

SEVEN⁷H WEEK DEVOTIONAL

monday**STOP**

Read Exodus 20:8-11

Sabbath means “the day that stops.” It’s set apart. *Holy*. Since God first instituted the Sabbath principle, it meant stopping the ordinary to fully attend to the extraordinary - remembering God’s faithfulness, trusting in his provision, celebrating his covenant promises, and even embracing social issues that matter to God. In the Sabbath year (every 7th) and the Jubilee (every 50th), it meant the forgiveness of debts, a time to refrain from farming the land, freedom for indentured slaves and blessing for the poor and landless. In reality, it’s a radical departure from the everyday. In principle, it’s a rest from what consumes us most of the time – our interests, responsibilities, diversions and demands. Sabbath is God’s way of giving us an opportunity to *actively and consistently* acknowledge that time, the world and its people are his. Is the Sabbath principle a reality in your life? What will you stop this week to be mindful of God and attend to the extraordinary? What needs to be free in your life? Whose “debts” should you forgive? Is there work that could wait until next week to give you more time for God? Will you be set apart from some of the entertainment in your life this week?

tuesday**POSSESS**

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-3, Isaiah 58:13-14

The Sabbath is a principle that was part of the Mosaic law. Is God an authoritarian who is just enforcing divine legislation – making rules and holding us to them? Who really benefits from obedience to God’s commands? If God doesn’t actually need our obedience, is it possible that his commands are a blessing? How do they benefit us? Pray for an obedient heart & the blessings that come from following Jesus, the one who has showed us what law-keeping looks like!

wednesday**AWE**

Read Psalm 29

Is your idea of God this big? Is he this powerful and full of splendor? If his voice has such power, are you listening for it? Pray that you will “magnify” God if your picture of him is too small. Pray that his voice will cut through the distractions!

thursday**AUTHORITY**

Read John 11

When you think of Jesus, do you consider his authority? When it comes to your losses, how does your time spent mourning compare to the amount of prayer? What role does “if only” play in your life? Even in his certainty about Lazarus’ life, Jesus was moved to tears by the atmosphere of suffering. What does this say about God? Do you believe Jesus has as much authority over the purposeful suffering in your life as he did in Lazarus’? Pray for a greater sense of Jesus’ authority!

friday**BREAD**

Read John 6:28-35 (or more!)

Just as God provided manna in the wilderness, he has given us Jesus as “bread” to live on. So often we “feed” on him only when we find ourselves in desperate circumstances. Our hunger for Jesus is ravenous when we have some serious needs. But what do we feed our souls on when things aren’t so bad? Could it be money, material goods, success, approval, other relationships, media? Does your spiritual diet reflect a daily hunger for Jesus or is your hunger guided by the urgency of felt needs? Are there other things you should “stop” feeding on that would make more room for the bread from heaven – worship and the Word? How might your thinking about God and your faith change if you did so? How might your response to trials change if you were steadily eating the bread of life? Pray for your appetite to increase!

saturday**YEAST**

Read Mark 8:11-21

Both the Pharisees and the disciples were missing the point in this passage, a case of misaligned focus. The Pharisees wanted a sign. The disciples were fixated on bread and on why they had forgotten it – possibly whose fault it was. And there was Jesus, the proven Provider, the Bread of heaven, in their boat! Like a pinch of yeast that can permeate a whole loaf of bread, their misdirected focus was endangering a truly faithful view of Jesus. What do you focus on that might diminish Jesus? Has anything crept in to harden your heart and weaken your faith? Pray for God to show you the yeast in your life that keeps you from truly seeing.