

JUNE 2014

ESSENTIAL CONNECTION

DEVOTIONS FOR STUDENTS



The Redemption Thread

THE BEGINNING

ESSENTIAL CONNECTION

VOLUME 20, NO. 3 JUNE 2014

Eric Geiger VICE PRESIDENT
LIFEWAY CHURCH RESOURCES

PRODUCTION & MINISTRY TEAM
CONTENT EDITOR Mandy Crow
PRODUCTION EDITOR Tessa Morrell
GRAPHIC DESIGNER Kaitlin Redmond
EDITORIAL TEAM LEADER Mike Wakefield

SEND QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS TO:
Mandy Crow, Content Editor
One LifeWay Plaza
Nashville, TN 37234-0144
or mandy.crow@lifeway.com

MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL
Ben Trueblood DIRECTOR,
STUDENT MINISTRY
Jeff Pratt DIRECTOR,
STUDENT MINISTRY PUBLISHING

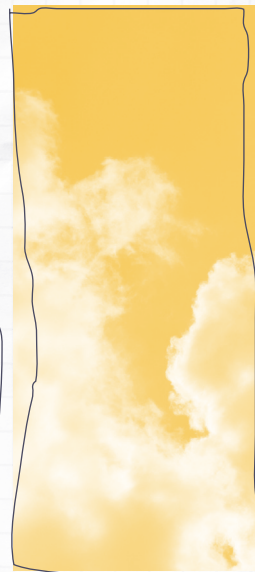
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Essential Connection, JUNE 2014
(ISSN 1078-2788; Item 005075081) is
published monthly by LifeWay Christian
Resources, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN
37234, Thom S. Rainer, President. © 2014
LifeWay Christian Resources. For inquiries,
visit www.lifeway.com, or write LifeWay
Church Resources Customer Service at One
LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0113.
For subscriptions or subscription address
changes, visit www.lifeway.com/magazines,
fax (615) 251-5818, or write to the above
address. For bulk orders shipped to one
address, visit www.lifeway.com/magazines,
fax (615) 251-5933, or write to the above
address.

Annual individual or gift subscription,
\$24.95. Bulk orders shipped to one address
when ordered with other literature, \$1.70
each per month, plus shipping. Please allow
six to eight weeks for arrival of first issue.

Unless otherwise marked, all Scripture
quotations are taken from the Holman
Christian Standard Bible®, copyright 1999,
2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible
Publishers. Used by permission.

VOLUME 20 • NUMBER 3
JUNE 2014



Devotions

3 June 1-7

Creation
by EC staff

12 June 8-14

The Fall
by Justin Hase

23 June 15-21

A World in Chaos
by Amy Keys

33 June 22-30

A Glimmer of Hope
by Cynthia Hopkins

The Guide

11 Read Through the Bible

A handy guide to help you read through the
Bible in one year!

Spotlight: Staying focused

20 Prayer

Prayer is vital to your relationship with
God. **Focus:** Praying for others

Plus: Journal your prayers and record
requests and answered prayers!

30 Spiritual Disciplines

Tools to help you mature in your faith.

Focus: Rest
by Leah Smith

43 Sermon Notes

A guide to help you listen, engage, and
apply what you learn in this month's
sermons or teachings.

CREATION

THE STORY BEGINS WITH GOD.

When the world was formless, it was God who spoke it into existence. He created the stage on which His story would unfold and placed the pinnacle of His creation—humanity—within it. We can make Scripture all about us, but at its very core, the Bible isn't our story—it's God's. He isn't just one of many characters or just part of the plot. He is the Creator, the Author, and the Main Character.



REDEMPTION THREAD:

The story begins with God, the Author and Main Character.

MEMORY VERSE

Go to God

CREATED MAN IN
HIS OWN IMAGE;

IN THE IMAGE
OF GOD:

HE CREATED HIM

— HE CREATED THEM
MALE AND FEMALE.

— GENESIS 1:27

SUNDAY

6.1

BEHIND THE STORY

God is the grammatical subject of the first sentence in the Bible—and He continues to be the thematic subject throughout the entire creation account (Gen. 1-2). The recurring phrase “then God said” in Genesis 1:1-2:3 serves to establish Him as the primary actor in creation.

THE MAIN CHARACTER

PAUSE

Consider this quote: “There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves His children and comes to rescue them.”

—Sally Lloyd-Jones in *The Jesus Storybook Bible*

Think about your favorite book or movie. A writer often uses the first scene or line to give you insight into the main character. What does the first scene tell you about the main character? How? Journal your thoughts below.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. —*Genesis 1:1*

With that idea in mind, read **Genesis 1:1** and **Psalm 92** in your Bible.

- Look at Genesis 1:1. A story begins with its author, creation with its Creator. How does this verse help to establish God as the main character of His story?
- Examine Genesis 1:1 and Psalm 92:14-15. What do these verses tell you about the purpose of the creation account? Is it more about glorifying God or being in awe of what He has made? Explain.

RESPOND

- The Bible doesn't start with this story so we can be in awe of what God has made; it's there so we can be in awe of God. Take some time to do that today. Focus your mind on God—not what He has done for you or what He has made—but on Him and who He is. Record your praises as a prayer below.

- For further study of God's eternal nature, read John 1:1, Ephesians 1:4, and Colossians 1:15-17.

MEMORY VERSE

Write Genesis 1:27 on an index card. Review it when you wake up and before you go to sleep.

MONDAY

6.2

BEHIND THE STORY

In the pagan cultures that surrounded God's people, the moon and sun were worshiped as gods. That may be why the usual Hebrew words for moon and sun are avoided in the Genesis creation account. (See Gen. 1:16.) It is clear from this account that the sun and moon are not deities to be revered or worshiped, but rather made to serve God and humanity.

ALL TO BRING HIM GLORY

PAUSE

You will be living in Genesis 1 and 2 this week. Skim over it this morning, asking God to open your eyes to what He has to teach you.

Then God said, “Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. —*Genesis 1:24-25*

Writers create a setting in which to tell the story. It provides the backdrop for the story, but also sets the mood. Read **Genesis 1:1-25** in your Bible. What does this passage tell you about the setting God created for His story?

Dig deeper by thinking through these questions:

- Think about what you learned yesterday. How do these verses further acknowledge God as the main character of Scripture? Explain.
- God had created a perfect world where all things proclaimed His glory and worked according to His intention. While the world we live in bears the scars of sin, how do you see glimpses of that perfect world's beauty and harmony today?
- Note all the times God said that His creation was good in these verses. What does that help you to understand about the world God had created? Why?

RESPOND

Creation was meant to bring glory to the Creator. Think about the glimpses of beauty and harmony you see in the world today that you just listed. Praise God for the ways you see even creation giving glory to Him. Sketch or record your prayer in your journal.

For further study:

- Read Psalms 19 and 148; Isaiah 55:12; and Romans 1:20.
- Listen to “Song and Dance” by Andrew Peterson (*Clear to Venus*, 2001).

THE POINT

The story of creation begins—and ends—in our eternal God. It is more about Him than us.

THE POINT

God created a perfect setting in which His story would unfold, one where His creation could experience the joy of His presence and glorify Him.

TUESDAY

6.3

BEHIND THE STORY

The original audience of Genesis 1-2 would not have recognized Genesis 1:26-27 as a reference to the Trinity, since that concept wasn't fully revealed until later in redemptive history. While theologians caution that we cannot derive the entire doctrine of the Trinity from one use of a plural pronoun, we can derive that there is plurality within the Godhead. This passage is the first of four Old Testament passages where the plural is found in divine dialogue. Genesis 3:22, 11:7, and Isaiah 6:8 are the others.

GODHEAD n. Word used to refer to the three Persons of the Trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

THE POINT

The Author of the story is our threefold God. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all active in creation—and redemption.

THREE-IN-ONE

PAUSE

Focus your mind on God and who He is. Listen or sing your favorite worship song to Him as an act of worship. Try "The Earth s Yours" by Gungor (*Beautiful Things*, 2010).

Read through Genesis 1:1-27 in your Bible, then focus on verses 26-27.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female. —*Genesis 1:26-27*

Ask yourself:

- What do these verses reveal to you about the main character of Scripture? Explain.
- Focus on verses 2, 26, and 27. How do these verses suggest the Godhead? Why is that important?

Now, read Colossians 1:15-20 in your Bible.

- What was Jesus' role in creation? Explain.
- Why is it important to recognize that the God who created the world and set redemption into motion is a three-in-one God?

RESPOND

It's easy to think that Jesus and the Holy Spirit didn't enter the story until much later, but it is our threefold God—Father, Son, and Spirit—who set the world into motion, beginning with creation.

- Praise God in all three Persons for their involvement in creation and the story of redemption.
- Think about your personal story of redemption. Thank each Person of the Trinity for their role in bringing you into a relationship with the Father through the Son, empowered by the Spirit.
- For further study, read John 1:1-13.

MEMORY VERSE

In addition to reading over Genesis 1:27 when you wake up and before bed, write out the entire verse three times.

WEDNESDAY

6.4

BEHIND THE STORY

The creation of humanity is the pinnacle of God's creative work. This is shown in that it was His final creative act, along with the personal nature of the way He created man and woman. In addition, of all God's creation, only humans are said to be made in His image.

IN HIS IMAGE

PAUSE

Read through Genesis 1-2 again today. Praise God for the creativity you see in His creation and thank Him for creating you.

What are some things that people think set them apart from the crowd? Circle all that apply.

- Income
- Intelligence
- Skills
- Popularity
- Relationships
- Hard work/effort
- Passion for something
- Family
- Appearance
- Power

Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being. —*Genesis 2:7*

Now, read Genesis 1:26-27 again. As you read, think about who or what is being set apart from the rest of creation in these verses. Consider these questions:

- Of all the things that God created, only humans are made in His image. How does that set us apart from other created things?
- What does that fact teach you about the kind of relationship God wants to have with us—even from the very beginning?

Read Genesis 2:4-7,18-22 in your Bible.

- What examples of the set-apart, intimate relationship God wants to have with His children do you see in these verses? Explain.
- Why is it important that we recognize that from the very beginning we were made to know God personally and be in fellowship with Him?

RESPOND

- Meditate on this thought: *God created humanity in His image even though He knew—even in the very act of creation—that He would have to redeem us.*
- God wants to have a personal relationship with you and provided the way through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Place your faith in Him. Read "The Gospel" on page 2 for more information.
- As Christians, God is continuing to conform us to His image, the likeness He has shown us in Jesus (Rom. 8:29). How can you see God at work in your life? If you don't see God conforming you into His likeness, ask the Holy Spirit to give you spiritual eyes to see God at work or reveal any sin that is disrupting your relationship with Him.

THURSDAY

6.5

A CARING CREATOR

PAUSE

Set aside anything that could distract you from focusing on God. Turn off the TV, your phone, and deal with anything that is weighing on your mind in prayer before you begin.

BEHIND THE STORY

Genesis 2:4 includes the first use of God's personal name, denoted as LORD, in English. The Hebrew spelling is transliterated as YHWH. The Jews considered the name to be so sacred that they would not allow themselves to say it. Its actual pronunciation is unknown, but suggestions include *Yahweh* and *Jehovah*.

God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This food will be for you. —*Genesis 1:29*

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper as his complement." —*Genesis 2:18*

Read through Genesis 1:26–2:25 carefully. As you read, look for the ways God showed His love and provision to humanity. Underline the instances you find and jot down any insights or notes. How do these examples help you to understand that God values humanity?

Consider these questions:

- Look at your notes and the things you underlined in your Bible. What do these instances teach you about God's attitude toward humanity?
- Consider Genesis 1:28. Why is it important that God gave Adam a job and a sense of purpose? Explain.
- Reread Genesis 1:29-30. How do these verses show God's provision for Adam and Eve? Why is it important that you understand God provides for His children?
- Read God's command in Genesis 2:15-17. How does God providing a boundary help you to see His love and affection for humanity? Explain.

RESPOND

- Think back over your life. Where do you see examples of God's love? Of His provision? Of ways He has met your needs? Thank God for how He has worked in your life, giving you direction, providing for you, and loving you.
- God sets boundaries in our lives because He knows what is best for us. Are there boundaries He has set that you're trying to ignore? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any ways you're living in opposition to God today. Confess and turn away from them today.
- For further study of God's provision and love for you, read Matthew 6:31-32; Luke 12:24; and Philippians 4:19.

THE POINT

From the beginning of His story, God has never been distant or uncaring toward His people. God values us, loves us, and cares for us.

FRIDAY

6.6

WITH PURPOSE

PAUSE

Read through Genesis 1–2 again. Ask God to guide you by His Spirit, helping you to see how this passage reveals God's purpose for humanity.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." —*Genesis 1:26*

The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. —*Genesis 2:15*

Read Genesis 1:26–2:25 in your Bible. Today, look for what this passage reveals about God's purpose for humanity. Underline any words or phrases that give you insight.

Debrief by thinking through these questions:

- God created humans in His image, which implies relationship and reflects His desire to know us. What does that teach you about His purpose for your life?
- God placed Adam in the perfect garden, a place meant to bring Him glory. How does that help you to better understand God's purpose for humanity?
- God gave Adam a job to do before sin entered the world. This means that work is good. How Adam lived his life—what he did and how he spent his time—was meant to bring glory to God. How would living with that mind-set affect your daily life? Explain.

RESPOND

God created Adam and gave him a purpose: to know God and to be a steward of all God had created. You are a steward, too. Think of all God has given you: salvation, resources, skills and talents, spiritual gifts, the gospel.

- Evaluate your life. Are you using what God has given you to bring glory to Him? Why or why not?
- Confess your desire to glorify God through what He has given you. Ask Him to help you have the courage and strength to do so, empowered by His Holy Spirit.
- Jot down three things you know God has asked you to be a steward of. List the steps you'll take to glorify Him, the Author of your story, with those things this week.

THE POINT

God created humanity with a purpose: to know Him and to live in a way that brings glory to Him.

MEMORY VERSE

Write Genesis 1:27 on your bathroom mirror in dry erase marker. Let it remind you every day that you are made in His image.

CREATED FOR COMMUNITY

PAUSE

Ponder this quote from John Piper: “God created us for this: to live our lives in a way that makes Him look more like the greatness and the beauty and the infinite worth that He really is. This is what it means to be created in the image of God.”

BEHIND THE STORY

The word translated as *complement* in Genesis 2:18 literally means that which is in front of him, implying a counterpart or equal. She is to be a helper (from the Hebrew word *ezer*), which stresses aid and support—and is even used of God Himself in Scripture (Ex. 18:4; Deut. 33:7, Ps. 46:1). The man and the woman have different roles, but those roles are designed to support and complement each other perfectly.

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper as his complement.” —Genesis 2:18

Now, look more closely at Genesis 2:18. God wasn’t saying that man was in some way bad, but rather that He had created humanity to exist in relationships with others. God created us to live in fellowship with Him, but also to build relationships with other humans. God created community—and He created us for community.

Ask yourself:

- God created Eve as a complement to Adam, someone with whom he could have spiritual, intellectual, and spiritual intimacy. She was someone he could be real with. Are there people with whom you can be absolutely transparent about your life? Who? Why did you select those people?
- If God created us for community, what does that teach you about the importance of the church?
- Why is it important to realize that God created us to live in community—in our faith and the work He has called us to?

RESPOND

- Who do you know who is trying to “go it alone” in the faith or live in isolation from the church? How can you reach out to that person this week, helping them to experience and see the need for true Christian community? Jot down three ideas.
- Who in your life needs someone to come alongside them and help them to truly live out their faith in a dark world? How can you be someone who invites transparency and honesty, while also pointing others to God?
- For further study, listen to “Carry the Fire” by Andrew Peterson (*Light for the Lost Boy*, 2012).

MEMORY VERSE

Recite Genesis 1:27 aloud from memory this morning when you wake up and tonight before you go to sleep.

THE POINT

God, the Author of our story, has hard-wired us for relationship. From the beginning, God created us to live in relationship with Him and with others.

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

THE PLAN

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| JUNE 1 2 Kings 24-25 John 3:1-21 | JUNE 7 1 Chronicles 11-12 John 6:1-15 | JUNE 13 1 Chronicles 25-27; John 8:12-59 | JUNE 19 2 Chronicles 10-12 John 12:20-50 | JUNE 25 2 Chronicles 26-27 John 18 |
| JUNE 2 1 Chronicles 1-2 John 3:22-36 | JUNE 8 1 Chronicles 13-15 John 6:16-40 | JUNE 14 1 Chronicles 28-29; John 9 | JUNE 20 2 Chronicles 13-16 John 13 | JUNE 26 2 Chronicles 28-29 John 19:1-16 |
| JUNE 3 1 Chronicles 3-4 John 4:1-42 | JUNE 9 1 Chronicles 16-17; John 6:41-71 | JUNE 15 2 Chronicles 1-2 John 10:1-21 | JUNE 21 2 Chronicles 17-19 John 14 | JUNE 27 2 Chronicles 30-31 John 19:17-42 |
| JUNE 4 1 Chronicles 5-6 John 4:43-54 | JUNE 10 1 Chronicles 18-19; John 7:1-36 | JUNE 16 2 Chronicles 3-4 John 10:22-42 | JUNE 22 2 Chronicles 20-21 John 15 | JUNE 28 2 Chronicles 32 John 20:1-18 |
| JUNE 5 1 Chronicles 7-8 John 5:1-17 | JUNE 11 1 Chronicles 20-21; John 7:37-53 | JUNE 17 2 Chronicles 5-6 John 11 | JUNE 23 2 Chronicles 22-23 John 16 | JUNE 29 2 Chronicles 33-34 John 20:19-31 |
| JUNE 6 1 Chronicles 9-10 John 5:18-47 | JUNE 12 1 Chronicles 22-24; John 8:1-11 | JUNE 18 2 Chronicles 7-9 John 12:1-19 | JUNE 24 2 Chronicles 24-25 John 17 | JUNE 30 2 Chronicles 35-36 John 21 |

STAYING FOCUSED

This month marks the half-way mark of EC’s plan to read through the Bible! It’s a good time to reflect on what you’ve learned and a chance to refocus if you’ve struggled to keep up with your daily readings. How can you keep the momentum as you read and study God’s Word each day? Here are a few ideas:

- **Change your routine.** Sometimes reading your Bible can become such a habit that it becomes something you do just to check it off your to-do list. Try changing the time, the place, or even the way you read. If you read the Bible on an app, grab a printed copy of the Bible or vice versa. Sometimes changing your routine can open your eyes to new things in His Word!
- **Remember that all Scripture is significant.**

Take some time to investigate how each passage relates to God’s overarching story in Scripture. How is that passage connected to other times and events? How does that passage point to Jesus and God’s gift of redemption? God’s Word is living and active and there is something to learn on every page. Ask Him to show you new truths as you study each day.

FAST FACTS: 1 AND 2 CHRONICLES

Reading through 1 and 2 Chronicles gives us an in-depth knowledge of the history of Israel from Adam to the Babylonian exile and restoration.

- According to ancient tradition, Ezra is the prophet God used to write 1 and 2 Chronicles.
- The books were written to help the Israelites reconnect with their history after they returned to Jerusalem from Babylonian exile.
- Throughout 1 and 2 Chronicles, it is clear that God sovereignly and faithfully led His people for hundreds of years. They were never outside of His knowledge and guidance. He led them through joyous moments, painful trials, and significant changes—always leading them to love Him more.

JUNE 1-7: Pray for those in your life who don't know Christ.

Intercessory prayer involves bringing that person and his or her needs before the throne of God. For those who are not Christians, the greatest need is salvation. Set aside time this week to pray specifically for friends, family members, classmates, or acquaintances who do not have a relationship with Christ. Pray that their hearts would be softened toward Him and that they would place their faith in Jesus, finding rest and purpose in Him.

Scriptures to pray: John 3:16-17; Acts 26:18; Romans 10:1; 2 Timothy 2:25-26

JUNE 8-14: Pray for other Christians.

Intercession is speaking to God on behalf of others. Take time this week to lift up Christian brothers and sisters. Pray for your youth group, church, and other believers in your community and world. If you know about specific needs or challenges they are facing, pray about those things specifically, asking God to work according to His will. Pray for boldness and courage to honor Him in every part of their lives. Pray that they may experience the peace and rest only He can give. Thank God for these Christian friends and praise Him for specific ways you see Him at work in their lives.

Scriptures to pray: 1 Chronicles 16:11; Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21

THE GUIDE: PRAYER

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: PRAYING FOR OTHERS

JUNE 15-21: Pray for your enemies.

In the Gospels, Jesus clearly instructed His followers to love and pray for their enemies (Matt. 5:44). This week, pray specifically for those who you consider enemies. Pray that you would see them with God's eyes, as people He loves. Ask God to help you love them and that He would rule in their hearts as well as yours. Pray for opportunities to show your enemies God's love through service.

Scriptures to pray: Colossians 2:2-3; 3:12-15

Prayer isn't about reciting a particular set of words or just about hearing yourself talk. It's a conversation with the God who created you and wants to have a relationship with you. To have a growing relationship with Him includes spending time with Him and learning to listen for His voice. So, seek after Him in everything you face, trusting that He cares and that He wants to guide your steps. This week, as you pray, set aside specific time to lift up the needs of others.

JUNE 22-30: Pray for the world.

As Christians, we aren't just to pray for other believers, but for unbelievers, those in authority, enemies, friends, and the church, among others. Set aside time this week to pray for Christians around the world, as well as world leaders and those in positions of authority or influence. Lift up particular people groups or areas of unrest, pleading to God on their behalf. Pray for missionaries at work around the world, as well as churches in your own community or state. **Scriptures to pray:** Colossians 1:9-13,18-19; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; 2 Timothy 4:2

Next month's prayer spotlight: Praying for your spiritual growth

WRITE IT OUT

Open your Bible to a passage of Scripture that God has used to speak to you during your devotions. As you meditate over this passage and what it means for your life, use the following prompts to guide your prayer.

REJOICE

What in this passage causes me to rejoice in who God is and what He has done? What does this verse cause me to want to thank Him for? Journal a short prayer that reflects your rejoicing.

REPENT

Continue reading the same passage. What does this verse reveal about your life? Does it reveal any sin or an attitude that does not honor God? Confess anything that comes to mind, asking God for forgiveness. Record a short prayer of repentance below.

REQUEST

How does this verse affect how you pray for yourself? For others? Request that God align your heart with the truth of what He has revealed in His Word or to help you live it out. Jot down your prayer below.

PRAYER REQUESTS

A place for you to record your own prayer requests or those from friends, family, discipleship groups, or others.

Date:
Request:

Date:
Request:

Answer:

Answer:

Date:
Request:

Date:
Request:

Answer:

Answer:

Date:
Request:

Date:
Request:

Answer:

Answer:

Date:
Request:

Date:
Request:

Answer:

Answer:

Date:
Request:

Date:
Request:

Answer:

Answer:

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

REST

THE BACK STORY

Our world just keeps going and going. Everyone around us stays busy and moves at a fast pace with little time for slowing down or rest. Imagine how busy God must have been as He created the world, yet Genesis 2:2-3 tells us that even our Creator rested. What else does the Bible have to say about rest? Read on to find out!

1 IN THE BIBLE, SOMETIMES “REST” IS CALLED BY ANOTHER NAME.
The word *Sabbath* comes from the Hebrew word *Shabbat* meaning to cease or desist. Sabbath is a day of rest considered holy by God. In the Old Testament, it became a day of worship, focused on God.¹

¹Trent C. Butler, editor, *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), 1216.

2 SABBATH IS A COMMAND.
In Exodus 20:8-11, God commanded His children to keep the Sabbath. Jesus honored the Sabbath (Luke 4:16) and also made sure He had time for rest (Mark 6:30-32). As believers, we are to follow Jesus and His example.

3 GOD SETS THE EXAMPLE.
The word *Sabbath* is not used in Genesis 2:2-3, but this is clearly the first example we see of Sabbath being practiced. God completed His work, then He enjoyed His creation. Since God Himself set the example of rest, we should follow it.

4 SABBATH IS REST FOR THE SOUL.
Throughout Scripture, we see God as being a place to find rest. In Psalm 23, David spoke of God making him “lie down” and “restoring his soul.” Jesus tells us to come to Him to find rest in Matthew 11:28-29. As you consider Sabbath rest and what that means for Christians today, remember that God alone is the place to find true and complete rest.

ITINERARY

Life is a tough balance of work and rest. Is resting the way God intended a struggle for you?

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU:

1. PLAN FOR IT.

Be intentional about creating time for rest. Pick a particular day that can be free from busyness and allow time to slow down. Even if you have to schedule it in your calendar or it is a different day each week, that's OK. Just make sure you have regular down-time for rest and relaxation.

2. FEED YOUR BODY.

Are you getting enough rest at night? Psalm 127:2 says, "In vain you get up early and stay up late, working hard to have enough food—yes, He gives sleep to the one He loves." Most people need 8-9 hours of sleep each night to function at 100 percent. Sleep is very important, so do not neglect a full night's rest!

3. FEED YOUR SOUL.

In a world of constant busyness, it is easy to put your relationship with Christ on the back burner. Make a point to spend time with God daily. Download a Bible app on your phone and read it between activities, listen to worship music as you are riding in the car, and pray continually. Also, don't neglect fellowship with other believers! Your relationship with Christ should be at the center of your everyday routine.

4. DO SOMETHING YOU ENJOY.

Make time for an old hobby, coffee with a friend, or learning something new. This will help give structure to your day of rest.

REMEMBER

It is God who set the example and commands Sabbath rest. Don't fall into the worldly trap of "me time" and make your time off completely self-centered. Use it to worship, give glory, and enjoy the One who created you!
—by Leah Smith

The Story Continues...

COMING NEXT MONTH: THE PATRIARCHS

THE LORD SAID TO ABRAM:
GO OUT FROM YOUR LAND,
YOUR RELATIVES,
AND YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE
TO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.
I WILL MAKE YOU INTO A GREAT NATION,
I WILL BLESS YOU,
I WILL MAKE YOUR NAME GREAT,
AND YOU WILL BE A BLESSING.

—GENESIS 12:1-2