

Rest and Renewal



SABBATH—MAY 8

READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON: Genesis 2:15; Exodus 20:8–11; Exodus 23:12; Matthew 11:28–30; Mark 2:27; Mark 6:30–32.

MEMORY VERSE: “But many people were coming and going. So they did not even have a chance to eat. Then Jesus said to his apostles,¹ ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place. You need to get some rest’ ” (Mark 6:31, NlrV).

A SMART, YOUNG STUDENT NAMED TOM WAS STUDYING TO BE A DOCTOR at Loma Linda. He found himself burning out. He got up at four in the morning and worked steadily until midnight. He struggled to keep up with his rough schedule. But he fell further and further behind.

“Feeling hopeless, Tom went to his professor for help. Being a wise man, the professor recommended that Tom get at least seven hours of sleep each night and thirty minutes of exercise every day. Tom did not believe this would help . . . but he agreed to give this program a try. After all, Tom was so far down he had nothing to lose. To his surprise, Tom’s grades began to improve within just two weeks. By the end of the year he was in the upper third of his class. And in due time he successfully completed his medical training.”—Adapted from “I’m [I am] So Tired,” *Hardinge Lifestyle Series* (Loma Linda, Calif.: Loma Linda University School of Health, 1988), pages 3–5.

Many of us are just the same as Tom. We all need daily rest and weekly rest to have healthy bodies and minds, and healthy spiritual and social lives.

To view and/or download a Hope Channel show on this week’s lesson, visit www.lifesbeat.org.

1. apostles—the disciples (followers) of Jesus who preached and taught the gospel (the good news about Jesus) after Jesus returned to heaven.

SUNDAY—MAY 9**NO TIME (Mark 6:30–32, 45, 46)**

Most of us live in a very busy and tense world. We have so many things to do and so little time to do them. Mother Teresa, a famous nun, said, “I think today the world is upside down. It is suffering so much because there is very little love in the home, and in family life. We have no time for our children. We have no time for one another. There is no time to enjoy one another” (adapted).

In some cultures,² people are working so hard to get ahead, to make money, and to be successful, that they sacrifice³ marriage, families, and even health.

Yes, working hard, doing one’s best, and trying to make a comfortable living for oneself and one’s family are good. The Bible does not encourage people to be lazy (Proverbs 6:9; Proverbs 13:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). But we can take a good thing too far. As a result, we and the ones we love and care about suffer. Often we hear about a father who works all the time. He argues that he is doing it for his family. But, in the end, it is the family who is being hurt by the father’s continued and long absence.

What does Genesis 2:15 say about the plan God had for people to work, even before sin?

From the beginning, even before Adam and Eve fell into sin, God’s plan was for humans⁴ to work. And to rest from work too. Especially now, we must remember that our bodies have limits. So, resting is very important.

What do Mark 6:30–32 and Mark 6:45, 46 say to us about the need for rest, no matter what we are doing and how important our work might be?

Jesus and His disciples (followers) took time to rest. He knew that His body needed time to be refreshed. We, too, need time for daily rest. Trying to cheat on our sleep results in physical (bodily) and emotional loss. No matter how young, how healthy or how strong, our bodies need rest. And sooner or later a careless lifestyle will catch up to us.



Our bodies need rest.

What things drive you? What things cause you to work the hardest? Whatever they are, you need

2. cultures—the ways that people live, dress, think, eat, and socialize with one another.

3. sacrifice—to give up something that you want to keep, especially in order to get or do something else or to help someone else.

4. humans—men, women, and children.

to ask yourself if they are worth the price of losing your health.

MONDAY—MAY 10

THE NEED OF REST (Exodus 23:12)

All of us know about the need to rest. We need food, we need water, and we need rest. So often our bodies themselves warn us that it is time to rest. And so often the warnings are loud and clear. Much of the time, if we would listen to what our bodies tell us then we would get enough rest. But, sadly, we often are so busy earning money, running here and there, that we do not listen to our own flesh. Many people have been struck down by sickness and have finally been forced to rest, and for a long time too. What is sad is that they would have been fine if they had listened to what their own bodies were telling them.

Sooner or later, we will rest—one way or another. The question is, Why not do it the best way possible?

What warnings does your body give you to tell you that it is time to slow down and rest? How well do you obey?

Every living person needs time for rest to restore⁵ that which has been used. Think about the word *restoration*. It means “the act of returning to an original [new] state or condition.”

5. restore—to make something as it was in the beginning.

6. verb—a word that shows action.

7. noun—a person, place, or thing; a part of speech.

It also means a “refreshing medicine” or “anything that refreshes.”

“Sleep refreshes the tired body and prepares it for the next day’s duties.” —Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance [Advice]*, page 342.

We need to know our limits. We cannot do our work in our own strength. God promises grace (strength) to handle our work. In regular rest, we permit the Lord to restore our bodies so we will awaken refreshed, ready to do His will (plan).

What reason does Exodus 23:12 give for rest?

The verb⁶ “refreshed” is used as a verb only a few times in the Old Testament. But it is based on a very common noun,⁷ often translated as “soul” (Genesis 2:7). It has the meaning of “life” or “that which breathes.” In other words, it is as if the word *soul* were made into a verb. So, it gives the idea that, through resting, we are getting more life, more breath, more soul. Rest is important and basic to us as living humans. If we deny ourselves the rest we need, we are denying the fact that we are human.

TUESDAY—MAY 11

THE REST IN GOD’S PRESENCE (Matthew 11:28–30)

What is Jesus’ invitation to all of us in Matthew 11:28–30? What do

you think Jesus is saying? More important, how have you experienced this promise in your own life?

The kind of rest that Jesus gives us is more than physical rest. It is rest for the soul. We need to experience the complete rest that Christ offers us. A deep sleep gives enough rest for the body. A vacation may give us emotional rest. But where can we find spiritual rest? Spiritual rest means freedom from the mental and emotional problems of the mind and heart.

Jesus is ready to give spiritual rest to all who come to Him. What does that rest include?

It includes freedom from the pain and guilt that come with the human struggle for acceptance through good works. We can rest in the promise that we are accepted by God because of Jesus' perfect works. It certainly is not because of our own imperfect works. By Jesus' grace⁸ and the changing power of the Spirit, Christians can surrender⁹ themselves to Jesus. And He will give them rest. The just shall live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11).

Human works fall far short of the high standard¹⁰ that God requires of us. It is so comforting to know that Jesus paid the penalty (price) for sin. His righteousness also is given to us and gives us assurance (promise) of eternal life. Jesus' perfect life and sacrifice are our only hope. In Him our souls can find rest.

Jesus speaks to both those who are burdened with sin and those who struggle with the problems of life. God knows what our struggles are, He knows what our burdens are, and He asks us to lay them at His feet. We are to trust in His loving-kindness and care for us, no matter what our situation is. What a rest for our tired souls when we learn to trust in Him!

All of us need a time and place where we can focus our minds on God. Prayer, Bible reading, and thinking about Jesus bring to us a sense of peace and renewal.

It is in this place of personal worship that one will hear the still, small Voice of encouragement and hope. This quiet time away from the stresses of life lets the Holy Spirit do His work in restoring the soul.

How can you put yourself in a place where you can profit more fully from this wonderful promise offered us in Jesus?



Prayer, Bible reading, and thinking about Jesus bring to us a sense of peace and renewal.

8. grace—God's gift of forgiveness and mercy (kindness) that He freely gives us to take away our sins.

9. surrender—giving one's whole life to Jesus to love and serve Him and to obey His holy law.

10. standard—example, guide, principle (rule), or law.

WEDNESDAY—MAY 12**THE DAILY REST (Genesis 1)**

Read Genesis 1. During the days of Creation, the evening and the morning made a new day. God was creating a regular schedule of work and rest, to renew and restore the body from day to day.

The human body requires daily rest. Studies on lack of sleep show different negative results. These may lead to greater risks of diabetes,¹¹ being overweight, poor school grades, traffic accidents, injuries, deaths from accidents, and even psychotic¹² behavior. The workday of airline pilots, air traffic controllers, and resident physicians is strictly limited to make sure they have time for both work and rest. Long ago, before electrical lighting was invented, people naturally would sleep during the hours of darkness and work in the light. In today's modern world, we have to guard against the temptation¹³ to work more than is healthful.

Science has discovered how the human body works in a daily 24-hour cycle. The body lets go of hormones¹⁴ at certain times of the day. This supports a statement made by Ellen G.

White: "Sleep is worth far more before than after midnight. Two hours' good sleep before twelve o' clock is worth more than four hours after twelve o' clock."—*Manuscript Releases*, volume 7, page 224.

Studies done in sleep laboratories¹⁵ show a need for different kinds of sleep. Adults require six to nine hours of sleep. Sleep requirements are met when people do not feel sleepy or drowsy during the day. With enough sleep they feel alert and have a sense of well-being. People without enough sleep will work at a level that is equal to those who are drunk.

List some of the things that may prevent you from getting a good night's sleep.

Some suggestions to help you have better sleep are

- Exercise daily.
- Keep your room at a comfortable temperature.
- Avoid eating for two to three hours before sleeping.
- Avoid tension and excitement before sleep.
- Do not take alcohol, sleeping pills, or caffeine.¹⁶

11. diabetes—a serious disease in which the body cannot properly control the amount of sugar in the blood because it does not have enough insulin (a substance that the body makes and uses to turn sugar into energy).

12. psychotic—having or relating to a very serious mental (mind) illness that makes you act strangely or believe things that are not true.

13. temptation—anything that can turn us away from God and that tries to get us to do, think, feel, or say what is wrong.

14. hormones—natural substances produced in the body that influence (affect) the way the body grows or develops.

15. laboratories—rooms or buildings with special equipment (machines and tools) for doing experiments and tests in science.

16. caffeine—a substance that is found especially in coffee and tea that makes you feel more awake.



Sleep is worth far more before midnight than after midnight.

THURSDAY—MAY 13

THE WEEKLY REST (Exodus 20:8–11)

What do Genesis 2:1–3 and Exodus 20:8–11 tell us about just how important the whole idea of rest is?

God rested on the seventh day after finishing the work of Creation. The Hebrew verb for “rested” comes from the same word that means “Sabbath” (*Shabbat*). This fact shows just how important the seventh-day *Shabbat* and rest really are. The verse makes it clear that God Himself rested on the Sabbath day.

Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27, NKJV). What was the background of this statement? What did Jesus really mean?

It is so easy to get caught up in

rules and regulations. But we never must forget that the Sabbath is a day for our good. It offers a quiet time for us to think about and enjoy the wonderful gifts our God has given us. It is a time to think about God’s goodness. The Sabbath is an everlasting sign for us to remember and recognize God’s love. The good news of the Sabbath is twofold: (1) by keeping the Sabbath, we talk about “resting in Christ,” and (2) we show in a positive way that we trust in Christ’s works for us as the way of salvation.¹⁷

The Sabbath also gives us a time to rest from the work, struggles, and stress of the week. Sabbath is God’s way of letting us truly relax, rest, and take it easy. Sabbath also gives our bodies and souls a chance to get the rest they so often need.

What is your Sabbath experience? Is it truly a delight, a blessing, a rest? Or, as in the time of Christ, has it become just another burden? How can you learn to get all the good things from this special day of rest?



The Sabbath is an everlasting sign of God’s love.

17. salvation—God’s plan for saving sinners from eternal (without end; forever) death.

FRIDAY—MAY 14

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, “Temperance¹⁸ in Labor,” page 99, in *Counsels on Health*.

“Many people work too hard to do just so much work in a given time. They continue to work when their judgment tells them they should rest. They are the ones who will never succeed. They are living on borrowed time. They are wasting the energy which they will need at a future time. And when the energy they have so carelessly used is spent, they fail. The physical strength is gone, the mental powers fail. They realize that they have met with a loss. But they do not know what it is. Their time of need has come. But their physical supplies are used up. Everyone who breaks the laws of health must at some time suffer the results. God has given us a certain measure of energy, which will be needed at different periods of our lives. If we carelessly waste this energy by continual overwork, we shall sometime be the losers.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance [Advice]*, pages 397, 398.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① What about your local society¹⁹

and culture? Is it one that pushes and drives people to work, work, work? Or is it one that is more relaxed? How can you learn to find the right balance between work and rest in whatever culture you live?

② Some people might have a hard time sleeping because of one thing: a guilty conscience. If that is you, what has Jesus done at the cross that could help you? At the same time, what might you need to do to make things right and to go easier on your conscience?

③ Bring to class some good scientific research on the need for rest. Discuss how you can profit from this knowledge.

④ How has Sabbath rest been a blessing to you? Share some of these blessings with others in class. Discuss both the spiritual and physical advantages (blessings) of Sabbath keeping.

⑤ Think deeply about the amazing fact of God Himself resting on the seventh day of Creation. What does this tell us? How does it help us better understand how important Sabbath rest really is?

18. temperance—not overdoing anything; taking good care of our health by avoiding habits that are not healthy.

19. society—people living together as a group, or forming a group, with the same way of life.