's the sign that's over a lot of churches. Right? There's lots of work to do, but he says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you Sabbath. I will give you rest." I would have that as the banner over my church, over the front door of my church.

He says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart. And you will find Sabbath or rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." One of the things that we can gain from Sabbath that we can gain no other way is that we can gain this holy rest that Jesus is

offering to us, especially when we're weary. Then, there are lots of other things that we would talk of as elements of rest. Our key verse in this section is 2 Corinthians 5:17. I'm sorry I made that so small. I can't even see it. This is the same verse that's in your handout. Paul wrote, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come, the old is gone, and the new is here." This new creation, we take two weeks off or a week off or a few days, long weekends, and we go off and we do recreation. Recreation is a very different thing than re-creation. If you just put a hyphen between the E and the C, you have Sabbath.

A lot of times, people do recreation, and they come back more exhausted on Monday morning than they left on Friday afternoon. That's not re-creation. That's not entering into the new creation. One of the benefits of Sabbath is it is re-creation. Sabbath is communion. These are just some of the elements of Sabbath. It's communion. My organizing principle in life, I will commit myself to a life of devotion and study of God, and then do what I do. I will commit myself to a life of devotion. That's loving God. That's communion with God. I will commit myself to a life of devotion and study of God. That's knowing God. That's spiritual growth. That's discipleship. It's communion, and it's discipleship. Part of Sabbath is rest. Part of it's remembering. Part of it's having a deeper walk with God through discipleship. Part of it's having a feeling closer to God. That's what communion is all about, all of these elements of Sabbath. These are some of the things that can be gained from the Sabbath, that really can be gained no other way.

Again, the Big Idea today is this. **Where will you set the boundaries that allow you to rest and remember how good and great is our God?** That brings up what are some ideas that can enrich and deepen your Sabbath experiences. Turn with me to Romans chapter 14, please. Romans, pretty please, chapter 14 verses five and six. Many of you will remember that for 20 years prior to Jim Angelakos being the administrator of the Bible study, a man named Jim Seibert was the administrator of our Bible study. How many of you remember Jim Seibert? Many of you do. Each year, we have the Jim Seibert Annual Distinguished Service Award. It's named after him for someone who has an incredible servant heart, which Jim did. Jim was Catholic, a very devout, born again Catholic. A lot of you guys are very devout, born again Catholics here and online as well.

In addition to being his friend, I was also his discipler as well. He was a disciple as well because he came to us with very little spiritual background or knowledge, just basically a regular church attender after a period of being an irregular church attender. Jim had this thing where he made his Sabbath Sunday. He saved up all of his prayers for Sunday. He would make sure he remembered them, but then he would do his prayers. He would have a real season with God. Now, he would do other prayers during the week, but he would have his main prayer time on Sunday. He made Sunday his Sabbath, a special day. In Romans chapter 14 verse five, we read, "One person considers one day more sacred than another." That would be Jim. "Another considers every day alike." That would be me. Basically, I go to church every day, not to physical church, but I go to church every day. "Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind." This is where the liberty of the gospel of grace begins to enter into a discussion about the Sabbath.

You have incredible freedom for how you want to experience the Sabbath, how you want to enrich and deepen your Sabbath experience, for the boundaries that you want to set that will allow you to do what? What are the two things about the Sabbath? Rest and remember. You have a lot of freedom about how you can organize how you rest and remember. "Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord." That's Jim. "Whoever eats meat..." Blah, blah, blah and so forth. I didn't mean that, Lord. Blah, blah, blah. Excuse me. Sorry about that. Just kidding. There's a lot of freedom. That's the first idea that can enrich your experience. Second

is do good. Jesus did good on the Sabbath. We don't have time to go into an example of that, but that's the case. Pray. In Luke chapter five verse 15, and that would be one that you should turn to or could turn to if you want to.

Luke chapter five verse 15, talking about Jesus, "Yet the news about him spread all the more, so the crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Jesus would Sabbath. He would take a time to rest and remember at odd times, but a lot of times when he was feeling overwhelmed. I remember my insurance agent, not a commercial, but my State Farm agent, I would call him. He also was a friend. I would call him sometimes, and his assistant would say, "He took the day off." I knew what that meant because Roy had the philosophy that when he felt anxious or he felt like the pressures were mounting and he was overwhelmed by his work, he'd just leave for the day. What a cool way to practice Sabbath. He just walked away from it, and then his mind cleared, and he came back a much fresher, better person. That's kind of what Jesus is doing here as well. Although Jesus is Jesus so Jesus is not doing exactly what Roy did.

In prayer, I think that prayer is one of the greatest ideas to experience Sabbath. I have found myself over the last, I don't know, few years, starting many of my prayers, when I'm praying with somebody at a lunch or something will bow, and I will say something like, "Our dearest Father, we bow our heads before you and assume the posture of humility before your goodness and your greatness so that you might hear us." Again, we're talking about how do we remember about the goodness and greatness. Well, one of the ways to do it is through taking time away, withdrawing, prayer, gathering with believers. That's the opposite end of it. That's another idea, gathering with believers and family for either church experience, small group experience like we're having here with men, with couples, family dinners, all of these things where you're taking intentional time to both rest and remember. Great ideas to enrich your Sabbath experience.

Personally, somebody asked me not long ago, "Why did you give up car racing for hiking?" I said, "Well, I ran out of money." That's true. When I first started hiking, I was astounded at how much Sabbath there is in creation, how much rest, how much remembering there is in creation. I just looked this morning. Since I started, I got an app. Since I started keeping track, I've got 212 hikes logged, over 1,000 miles. One of the first hikes that I took, I wrote up a little, I don't know if it's a poem or what, but I want to close with this. Last weekend, I went camping. On Saturday morning, I took a hike. At first, I could have been anywhere. My mind was preoccupied with the cares of the world.

Suddenly, I heard the thump of a Pileated woodpecker pounding on the bark of a dead tree. I froze, hoping to catch a glimpse of this majestic creature. The absolute quiet of the woods enveloped me. I could hear the silence. Just like that, I had been transported from a tangled web of thoughts to where I was standing. There it was again, thump, thump, thump, reverberating through the trees. I crept forward, ears alert. I could hear the crunch of pine needles under my feet. A walk in the woods had restored my hearing. Then, I saw the proud woodpecker powerfully ripping at the rind of a hollow tree. On the trail ahead, the atmosphere hung suspended. A glistening mist, irradiated by the sun.

Vivid red leaves were dancing in a ballet choreographed by the sun. A walk in the woods had restored my sight. Further down the trail, the luscious scent of fallen leaves wafted into my nostrils. The aroma of pine needles strewn across the trail bombarded me like sweet perfume. A walk in the woods had restored my sense of smell. It was a good day, this aquifer of ordinary experience bubbling up all around me. A stand of palmettos, an oak hammock, a 50-foot ravine, the presence of the creator all around me,

the beauty of his holiness on display in the majesty of his creation, a longing to worship the one behind it all, restored to transcendence by a one hour walk in the woods. You can do Sabbath however you want to do Sabbath. The Big Idea for this day: **Where will you set the boundaries that allow you to rest and remember how good and great is our God?** Let's pray.

Our dearest Father, we come humbly to you right now. As we were talking in the message, we remind ourselves of the posture that we have assumed, the posture of humility before your goodness and your greatness. Lord, I pray that you would help each of us to be intentional, to set the boundaries for our Sabbath, whether it's making one day special or every day, treating it alike, whatever you would have us do, Lord, that you would tutor our hearts, that we would recognize that it's legal to do this and that it's really not right not to. We pray that you would make this commandment a real and living thing for each of us, not as a matter of law, but as a matter of grace and liberty, something you've given us as a gift, the Sabbath to be understood as a gift. Let us not leave this gift unopened. Let us not open the gift and set it aside for something that sparkles more or seems more appealing. Let us enter into your Sabbath and to do it with regularity and intentionality. We ask this, Jesus, in your name. Amen.