

We're in this series looking at how we integrate habits of attentiveness to God. Last fall, we launched the habit of Silence and Solitude. This spring, we're launching Sabbath, and we're looking at how we cultivate rhythms of life in which our hearts are indexed towards God regularly. We will look in Deuteronomy, but first, a note on consumerism taken from an article at [pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org) entitled "The Rise of American Consumerism."

At the end of World War II, American soldiers were returning home to a country that was far different from the one they had left years prior. Wartime production had helped pull our economy out of the Great Depression. Young adults saw a rise in spending power. Jobs were plentiful. Wages were growing higher, and because of the lack of consumer goods during the war, Americans were eager to spend. In an effort to rebuild the shaky economy after the war, consumer spending was no longer considered an indulgence for material goods but rather was seen as a patriotic virtue, something to help carry and rebuild after the damage of the war.

Lizabeth Cohen, a historian, said, "The good purchaser devoted to 'more, newer, and better' was the good citizen. Since economic recovery after a decade and a half of depression and war depended on dynamic mass consumption economy." This shift introduced things like the assembly line. It brought mass production of goods.

The goal was to produce more, newer, and better. This shift gave a fledgling economy the jolt needed to rebuild after the war. But again, as economics 101 would tell us, too much supply with little demand is problematic. And so, in response, demand had to be cultivated within the people.

This created a new understanding of the way we engaged with the economy. The new need was for the average person to become a consumer. In 1960, the Austrian American psychologist and marketing expert, Ernest Dichter, published a book, *The Strategy of Desire*. A book I have not read, but Lindsay, my wife, who is a psychologist, pointed it out to me in my research. In this book, Dichter argues that marketing agencies need to unlock the unconscious desire within the person to drive consumer behavior. He writes, "The mobilization and manipulation of human needs as they exist in the consumer is the basis of all modern advertising and merchandising techniques."

By mobilizing the right needs at the right time, advertisers can trigger a chain reaction that will culminate in a purchase decision. If you've ever watched the show, *Mad Men*, you are

watching the work of Ernest Dichter played out in real-time. That show detailed the rise of modern advertising agencies, and they leaned into human psychology to understand how to manipulate human desire towards purchasing. What Dichter understood is that to be human is to desire.

Fundamentally, we are loving things, not thinking things. The reason you got out of bed is because you desired something. Big or small, desire fuels human life. It's the drive to get out of bed in the morning. It's the drive to go to work. It's the drive to continue raising your children, whatever it is.

If you pay attention to the inter-dynamics beneath human desire, what you quickly realize is that your desire is never satisfied. There is an infinite longing within you, a depth to your wanting that the author of Ecclesiastes 1:8 would say, "*The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.*" Or maybe you're more familiar with the modern translation from the great poet-philosopher, MC Jagger and Keith Richards. "I can't get no satisfaction 'cause I try and I try, and I try, and I try..." What we're left with is this equation that being the finite being that we are, plus an infinite desire, results in perpetual restlessness.

What Ernest Dichter understands, what the modern world understands, is your infinite desire for more placed on finite things can actually be monetized. Your restlessness is monetized. On a conservative average, we are exposed to 4,000 advertisements per day. That's nearly double the number in 2007 and over five times the number in the 1970s. And every single one of these advertisements is playing this equation out carefully cultivated and designed to leave you feeling unsatisfied unless you partake in that particular product. What is being sold? It's visions of rest. Pay attention to the images that come across your screens. Pay attention to the advertisements. What you'll notice is they're selling the very rest for your soul that Jesus has on offer for us.

Before you write all of this off, consider the fact that it actually works. I know I fall for it. I know you probably do too. We fall for the old carrot on the string routine time after time. We chase after more money, more clothes, more things, more square feet, more experiences, more and more and more because it's never enough. All of it is never enough. All of it culminates in this deep restlessness that leads to addiction, consumerism, and injustice. This is the worship of the God of accumulation.

Throughout this series, we've been looking at the twin gods of the modern age—accomplishment and accumulation. I'm using these terms from a pastor in Oregon, John Mark Comer, who

says, "The practice of Sabbath cuts between those and asks us, invites us, into a different rhythm and way of living in which it gets to the core of these gods of accomplishment and accumulation."

The question I hope you're asking is, "Is there a way out of this treadmill?" Is there a way out of this equation in which we're not caught with this perpetual restlessness, but rather as Jesus would offer in Matthew, that we would find the rest for our souls that we long for? Restlessness is indicative not of a finite being that needs to find more finite things but rather when we learn to rest in the infinite nature of God, we can satisfy the infinite longing in your heart.

How do we do this? Well, one thing that we are offering is this practice of Sabbath. I believe that Sabbath is an act of resistance against the god of accumulation. The practice of Sabbath is a way that we wage war against this restlessness, and instead, we take on the easy yolk of Jesus that brings rest for our souls. I think this is so imperative as we are in this larger vision process in which we want to become a transformed people transforming the peninsula.

At the heart of that vision is the belief that we are constantly changing. Those desires that are placed in your heart are constantly being waged war against within the broader world around us that are trying to form you into a certain kind of person. And in this, we believe that if we partner with Jesus in the work of our formation, we become more present to him through attentiveness in the renewing our mind, which will allow the Holy Spirit to do a transformative work within us.

But then, after that, we begin to participate in what God is doing in the world around us. Sabbath is just putting our stake in the ground and saying, here's the first way we create margin and attention to draw our minds toward the things of God. Because unless we cultivate a rhythm of attentiveness, unless we do that work, we move through life at such a pace that we slowly become more shaped by the world around us than the way of Jesus. This is the invitation. A couple of weeks ago, I used this definition for Sabbath, which we've been calling a working definition. It's in flux.

"Sabbath is the gift of regular rest and communion with God. An intentional weekly rhythm set aside to allow your soul to reconnect with God and disconnect from the world of distraction and hurry."

Three things regarding that definition. First, notice that Sabbath is a gift given to us. It is the gift that God has created, baked into the very order of the world. It's in that text of Mark where Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man. It was given as a gift to us to help us understand how our souls operate and how we live in that tension between work and rest, both dignifying the other. In resting, we dignify the role of work; and in work, we dignify the role of rest.

Secondly, notice in that definition that it is regular and intentional. It should be a weekly habit, something in which you bump into, something that, whether you're ready for it or not—Sabbath comes. That has been the biggest gift in my own practice of Sabbath; whether or not I'm ready, Friday night is coming, and so is my Sabbath.

Then thirdly, it disconnects us from the world of distraction, hurries, and restlessness. It disconnects us from that. It sets a day aside in order for us to live in a different type of rhythm. At its core, Sabbath keeping is about making us a peculiar people in this world, living according to a different rhythm, understanding, and living into time in a different way. One that is not organized and orchestrated by human need and desire but is organized and orchestrated by God himself at the center of everything we do.

It's what Walter Brueggemann, Old Testament scholar, would say, "Those who keep the Sabbath live the other six days differently." It isn't just about one day. It's about reorganizing the whole of your life in light of that day and God's presence in that moment.

Over the past few weeks, we've been doing a biblical theology of Sabbath, which means that we're walking through the biblical story and seeing the major moments in which Sabbath is discussed. Today, we pick up in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is made up of two different words. The first is *deutero*, which means second, and the second part of that is the word *nomos*, which means law. So at its core, Deuteronomy is the second giving of the law. And what we find today is we are at a different moment in Israel's history.

Last week, we looked at the Israelites at Mount Sinai, and that was a moment where God rescued them from Egypt, led them through the wilderness, brought them to Mount Sinai, and God is giving them the law in which they're understanding what it means to be human and how to live as God's distinct people. About 40 years have passed as they wander aimlessly through the desert, trying to figure out how to do this. They land on the edge of the Jordan River, about to cross over into the promised land, and Moses, with all the first generation of those liberated out of slavery, because of their disobedience and their inability to live into the covenant promises of God, were actually barred from entering the promised land. Moses himself is included in that crowd. He's standing on the edge of this river, and there's a new generation right there who need to hear the law again because, most likely, they hadn't received it or maybe they hadn't heard it as it was dependent on it being passed down through their family tribe.

Moses, in his final sermon, is saying, "I need to pass on this law to the next generation." This isn't their parents' generation. The audience is the first generation's kids 40 years later. If you pay attention to the biblical narrative, what you'll notice, particularly in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, God is really

concerned about our forgetfulness. Over and over, particularly in Deuteronomy, you see this reminder to not forget who they are. To not forget what God has done. In Deuteronomy 6, you see that part of the reason Moses is giving this law a second time is the fear of forgetfulness. Look at Deuteronomy 6:10. Moses, speaking to the next generation about to enter the promised land, says,

When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Deuteronomy 6:10-12

Moses is worried about the prosperity they were about to experience that would cultivate amnesia to their very own heritage and story. God is worried about the way in which they live in homes they didn't build and drink the wine of vineyards they didn't plant. God says to be careful. It's easy for us to forget who we are and where we came from. God is worried about this. Church, if we're honest, I think this is a warning for us as well as we sit on the West coast in one of the most expensive areas in the country, if not the world. Our own wealth can foster amnesia. It can numb us to our need for God. I wonder if the warning of Moses here could be a warning for us.

Also, church, be careful. Do not forget what God has done. Do not forget the way in which he has saved us. Do not forget the sin which he has forgiven of us. He says, be careful. He says, be careful because our own prosperity can swell up in amnesia.

Flip back to Deuteronomy 5:12-15. I want to read these, and I want you to try to pay attention and remember the way we read the command in Exodus. Much of it is the same, but some have been intentionally changed by Moses.

“Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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 ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, 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 of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. Deuteronomy 5:12-15

If you're a careful reader or a careful listener, you'll note a few differences in this giving of the Sabbath command compared to the one in Exodus 20, where Moses gave it to that first generation.

What I want to do is walk us through a side-by-side and point out those distinctions.

In Exodus 20, the very first word of the command in verse 8 is “Remember the Sabbath day.” That's the first. But here in Deuteronomy 5:12, it's changed to the word “observe.” Now the word “remember” in Hebrew is the word *zakar*; it means to be mindful of, to remember, to bring to mind. But it's far more than just recalling a past event. It has a connotation of living in light of that particular event. So in Exodus, as that first generation is arriving, it says, remember the Sabbath day, keep it holy, keep it set apart. You'll see this in the way we think through the word observe. The etymology of the word holiday comes from holy day. Think about the way we set aside a particular holiday.

This is why then, in Deuteronomy 5, Moses changes it to “observe” the Sabbath day. This is the Hebrew word *samar*, which means to keep, to watch, to preserve, to cultivate it. It's the same word that's given to Adam and Eve in the garden. When it says, watch over or observe the garden, it's an active word. It doesn't mean sitting back and just looking at it. It means cultivating it, building it, and preserving it.

Think of the way you observe a holy day, like July 4th, a holiday. You set it aside. Your work rhythms are different. You're probably grilling up some hotdogs; you're watching some fireworks and probably some baseball. It's set aside; it's different. In the same way, you think of the way you hopefully, maybe or maybe not, observe the speed limit, but in theory, to observe the speed limit is to come under its power and authority. It is to live within that. Moses says to this next generation, observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Set it aside. Come under its power and authority.

He says to this generation, “observe.” This is why the traditional Sabbath meal that begins the Sabbath begins with two candles. We actually do this in my family. It's been a fun tradition where usually the girls will fight over who gets to light the candles. We light one of the candles to remember the command and the second to observe. And then, throughout the day, those candles are lit and burning throughout our house. And every time I walk by them, I remember to observe the Sabbath. It's a traditional way to begin the Sabbath. That's been a fun way for our family to engage.

Deuteronomy 5:14 talks about how we should not work. *“On it, you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant...”* In Exodus, it says, nor your animals, but Deuteronomy expands it a little bit. It says, *“...nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigners residing in your towns...”*

Let's look at one more difference. This one's important. In Exodus 20:11 as Moses gives the rationale for Sabbath. *“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."

You see, in Exodus, the rationale for Sabbath is going and looking back at the Genesis story and saying that God built this rhythm into creation, and if we are to live with the grain of the universe, we need to Sabbath. God sabbathed not because he was tired, not because he was exhausted, but because he was creating and speaking into something about what it means to be human. Six days you work, the seventh you rest. Moses, at Sinai, speaking to first-generation slaves, says that this is what it means to be human. In Egypt, you worked and worked and worked and did that every day of your existence. But this God functions differently. God gives you six days to work and one day for rest. Moses says that this is why we Sabbath.

But notice here in Deuteronomy 5 that the rationale is different. Deuteronomy 5:15,

"Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day."

The rationale here in Deuteronomy is not the Genesis story. It's the Exodus story. Because he's speaking to the next generation, to the children of those that were in slavery, and says that they are going to enter the promised land. They will have all this prosperity. Houses they did not build. Vineyards they didn't plant. All of that will cultivate an amnesia in them if they are not careful, and God tells them not to forget that they were slaves. That was their story. He says, "Remember, you were slaves, and it is I who brought you out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm."

If we're going to live into this Sabbath resistance, we recognize our story as slaves. For this generation, it was "You are called to resist Pharaoh and that allure of empire that will be there beneath the surface." This in their story. Remember when they're wandering the desert, and they're complaining, "God or Moses, why'd you bring us out here to die? It was better in Egypt." And Moses says to this next generation, don't forget what God has done. Don't forget that he had brought you out of that slavery.

If we're going to see the significance of this, we need to spend a little bit of time understanding what was going on in that first generation. Because last I checked, most of us are not ancient Mesopotamians in slavery to Pharaoh, so a reminder of the story. For 400 years, the Israelites were in slavery to Pharaoh, and over and over, you see in the Exodus narrative, they were living according to this brick. They would wake up and make bricks for Pharaoh day in and day out. Over and over seven days a week, they made bricks for Pharaoh. Pharaoh and his regime were building these store cities to take the extra stuff and accumulation of what they had and place it in these buildings.

Most empires throughout history are built on the back of the marginalized, and so too was the Egyptian empire. It's built on the backs of slaves, which they found their life and their opulence in these things. The entire economic system was built to satiate the appetites of Pharaoh through the exploitative practices in which the Israelites were the recipient. Pharaoh took that infinite human desire placed within us, created by God to draw us towards God, but he had bought the myth of his own divinity. He believed himself to be God, and turned that desire inward. At the risk of anyone else, the empire was working its way back toward him.

See in an empire work is demanded without relenting. But rest is what happens when God sets you free. The Israelites Sabbath because they were free; that's what free people do. They didn't Sabbath out of duty and obligation. They Sabbath because God had allowed that freedom to take place with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Here's the kicker, Pharaoh, and his empire are alive and well. If you know the biblical story well, you know that Egypt is an archetype of an empire throughout the scriptures. You see that with Egypt, you see that with Babylon, and you see that with Rome. Yes, it's a historical setting, historical events that took place, but they become this archetype for what is down the road that depicts empire.

None of us are dealing with Pharaoh, but there's something inside us that is still permeated with Pharaoh. For the Israelites, as you see the story progress, there's a scene in Samuel when they're building the temple, and it says that they built the temple on the backs of forced labor. What is forced labor? Slavery. The people of God who were renewed, who were slaves once, liberated from that slavery, had become the very oppressors from which they were freed. And tragically, you see this throughout history, century after century, where you see the oppressed become the oppressor.

Pharaoh and his empire are alive and well. There's something within us that is still permeated with Pharaoh. The problem with Israel is they had been taken out of Egypt, but Egypt hadn't gotten out of them. They had been formed in a way to understand their existence through the same economic systems that had oppressed them. So they wrestle; they struggle with how to then become human. They longed to own, almost in a Stockholm syndrome kind of way, to be back in slavery. See, this is counter-gospel. The gospel of empire says you stop working and you die. The gospel of Jesus says someone died so you can live. You don't have to. God has done that work. He liberates us from that all.

See, again, like most empires throughout history; we end up dealing with this empire ethos in churches. We look at our own landscape. You look at America as the most powerful nation in the world. You look at China, one of the most powerful nations

in the world. We are living in an empire. I'm forever grateful for this country. Genuinely, I wake up every morning and think it is a gift that we wake up safe and secure, but we have to understand we're at the top of the economic power.

There's something in us, in the way we are being formed by Egypt. It's far more nuanced than the story I can tell in 20 minutes here on the stage of the tons of incredible amount of good that we've done. But we have to recognize the influence and how we understand our place in this world—a place without Sabbath, a place without rhythm. And I just wonder if Moses again is saying, "Hey, remember what the Lord your God has done for you."

Sabbath is an act of resistance that says, "I am not what I accumulate or accomplish." Sabbath is something that leans into our identity as image bearers of God and says, "I lean on God's ability, not my own." We talked last week about how living into this rhythm of Sabbath is literally rehearsing the gospel story. Adam and Eve, their first day of existence, is not a day of work. It's a day of rest. It's a day of rest in which they come before the Lord and the Lord has done everything for them already. This is the gospel. Not that if you stop working, you die, but that God worked, and died, so we can live. This is the gospel.

There are two things I want us to take away as we close. The first is in Sabbath, we remember we were slaves. Did you catch that? Not we are. Not that we might be liberated someday, but just like this second generation in Sabbath, we remember we were slaves. It's the offer of a former life.

On Sabbath, when we stop, and we cease from both all of our work and all of our accumulating and spending in all these different things. We live into a new kingdom under a new king, not Pharaoh in Egypt any longer. You live in a new reality. There are no more quotas, no more supply cities to fill. You are free. This is the offer, the rehearsing of the Gospel by Jesus. We remember we are no longer slaves.

We get this mixed up. The world understands freedom as the liberation from anyone telling you what to do, but here's the difference with biblical freedom. The biblical understanding of freedom is that you have the ability to say no to what you want to say no to. It's the ability to not be mastered by your desires, that infinite human desire, because it's been satiated in an infinite God. And so you have freedom as the slaves did, to say no to work. This is what Israel and the wilderness understood about Sabbath. That was an act of freedom. It was resistance against more and more and more. We no longer have to be enslaved to our malformed desires that are monetized for some other ends, but rather on Sabbath; we practice the liberation from slavery, the liberation into God's good world. This is the act of Sabbath.

On Sabbath, we also must resist becoming Egypt. We remember as the Israelites go into the promised land that they have to resist becoming like Pharaoh. Remember the other scene in

the Old Testament where they want and desire a king like all the other nations? They were longing to just blend in with the world around them. But God has said, "No, you live under a new kingdom with a new king. You are a peculiar people, and it is peculiar to practice Sabbath."

It is strange to practice Sabbath. It's, again, the joke I've made before, but when you go to Chick-fil-A today, it will feel strange that they're closed, or Crumble Cookie or Hobby Lobby, whatever you think of those organizations consider the fact that they give up millions of dollars of revenue a year because they want to slow down and be a peculiar company that functions differently. Sabbath allows us to live in this different rhythm. Look down at verse 14 in Deuteronomy 5, in both Exodus as well as here in Deuteronomy, and notice who Sabbath is for.

"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 ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do." Deuteronomy 14:5

Sabbath is for everyone, and we live in a way in which the web of our economic lives overlaps so that Sabbath can be for some and not for others. But this here, particularly in the ancient world, is a radical move that the world had never seen, that you would give your animals, your servants, your son or daughter, or even the foreigner residing within you rest. That was a move that set Israel apart in radical ways from the world around. It said you are not what you accomplish and accumulate, but rather, the people of God were to look out and identify the very image of God within the other and create Sabbath for them.

What would it look like for us to do this? I think it depends a lot on where you are within your working environment, within your organizations, and within your life. But what does Sabbath look like? What could it look like for you to help create Sabbath for others? In a very, very small way, I try to do this with our staff. I both model Sabbath rhythm and then also release them from any expectations. There is zero expectation that they should be checking email or Slack on Saturday and sending whatever it is. I try to create a space in which they, too, can practice Sabbath.

That sometimes means that my sermon isn't quite done by Sunday morning. I have to wake up a little earlier. Sometimes it means that everything isn't quite put away and tidied up on Sunday morning because most of our staff Sabbath on Saturday, but that's okay. We create that Sabbath rhythm.

What would it look like for you, if you're a corporate executive, to take the call to Sabbath seriously? In your company, could you institute Sabbath? Could you help out a family who has kids that are really young, and life is just on and on, and it's difficult? Maybe that means you take their kids for a few hours. Maybe it

means you help your neighbor with whatever work they may be doing. What would it look like for you to create Sabbath for those around you?

Because the Sabbath is for all of us, it is a communal focus in which we understand our identity within God's good world. We create and extend that Sabbath rest for others. See, Sabbath is your opportunity to connect and engage with God, but it's also the space in which we look out over the community and try to create Sabbath for all because that's the gift of Sabbath. It's what set Israel apart from all the others. So the first thing we remember is that we were slaves.

Second, on Sabbath, we remember that our identity is in God. Fundamentally remember you were slaves in Egypt, and God saved you with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. On Sabbath, we remember that we are not the fundamental accumulation of our accomplishments, but rather we are God's beloved children. And on Sabbath, we lay aside all the things we do throughout the week, all the purchases we make to find meaning, all of that. We set those aside to rest in the fact that our identity is in God. It brings us back before him.

Sabbath is one of those things that, as we enter into it and we observe that Sabbath exposes the idolatry of our hearts in a way where we can come back to the Lord and say, "God, I am yours and yours alone." It opens up our hearts to the ways that we have succumbed to the ways of the world. "God, renew me and refresh me."

It's an act of trust in which we recognize the work may not be done, but God is sufficient. God is enough, not my own efforts, not my own ability. Sabbath is an act of resistance against the world that says you are the center of the universe, that you are the master of your own creation, the master of your own destiny.

Sabbath resists a world that places the individual at the center and says, "No, God is there, and we find our identity in him." Sabbath is waging war against a world of restlessness. It's a stake in the ground, a line in the sand in which we say, "God has given me enough; he has saved me." It's a day not for more but to be content with what God has already given you. Sabbath resists the world that places us at the center.

So my hope as we continue to practice Sabbath is that you would come humbly to this gift that's been given to us. And as you find your rest in God, I pray that you'll also say, "Expose the idolatry within my own heart, the ways in which I've been formed by this world of more and more and more." And then, in that moment, as God brings all of that to the surface, could you lay it before

him and just say, "God, I need to be renewed of this. Take this, restore this. I confess the ways I've lost the plot."

Because church, we're not the first to lose the plot. The scriptures are littered with story after story of the people of God getting caught up in empire, caught up in the different ways of the world around them. And God invites us back, again and again, to say, "Lord, forgive us of our sins and heal us." That's the invitation of Sabbath.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

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