
**“Finding Balance Between Work and Rest”
(Genesis 1:26 - 2:3)
Pastor Peter Yi
November 22nd, 2009**

Introduction:

NiV Genesis 1:26 – 2:1

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

It's been a couple weeks since we last looked at the subject of work and vocation. Let me give you a quick recap of what we covered. We established that work is inherently good because before sin entered the world God gave Adam and Eve work to do. And because it is good, we mustn't view work as something negative or just as a necessary evil. And we also said that all work is of equal worth before God. We cannot say that one job is more valuable than another job. As people who have been brainwashed by our parents that some jobs are better than other jobs, we really have to trust God on this one.

Then we looked at how we should work. And we established that all the work we do we are doing it for Jesus. He's our Lord, our ultimate boss and we will be held accountable to him. Then because we are working for Jesus we should work with sincerity, honesty and integrity. And finally we should just plain work hard. That becomes our strongest witness as Christians in the marketplace.

And then we invited all of you to offer your attitudes about work and yourselves as workers before the Lord, which I believe many of you did.

Today we're going to look at the often talked about but not so successfully accomplished topic of balance between work and rest. Finding balance in life is like hitting a moving target. It is very elusive and even though we may never find perfect balance or if we do, it lasts but a moment, we

can still live lives that are more balanced and that kind of life does a few things. It honors God. It allows us to know God more deeply. It strengthens the relationships that matter most to us. And it puts us in a place where we can be better used by God.

If you're new to the world of work, finding balance can be very disheartening. The freedom you once experience in school has now become a regimented life that is set primarily by the expectations decided by your work. Whether it's a job that's 9-5, five days a week, or a job where you don't even have the luxury of looking at the clock or it's because you're taking work home, we all begin to struggle with this word called balance. And as our lives progress the balancing act becomes more and more difficult. We can throw into this mix things like work, rest, friends, dating, more schooling, family, marriage, children, church, ministry, hobbies, health and exercise and whatever you might allocate your time to. But the more things there are the harder it becomes to find balance. It's like juggling tennis balls. One ball, no problem. Two balls, not bad. Three balls, difficult but with some practice doable. Four or more, and it all comes crashing down.

And then you consider today's uncertain economic climate where some companies are cutting 40% of their employees. And they forecast those layoffs so that everyone is looking over their shoulders and praying that when those cuts happen that it doesn't include them. So everyone puts their nose to the grindstone and works and works and works with no certainty that your job will be spared.

Today's message on balancing between work and rest, of finding and taking Sabbath, might on one hand be very difficult for you to hear, but it also might be one of the most important things for you to hear, especially because of how work is these days.

Finding the balance between work and rest begins with God and it begins with the creation story.

For six days God created all that we know to exist, culminating in the creation of human beings. After creating us he gave us work to do. Name the animals, rule, steward the creation, and start a family. And here's how the story continues

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

After God's work of creation, God rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Why did God rest? He didn't need to rest for himself, that's for sure. Even Jesus of God that God is always at work. (Jn 5:17)

God didn't rest because he was tired. That's ridiculous. Look at what God does with the 7th day. He blesses the 7th day and makes it holy. And the reason he blesses it and makes it holy is because he rested from his great work of creation.

So there's the foundation. Now let's jump forward to Exodus 16 and make a connection. In Exodus 16 the Israelites are wandering through the wilderness to their land of rest, to the land of Canaan, and during the journey God feeds them with bread from heaven called manna. And do

you remember the manna collection instructions he gave to the Israelites on the sixth day of every week? Collect a double portion.

23 He said to them, "This is what the LORD commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. (Exo 16:23 NIV)

Why? Trust and faith that God is our daily provider.

Then we jump over to Exodus 20. Do you remember what happened in Exodus 20? Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments. It was when God made a powerful and intimate covenant with his people. And here are the ten rules that God wants his people to abide by. The first 3 have to do with the people's relationship with God. The last six have to do with their relationship with others, but the fourth command is a bit different because it's one of those commands that relates both to God and to oneself.

⁸ "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.

(Exo 20:8-11 NIV)

So what is God saying about Sabbath? Well the instructions are clear. Work real hard, labor and do all your work for six days. But on the seventh day, it is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. It's a day for God. And so what are we not to do on it? Basically, don't do what you did during the six days? Don't work.

And then God makes the connection with creation. V11. So in the creation story, God worked for six days and rested. And now in the Ten Commandments God says to his people, work for six days and then take a break. Now, how many of you when you hear that feel burdened? If you do, then there is something wrong with our thinking.

1. We may feel that we don't deserve rest.
2. We may not have the faith to trust that I can successfully do my job in six days.
3. We may not have the faith to trust that I will be able to provide for my family by just working six days.

If you're still not convinced then hear the words of Jesus, The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). Listen to those words. It takes some time to let the meaning sink in. Are you getting it? What is Jesus saying? God didn't give us the 7th day so that we could be burdened with rules and regulations and work and more work. God gave us the 7th day so we could rest because he cares for us. He cares for our physical well-being and our spiritual well-being.

So if coming to church is a burden, if taking a break is a burden, if refilling your spiritual and physical tank is a burden, you have the wrong idea of Sabbath and rest. And you might then have the wrong idea about God himself. God loves us. He knows we are finite. He knows we need to take a break.

Just as an aside.

Is Sunday the Sabbath? Technically, No.

But the creation order, and mosaic command of rest I believe is interwoven into the fabric of humanity.

So we mustn't become legalistic about the Sabbath as if there are some rules to abide by. We don't say we have to go to church on Sunday because it's the Sabbath. No we say we really should go to church on Sunday because Acts 2 and Hebrews 10 say that is part of the Christians spiritual cycle. We don't say you're sinning when you work on Sunday. We say instead, for your spiritual and physical health, you need to take a day off to recoup.

If you're not convinced listen to these words by the Apostle Paul.

¹⁶ Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.

¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. (Col 2:16-17 NIV)

⁵ One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

⁶ He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. (Rom 14:5-6 NIV)

The Sabbath is for rest, not for rules. I hope you are beginning to understand the spirit of the Sabbath.

Sabbath purposes

1. To remind us we are finite.
2. To give us rest.
3. To teach us how to live by faith.
4. To help us value and appreciate work
5. To remind us that God loves us.
6. To remind us of the Creator.
7. To test obedience.
8. A reminder of the divine timetable.
9. Social concern for beast and man.

In Summary. Reasons for Sabbath. Vertical and horizontal. Social and theological.

Practical ways we can rest.

Tell yourself and believe that God created you not only for work, but also for rest. It's okay to rest.

The need to simplify life. And in order to simplify we need to evaluate. Many of us don't think we can rest because we are overextended. We have too many commitments. Too many financial debts. Not enough time. Not enough energy. Simplifying, decluttering your life, will help you rest better.

What if I don't rest? God will get your attention. You're body will begin a quiet and then a more loud protest. The people around you will tell you.

Take 15 minutes every day to be still before God. If you have young children, husbands help your wives to have that time every single day.

Engage in Sunday. You have this awesome opportunity to meet God in community, a worship team that has prayed and practiced to make this a Spirit-filled time for each of you. You have a sermon that takes hours to prepare, thoughtfully and prayerfully crafted, so that the Spirit of God would speak to you.

Rest well. In my not so humble opinion, television is not good rest. Video games are not good ways to rest. Good rest I believe includes good physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual contact points. Think about it. Those are the ways in which Jesus grew. (Luke 2:52).

I'd like all of you to stand. And the band is going to come up and lead us in a song. And I'd like you to get into a posture of receiving rest from God. Hands out and palms up. Close your eyes for a moment and let me read a scripture for you.

Matthew 11

28"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Let's sing this song.