

# HEALTHY REST

By John Richardson

## SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:1–3

*[1] Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. [2] And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. [3] So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.*

## OBSERVATION

What is biblical rest? Does God want us to take a day off from work and catch up on our TV watching or maybe just nap on the couch? Rest is a very fluid word in our society, so much so that biblical rest can be confused with generic rest.

- Everyone knows that God does not get tired and cannot be exhausted in work, therefore one must consider the idea of God resting. When people rest, they are depleted or exhausted, so they need time to recharge. In the first verse God has completed the creation of the heavens and earth. The work is complete, it lacks nothing, He did not create it and now it is evolving. God finished His work and although finished, He is still intimately involved in the world's function (v. 1).
- With all of the work completed, God did something unimaginable—He rested. The definition of rest will inform what God was doing at this time. God didn't rest to recharge; He actually rested to reflect. If you listen to a symphony orchestra, sometimes you hear a solo instrument such as a flute or violin. That solo is a rest for many of the other instruments; they pause as a means of highlighting something. The other instruments gradually begin playing again, flowing back into the music in an ever-growing song. The rest is not permanent, but it is necessary to highlight different sounds. God rested/paused to highlight His creation. The work was finished, and He decided to enjoy and highlight all that He had created (v. 2).
- God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. The seventh day is not special without God making it special. Here God was not instituting the Sabbath that would come later in Exodus 16; instead God was highlighting His work. God doesn't place the emphasis on the seventh day for rest; He emphasizes the holiness of the day—holiness meaning God sets this day apart for Himself. The whole day is given over to God. One must ask if keeping the Sabbath is required by man. No, keeping the Sabbath was part of the law and man is no longer bound by the law;

man is bound by grace (Romans 7:6). Keeping the Sabbath is holding onto a day, while rest is given throughout all of the Bible. Jesus calls people to rest in Matthew 11:28-30 meaning spiritual rest now and eternal rest forever.

- Man's response to the rest found in Genesis 2 is to follow the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27-28). God rested because His work was sufficient; we rest because God's work is sufficient. Rest in trusting that God has everything covered. Rest is a time of continued reflection on God and all of His work.

## **OBEDIENCE**

The goal of rest is not to increase church attendance on Sunday. Rest finds its end in every believer reflecting on God and how He worked, is working, and will work. Trusting God every day is resting in Him, understanding that He is working all things together to continue the work of redemption.

- Rest is not more time in front of the TV or out on the lake. How will you reflect on God and His work this week? Spend time truly resting in Christ.
- Share the hope of rest (spiritually now and eternally later) with those around you who are wrestling with fear/anxiety.
- With all of the time that many of us are given in these days, spend it doing more than catching up on projects or resting physically. Set goals to lead your household in worship. Seek to redeem the time by keeping a journal of the work that God has done in your life.
- Look over your schedule and set time aside to pray that God will move you to greater trust in Him.

## **PRAYER**

Pray for how you will spend your time in honoring God. Ask for rest from God. Thank God for His holiness and how we are called to be holy (set apart) for Him this week.