

What To Do When You're Overwhelmed

Introduction:

Good morning, Christian Life, let me just smile for a second...I'm so happy and grateful to get to preach the Bible to you this morning. When I was first asked to preach and when I found out the nature of the series, I thought to myself..."we must really be in trouble if they are asking an only-child, formerly homeschooled, nineteen-year-old college student who's not married and doesn't have kids to give an answer for a "what to do when...question".

The good news with all of that is, I can't speak much from my own experiences...so I have no other choice but to just speak from the Bible.

Before we really dive in, to just set the stage and maybe to ease my nerves, I want to talk to you about a concept I do have a lot of experience with...breathing.

Quick qualifier for that is that I have been competing in the sport of CrossFit since I was 12 years old. Throughout my time competing I have picked up many tricks of the trade. Hands down the best trick I ever learned was how to control my breathing. This allowed me to relax, stick to my pace, and also gauge how my competition was doing. Just because I love you guys, I want to reveal my secret breathing trick but you can't tell anyone. I promise all of this will make complete sense in a second.

Teach breathing rhythm with running:

People typically breathe erratically, which causes confusion/tension. (oxygen?)

The solution to this problem of erratic breathing and flight or fight is to establish a breathing RHYTHM. (helps you settle)

Most efficient rhythm is every 4 steps...we're cruising. (it's not EASY but its SUSTAINABLE) {if we do anything other than 4 steps we are likely out of rhythm}

We have to be intentional to stay on rhythm with our breathing. Otherwise, we are going to get overwhelmed and our performance will suffer.

What's true with running is true with life, but instead of breathing... it's rest.

We have to be intentional to stay on rhythm with our Sabbath rest. Otherwise, we are going to get overwhelmed and our performance will suffer.

That's what we are going to address today...**What To Do When You Are Overwhelmed.**

Some of us are CRUISING...keep going this is still important for you to hear but keep going!

My heart is concerned about how many of us are breathing every three steps?

My heart breaks about the people breathing every other step...how many of us are in trouble?

How many of us are overwhelmed, suffering, anxious, gasping for air, depressed, lacking joy? Asking ourselves, what the heck do I do?

There are many solutions but one of the least talked about but arguably most important ones is Sabbath. So for our purposes today the solution to what to do when you are overwhelmed is to institute a **rhythm of Sabbath.**

Transition: What does that look like?

History (OT context / NT context):

General Info:

Sabbath is derived from a Hebrew word meaning “cease” or “desist”. Sabbath is a cease and desist order. Are we really trying to take God to court? Historically it was a 24-hour period where all work stopped for the purposes of reflecting on God and being refreshed. We find Sabbath to have both a creation theme and redemption theme. This simply means that the Sabbath was present in the creation story (which is what we'll talk about in a sec) and that God uses the Sabbath as a way of redeeming His people. God had instituted a rhythm of 6 days to do work/1 day off...this is like our breathing.

Creation:

A quick survey tells us that the Sabbath does not start to originate in the 10 commandments but that the sabbath theme was present in the creation story: {Genesis 2:2-3...God states that he rested from his work and made that day holy}

The fact that the Sabbath rest appears in the creation story highlights to us that this is a theme that God intended to extend throughout all times..

Ten Commandments:

The Sabbath was signed into law when it was instituted as the fourth commandment {Exodus 20:8-11}

When Sabbath appears in the 10 Commandments given to Moses to give to the Israelites we must keep in mind that this was not to “bind” the Israelites. In fact, if we remember that before the 10 Commandments were given the Israelites were in slavery to Egypt 7 days a week with no rest. They were reduced to work. That was their only sense of value. They were defined by production (sound familiar?).

We can conclude that God intended for the Sabbath to be a gift of rest.

Penalty:

The fourth commandment....like any modern law...carries with it a penalty for violation.

According to the book of Numbers, breaking the fourth commandment was punishable by death Specifically by being stoned to death...where you get with big rocks until you die. Rough stuff. (Numbers 15:32-36)

This may seem harsh but we must see the sabbath through not just a creation lens but also a redemption lens. This harsh penalty was part of the process of cleansing Egypt from the Israelites. This commandment was actually seen as the main test of people's allegiance to the Lord. Can you leave all of Egypt behind? Can you leave your old way of life behind that was completely defined by work? Can you see how serious I am about the fact that I want you to rest in me?

Transition: so in the OT we see that Sabbath is a day that was holy and set apart from God, it is a cease and desist from God to us about working, it is a theme that God models for all people, in all times, and all places in the Creation story, it is a gift from God, and it was the main test of allegiance as willfully disobeying it would get you killed. In the NT we see a different story, although not THAT different.

The Shift:

The one big thing that we have to see as different from the OT and NT is that God now provided His people rest through a person and not a day {Matthew 11:28}

This doesn't mean that the Sabbath is no longer necessary for us to take (Pre-10 commandments) it means that you won't be stoned for breaking the sabbath. It also means that you can take a day off and still not rest because our rest is not found in a

day. To paraphrase a line from our Lead Pastor, "Rest is a connection to a person not just a day off...Glory to God."

Jesus Is Lord Over the Sabbath:

The last big thing that we need to understand contextually about the NT Sabbath is how Jesus described His relationship to the sabbath day.

In the beginning of Luke 6, we see Jesus and his disciples do two things that ticked off the Pharisees (religious leaders)...shocker. The first incident was when his disciples harvested some corn because they were hungry. The second incident was when Jesus healed a man who had a withered hand. To both incidents the religious leaders balked at Jesus saying that He and his disciples had broken the Sabbath law. Jesus both times responded with a variation of this answer. "You have made the Sabbath about your holiness and not about God's holiness. You have added to the Sabbath and made it bondage when it was meant to release people from bondage. You have forgotten who you are dealing with, "I am the Lord over the Sabbath".

The "Big Takeaways" for Sabbath:

- 1-The Sabbath is a cease and desist order from work. 6 on / 1 off
- 2-The Sabbath was present in the creation story.
- 3-The Sabbath law was written as a gift of rest.
- 4-The Sabbath death penalty was a redemptive measure in the OT.
- 5-In the NT, the rest found from Sabbath is found in a person.
- 6-Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath.

Transition: Now that we have some established historical and legal framework for the Sabbath we can look at this fascinating story from the NT that puts the Sabbath concept on display.

Mary/Martha Story:

38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. **39** And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. **40** But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." **41** But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, **42** but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." {Luke 10:38-42}

Things to know and see:

-There are two personalities/two rhythms to see here...one is a work first {guilty as charged} this is getting out of rhythm with our breath | the other is a sit first.

-The problem in this story is not that Martha took action and that Mary did not immediately join. The problem is that Martha took action out of rhythm. She got so enthralled with work (work for Jesus that is) that she lost sight of learning from Him. Especially for my brothers and sisters who serve in ministry in any capacity, we should NEVER let our work for Jesus distract us from our love for Jesus. Martha became overwhelmed/short/complained because she worked from the wrong rhythm.

-When Mary “chose the good portion” it wasn’t implying that Martha “chose the bad portion”. It was written to suggest that Martha chose something good but Mary chose something better. Martha was right to prepare but she prepared in a way that was out of rhythm. Mary kept the rhythm of listening and resting first before you work.

-Quote from a commentary that I thought was especially important for this message to highlight the importance of balance and rhythm: “A church full of Mary’s would be perhaps as great an evil as a church full of Martha’s. Both are needed, each to complement the other.”

Transition: we’ve surveyed what sabbath meant in both the OT and NT. We’ve looked at a case study from the NT. Now...the moment we’ve all been waiting for...how can I practically put this into my life today? How can I practically and efficiently use everything that I learned today to answer the question of “what to do when I am overwhelmed?”

Modern Application {From Emotionally Healthy Leader}

I took the language of these applications from a book called “Emotionally Healthy Leader by Peter Scazzerro”. I would HIGHLY recommend this book to anyone even if you aren’t by title a “leader”. These are meant to be guidelines and not move you into legalism.

We should prayerfully consider and intentionally make a 24 hr period happen where we can make the following happen:

Before I move on though I want to address a potential wall that just went up. I know some of us may think, but I own a business, but I have kids, but I have a full-time career. I know I’m a single 19-year-old guy, I don’t know what any of that is like, yes I am busy, yes I have a lot on my plate too but I don’t know firsthand your experience.

What I do know is this, we humans are quick to filter things through a lens of “can’t”.

Why is it that when we hear messages like “rest” and “sabbath”, we are quick to list every reason why we in particular can’t do that? Instead of filtering through the lens of “can’t”, let’s take all things in context and think about what we CAN do. Our health, our happiness, our productivity, our family, and our life are too important to not make an intentional effort.

1- Stop work: cease all work paid and unpaid. This is hard and requires an intentional choice. Remember though that Jesus himself participated in acts of mercy and healing on the Sabbath. Jesus worshipped on the Sabbath. So the Sabbath is not an excuse to be a sloth. Let me call myself out for a sec: Cole, the Sabbath is not a Netflix binge day. Or if you’re holier than me, a PureFlix binge. **The Sabbath is a day where you stop paid and unpaid depleting work.**

2- Enjoy rest: accept the invitation to rest and engage in activities that restore and replenish us. The Sabbath is not a day reserved for cleaning, mowing the lawn, and taking care of chores. But if cleaning, mowing the lawn, etc...truly refresh us and replenish us then go for it!. The key here is to be restored and replenished by your activities not depleted. We also must be reminded that enjoying rest is about being intentionally connected to Jesus and rest is not found in a particular day.

3- Practice delight: enjoy the beauty of life and creation (God said it was very good). Delight is a choice. We can choose to be so upset about the traffic on Old Fort that we miss the fact to delight in a beautiful sunny day. We can choose to be so upset about the kids, dogs, and people being ridiculous and dramatic that we neglect to delight in the fact that kids are a gift from God, dogs are significantly better than cats, and we are also human. This is kinda like the adage of “look on the bright side”. To practice delight is to **make a choice to shift your perspective and to find the beauty in all aspects of life.**

4-Contemplate God: We don’t take a sabbath from God, Sabbath is intended to draw us closer to Him. ***The Sabbath is truly an act of worship because it denies our fleshly desire to be defined by our work.*** The Sabbath is a realization of our limits and an expression of our dependence on God. We should create space for us to meditate on God, journal, think, and overall just be appreciative. **If our Sabbath doesn’t include some dedicated time to just spend with the Lord and reflect on Him then it is not a Sabbath. It is a day off.**

This is a FRAME WORK...progress slowly.

Transition: At this point, I want to bring us on our descent. I want to land the plane. And I want to **invite everyone to stand with me**. I also want to address one final thing...why some of us may hear this message and never put into practice a Sabbath rhythm. Why I struggle to put it into place. Why some of us may be very uncomfortable.

Conclusion:

At the root of this is an identity issue. Its a heart issue. I know circumstantially you may legit not have 24 hours to take a rest. I'm not denying that. Neither is God. But I do want to say is that there are so many of us, like me, who have the ability to take a Sabbath and we don't. We choose to fill it, because if we stop grinding for a day the competition will beat us. If I stop working I am not productive. I am nothing. If I don't produce, I am worthless.

The author of the book I mentioned earlier addressed this point. He mentioned that one day he went to talk to a friend of his who was a renowned Christian Counselor. The author told his friend that he had become so frustrated when he would talk with Pastors and Christian Leaders about Sabbath and then he would see no change in their life. The counselor, unfazed, dropped this phenomenal line:

"They can't stop. If they stop, they'll die. They're terrified. They're frightened to death of what they'll see inside themselves if they slow down....Something so much deeper is driving them, but they just have no idea what it is."

The counselor went on to describe that the "deeper" driving factor in most was shame. Because these leaders had identified with "discipline" and "productivity" and it was shameful for them to stop.

How many of us does this describe? How many of us in our genuine sincerity would say that we need to repent for our busyness? How many of us have become overwhelmed because we have allowed ourselves to be defined by our results?

These are all LIES. Some of you in here may have never been told what I am about to say but please hear this. You are so much more than your ability to work. You are so much more than your ability to produce. You are a child of God. That is your identity. Nothing more and nothing less. You should work hard. You should also rest hard. If you're in here this morning asking what to do when you are overwhelmed. The Sabbath isn't law written to constrict us. The Sabbath is a gift written to help free us. I hope to have shown you that the answer is to take a sabbath rhythm.

Let's pray together