

Momentum for Life: Enjoy a Sabbath Day

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Introduction" A 2000 survey by *US News and World Report* says the price of prosperity is working harder than ever. Americans thrive on crazy hours, fast food and high tech energy.

Are we really that overloaded or is it just a figment of our imagination? Are we overloaded or is it just our perception? Are we just wimps?

Consider these statistics. People now sleep 2½ fewer hours each night than people did a hundred years ago. You're sleeping less than your grandparents did. The average workweek is longer now than it was in the 1960s. You're actually working longer hours than in the 60s.

We spend eight months of our lives opening junk mail, two years of our lives playing phone tag with people who are busy or who are not answering, five years waiting for people who are trying to do too much and are late for meetings. We're a piled on, stretched to the limit society. We are chronically rushed,

chronically late, chronically exhausted. You may feel like Job did in Job 3:26 *"I have no peace. I have no quiet. I have no rest and trouble keeps coming."* Anybody identify with that verse?

What is the solution? The solution is to put some margin into your life. Margin is breathing room. Margin is a little reserve that you're not using up. You're not stretched to the limit.

You're not going from one meeting to the next to the next with no space in between. Margin is the space between my load and my limit. Hopefully your load is not heavier than your limits. But the truth is that most of us are far more overloaded than we can handle and there is no margin, no margin for error in our lives.

Dr. Richard Swenson, an MD says this, "The conditions of modern day living devour margin. If you're homeless we direct you to a shelter. If you're penniless we offer you food stamps. If you're breathless we connect you to oxygen. But if you're marginless we give you one more thing to do. Marginless is being thirty minutes late to the doctor's office because you were twenty minutes late getting out of the hairdresser because you

were ten minutes late dropping the children off at school because the car ran out of gas two blocks from a gas station and you forgot your purse. That's marginless. Margin, on the other hand, is having breath at the top of the staircase, money at the end of the month and sanity left over at the end of adolescence.

Marginless is the baby crying and the phone ringing at the same time. Margin is grandma taking the baby for the afternoon.

Marginless is being asked to carry a load five pounds heavier than you can lift. Margin is having a friend carry half the burden.

Marginless is not having time to finish the book you're reading on stress. Margin is having the time to read it twice. Marginless is fatigue. Margin is energy. Marginless is red ink. Margin is black ink. Marginless is hurry. Margin is calm. Marginless is our culture. Margin is counter-culture, having some space in your life and schedule. Marginless is reality. Margin is remedy.

Marginless is the disease of our decade and margin is the cure."

But this cure is not anything new-about 5000 years ago God gave us the ten commandments. In these commands is the command

to rest-to put margin in our lives. Work 6, rest one. This is the fourth command. The Fourth Commandment is the longest of the Ten. Whereas it required only four words to give us the sixth Commandment--thou shalt not kill--the Lord used 94 words to tell us about the **Sabbath**. This commandment has also been the most controversial.

For momentum for life-for momentum to make it through 2010 we need to enjoy the Sabbath. We need rest. We need margin. So let's look today at what the bible says about a Sabbath. A margin. A time to rest. First; ask yourself what day is the. . .

Sabbath Day

Since the Old Testament commanded people to observe the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week,

Why have most Christian churches switched their day of worship to Sunday, the first day of the week?" At the very beginning, the church in Jerusalem met every day in the temple and in private homes ([Acts 2:46](#)). Since the first believers were all Jewish, it

seems safe to assume that they continued to participate in Jewish synagogue and temple worship for some time.

However, the New Testament makes it clear that the observance of a particular day was not imposed as a binding obligation.

[Romans 14:5-6](#) makes it clear that there was some freedom in the matter of special days. [Colossians 2:16-17](#) commanded the church not to allow anyone to act as their judge in regard to Sabbath days. And [Galatians 4:9-10](#) warns against going back under the Law by insisting on the legal requirement of special days. So more than likely the early church did not emphasize one special day-but the principal of work six-rest one.

In fact all of the ten commandments are repeated in the New Testament except one-to keep the Sabbath day! In Matthew 28:1 it say; *After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.* Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. He continued to reappear on the first day of the week; A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!". In Acts 2 some believe the

Holy Spirit fell on a Sunday. In Acts 20 and I Corinthians 16 we are told the church in these verse met on Sunday for worship. There is no Scripture passage that specifically teaches that the sabbath has been transferred from one day to another. It seems most likely that the shift from Saturday to Sunday was gradual, and took place along with the change from a mostly Jewish church to a mostly Gentile one. More importantly, it shifted to Sunday-as a reminder of the day Jesus rose from the dead, on the first day of the week.

Lord of Sabbath

²⁷Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Mark 2:27-28

All kinds of petty regulations were set up to safeguard the **Sabbath**. Ultimately, the day became the important thing, not the people for whom it was created.

By the time of Jesus, the **Sabbath** had become a burden, not a blessing. Strict rabbis had drawn up a lot of rules over the years, regulating everything. Some were ridiculous. For example, it was taught that there could be no work on the **Sabbath**, so a person must be still; he must not shave or ride horseback; if his ox fell in

a ditch, he could pull the ox out; if he fell in a ditch, he had to stay there. Eggs laid on the **Sabbath** could not be eaten; the hens had been working. If a flea bit a person on the **Sabbath**, he must not scratch it, but let it bite in peace, for to try to catch the flea would be hunting on the **Sabbath**. Once fire broke out in Jerusalem on the **Sabbath**. The Jews, afraid to work on that day, let it burn, and three people were killed. The day became more important than the persons it was designed to serve.

But when Jesus came, he reversed the idea, reminding people that human life was more important than rules or regulations or days. For this they sought his life.

When Jesus said he was Lord of the Sabbath, he claimed to be greater than the law and above the law. To the Pharisees, this was heresy. They did not realize that Jesus, the divine Son of God, had created the Sabbath. Jesus had written the fourth commandment—as God he knew the intention of the law! The Creator is always greater than his creation; thus, Jesus had the authority to overrule their traditions and regulations.

Sabbath Rest

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Hebrews 4:9,10

One of the **Sabbath** observances that are important for us to keep in mind is rest. Dr. William Dement, a Stanford psychiatrist, says that our cultural demands push us so hard that we are creating a "national sleep deficit." More than half the workers he surveyed admitted to falling asleep on the job. They get sick, lose productivity, have serious accidents, become depressed, and make bad decisions because they haven't provided themselves with adequate rest.

This is dangerous for everyone. He points out that the nuclear disasters at Chernobyl and Three Mile Island both occurred in early morning hours, in the middle of overnight shifts, when workers were at a mental low. The Challenger shuttle disaster followed an all-night discussion by exhausted launch officials. Thomas Edison has not helped. Before the light bulb was developed, people went to sleep when it got dark. Edison didn't help matters any by giving his own opinion that a good night's sleep was a waste of time. The recurrent **Sabbath** reminds us that

the rhythm of activity and rest are built into the scheme of things. SO PUT SPACE IN MY SCHEDULE. Circle “put”. You can’t hope for space in your schedule or pray for space in your schedule or expect somebody else to provide space in your schedule. You’re going to have to decide to build some buffer zones into your life, some downtime.

The fact of life is, the faster you go in life the more margin you need. Most of you in this room, your life is filled. Things are going pretty quickly in life. The faster you go the more margin you need. If you’re going 70 mph down the freeway, you want more than three inches between you and the other car don’t you? We need to build that margin into our life-the Sabbath is a reminder of this.

Sabbath a celebration of Creation

Exodus 20:8-11 says; “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ 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 manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹ 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.

The word "**Sabbath**" ("shabbat" in Hebrew) does not mean "seven." It means to desist or to cease or to rest. The word "holy" means "different." Therefore, we could render that sentence as follows: "Remember the rest day and keep it different from the other days."

Fifty years ago work was more likely done outside and being very physical-so for the Sabbath to be kept holy or different it was wise for them to spend time inside resting and studying. Today, a lot of people work like me from a desk reading, writing, meetings and answering mail forty plus hours a week. For me to make the Sabbath different or holy-it would not be wise for me take another 8 hours inside.

Especially when part of the original Sabbath was a celebration of all God created. For me and most moderns to keep the Sabbath holy-build margin by doing something different is to use this day to celebrate God's creation

Lee Pitts in the January 11 Fence Post article Naturally

Stupid writes, in last 20 years outdoor activity has declined by 20%. He goes on to say Doctors have named a new disorder-NDD-what is NDD you ask? Nature Difiency Disorder. He closes the article by saying: It's sad really, as American locks itself indoors few people will know the joy of a Sierra Lake, a Rocky Mountain High or an enchanting New Mexico Sunset. I would add it's even more sad, by being ignorant of creation they may miss their creator. That's why God wants' a margin to include a celebration of His creation.

Sabbath Good

Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." ⁴Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent.

⁵He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Mark 3:3-5

The Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking their law that said medical attention could be given to no one on the Sabbath except in matters of life and death. Ironically, the Pharisees themselves

were breaking God's law by plotting murder.

Jesus was doing a brave thing in Mark 3 healing the man in that place. Seated at the front of the synagogue were members of the Sanhedrin. It was their duty to see that no one, would deceive the people with false doctrine. Jesus was fully aware that his action went contrary to the interpretation of Jewish law concerning the **sabbath**. He knew that such laws were exceedingly strict. Even use of medical knowledge was against the law unless it was deemed necessary to save a human life. A broken bone could not be set.

Jesus excused his **sabbath** activity by pointing out how practical his hearers were in meeting the requirements of **sabbath** observance. They would make an exception, for instance, if one of their cows fell into a pit on the **sabbath**; they would rescue the unfortunate animal. So, to do a kind act of any sort on the **sabbath** was not to be condemned. The intent of the day was to bless humankind. It was to serve to bring one closer to God as a day of worship, and help one by observing a day of rest.

So ask yourself: "What good do we do on the Lord's day?"

To keep the **sabbath** holy is to let it produce acts of love on our

part. It calls for a positive, not a negative, discipleship.

People can attend church and, like the Pharisees, leave the worship of God without having love in their hearts. After spending time in God's presence on our Sabbath we should leave wanting to share God's love with all we come in contact with!

Sabbath a day of Worship

Luke 4:16 says: He (Jesus) went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. Circle the word Custom. The NLT translate custom as usual. New Century version says as he always did. Custom means Jesus attended synagogue every Sabbath.

We have so many excuses for not attending church: Churches contain hypocrites," "I've been hurt by petty people at church," I worship God in nature, and feel closest to him there."

Jesus went to the synagogue "as usual." Even though he was the perfect Son of God and his local synagogue undoubtedly left much to be desired, Jesus attended services every week. His example makes our excuses for not attending church sound weak and self-serving. Make regular worship a part of your life. Public

worship keeps God's Sabbath Holy!

Conclusion: There are dozens of benefits that we can talk about that come into our life and begin to build some space between my load and my limits. Let's take a quick look at at least four of them that immediately begin to happen in our lives. What happens when I build in a little margin?

1. I've got more peace of mind in my life. I'm not hurrying and worrying all the time. I have time to stop, to think, to relax, to enjoy, to smell the roses.

2. Better health. We all know that unrelenting stress harms our bodies. We all know that, yet we let it continue, day after day after day. Many times the only time we get margin in our lives is in the hospital. Why do we wait until our health plummets until we make this decision? Why not realize that now I need to build some margin in?

3. Stronger relationships. There's a lot of reasons for the collapse of the family in America today, but I say that one reason is we don't have any margin in our lives. A Sabbath

provides the time to listen, the time to comfort someone who needs to be comforted, just to enjoy people, to play with your kids.

4. It makes you available for God to use. Available to God to use to make a difference in this world. When you're overloaded, when you've got too much to do, you can only think of yourself. When you get overloaded you go into survival mode – "So if God does come and tap you on the shoulder and say, "I'd like you to do this. I can make a difference in your life through this," your first response isn't joy. Your first response is, "Oh, no! Another thing to do!

Bottom line is enjoying a Sabbath is an act of faith! It is saying yes to His ways. It is a reminder to us that; God can do more in twenty minutes than you can do in twenty years. Some of you have had some goals some dreams that you've been striving, seeking, working, hustling, hurrying for year after year after year. You haven't achieved it yet. Why don't you just back off a little bit? Relax, chill out. Trust God. Watch what He can do. He can do it a whole lot faster and a whole lot better than you can do it.

It all starts by you saying yes to Jesus! If this is your decision
come up front as we sing. If you need a church home to love and
be loved In come up front as we stand to sing!