

## Priorities of Faith

### DAY 9 — THE BLESSING OF THE SABBATH

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“If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” (Isa. 58:13, 14, ESV)

#### Sign of Our Identity

One blessing that truly matters for human life is Sabbath rest. The Sabbath day reminds us of our origin and that God is our Creator (Exod. 20:8-11). It also testifies to God’s graciousness as the loving Savior who delivered His people from the bondage of slavery (Deut. 5:12-15). As such, Sabbath celebration is a powerful sign of our identity as human beings. This identity is not derived from economic success or our level of productivity. Nor is our identity determined by whether we are employers or employees. The Sabbath is God’s invitation to rest in Him and enjoy what He has graciously provided.

The Sabbath, rightly understood, is an exercise in un-hurry. It teaches us to rest from rushing, performing, and achieving. It is a weekly declaration by my heart and mind that God is more important than my to-do list and my output. It acknowledges a shift in my priorities and makes visible my loyalties. Sabbath allows me to slow down and rest in God’s presence. It lets me enjoy His promise that He is enough. Although not engaging in mundane business activities on Sabbath is an important expression of our loyalty to God, resting in God’s love and care is far more than abstaining from work. Sabbath rest is fulfilled in our deliberate and meaningful communion with our Creator. When we learn to rest in the reality of God’s unfailing love, and when His goodness becomes our focus, we experience joy, shalom, and a desire to worship God with our entire being.

Thus, the joyful and faithful keeping of the Sabbath becomes a significant sign of who we are and whom we belong to. To practice Sabbath spirituality with moments of peace, joy, and calm requires much more than abstaining from work on the seventh day. It involves deliberate planning that prepares us during the week for the highlight of Sabbath shalom. As such, the Sabbath creates a meaningful counterculture that becomes visible in a distinctly different lifestyle. The Sabbath protects us from becoming driven by consumerism. Rather than striving to gain more and more in an endless race for power and dominion, we are invited to pause and honor God and His goodness and grace. This is a stark contrast to our pride and selfishness. By practicing the Sabbath, we become apprentices of Jesus Christ, who kept the Sabbath as was His custom (Luke 4:16).

To keep the Sabbath holy, to set it apart, and to dedicate it to God for His special purpose helps us to focus on what really matters in our spiritual walk with Jesus. Sabbath is not just a day to sleep in and do nothing; instead, it is a day to worship the only true God and thus becomes a meaningful sign that we have reoriented our lives toward the living God of Scripture.

Let’s pray together.

**Prayer Time (30–45 Minutes)****Praying God's Word — Isa. 58:13, 14**

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**"Call the Sabbath a Delight"**

*Father, what an incredible gift You have given us in the Sabbath. Thank You that we are not destined for a life of 24/7 busyness but that we were created to experience communion, shalom, and peace with You in a special way every seventh day. God, too often, we have made Sabbath the busiest day of the week and have lost sight of its purpose. Forgive us, please. Teach us how to keep the Sabbath holy and make it a delight for all in our sphere of influence. Amen.*

**"Not . . . Talking Idly"**

*Jesus, we give You honor and glory, for You are holy and worthy. Thank You that the Sabbath is a day in which we are freed to focus on You, Your Word, Your Creation, and being a blessing to others. Yet, too often, we have spent these holy hours filled with idle conversations and activities that do not honor You. Please forgive us. Teach us how to make the Sabbath uplifting, beautiful, and holy. Amen.*

**More Prayer Suggestions**

**Thanks and Praise:** Give thanks for specific blessings and praise God for His goodness.

**Confession:** Take a few minutes for private confession and thank God for His forgiveness.

**Guidance:** Ask God to grant wisdom for current challenges and decisions.

**Our Church:** Pray for regional and world church needs (see separate sheet with requests).

**Local Requests:** Pray for current needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

**Listen and Respond:** Take time to listen for God's voice and respond in praise or song.

**Song Suggestions**

*SDA Hymnal:* Day Is Dying in the West (#51); O Day of Rest and Gladness (#382); Wonderful Peace (#466)

*Other Songs:* This Is the Day; Surely the Presence of the Lord, A Temple Made of Time