

Sabbath and Perfectionism

by Katie Kump

In the middle of my college career I first found Sabbath rest to be a relief rather than a rule. The message of God's power and sovereignty pressed deeply as I navigated the over-achieving culture at Georgia Tech. We were doing, having, and achieving it all. As a first-born, perfectionist, people-pleaser, my soul needed to know who God really was.

For the first time in my life I considered how Sabbath rest was meant to rightly swell my view of God, giving life, relieving stress, and demolishing worry. I found how expanding my heart with the glory of God was key to expanding my lungs with the very breath of grace. God of the heavens breathed life into my lungs and said, Trust Me. I gave Him my Saturdays, and Sabbath became the exhale of dependence. I could rest because He never needs to.

Keeping Sabbath means all my abilities and success are found in Christ.

When I graduated from college without a full-time job, I began babysitting to support myself while I figured out what in the world I would do with my life. I needed to make \$400 each week in order to pay for my rent, insurance, gas, and meals. When each hour of childcare represented one portion of my sustenance, turning down jobs seemed out of the question. My boundaries evaporated, and before I knew it, Sabbath rest had vanished.

It wasn't until I was exhausted, exasperated, and frustrated that I realized I was working seven days most weeks of the month. As soon as my time represented a dollar amount my bank account seemed to sorely need, God's sovereignty over all my time was forgotten. It took a lot of thoughtfulness and self-control, but I began to decline jobs so as to keep one day each week for resting. Sabbath was soul care. My generous God poured into me all the Love and affection I was paid to pour out into little hearts the other six days. I never went without.

Keeping Sabbath means He loves to provide for my every need.

In this current season of life, where full-time work and marriage and ministry vie for all my time and energy, Sabbath takes deeper meaning still. Sabbath reminds me I am in no way able to be all things to all people. My life is limited. But the limitations birth sweet reliance on my Maker; He is able to do exceedingly more than all I can ask or imagine.

My identity is freed by Sabbath rest from all its striving to be the perfect wife, very best friend, and brilliant homemaker. Sabbath reminds me my life is hidden with Christ in God. Sabbath, both the hard work and the harder rest, are the outworking of my trust in His promises: He who calls me is faithful; He will surely do it.

Keeping Sabbath means I am defined not by my performance, but by the sufficient, saving work of Jesus on my behalf.

In all these seasons Sabbath has been an idol-slayer. Where success, material needs, and performance could consume my heart with anxiety, Jesus, whose blood frees me from slavery to sin, has invited me to rest. Keeping Sabbath is not an added demand on my time or conscience.

Keeping Sabbath renders to God His own glory as I rest in the One who neither slumbers nor sleeps. And keeping Sabbath is a means of grace, an invitation to live in the freedom and love Jesus died to provide, humble King washing my feet and calling me His own, week in and week out.

Prayer:

Our Mighty Creator, who never sleeps or slumbers,

We pray for the strength to trust in you. May we remember you created us and called us very good. We may strive to be perfect, but this is meaningless, as you have already made us in your image. Lead us away from the temptation do everything and be everything to everyone. Help us to rely on you so we may truly glorify you and accept your invitation to keep the Sabbath.

In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Questions:

1. Describe a way when you felt overwhelmed or exhausted.
2. In what areas of life do you strive to be "perfect?"
3. In what sense is keeping a weekly Sabbath a sign that we trust and rely on God?
4. What idols may you need to slay in order to be a regular Sabbath keeper?