



## Sabbath // Slowing & Ceasing

When John Ortberg asked Dallas Willard what he must do to become spiritually healthy, Willard said, “*You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.*” When Ortberg asked, “*And what else?*” Willard simply said, “*There is nothing else.*” These are the gifts of the practice of the Sabbath: to step into spiritually healthy rhythms and learn to walk in step with God who does not strive and is not in a rush.

The Sabbath is a full day set aside every week to stop, rest, delight, and worship. We practice Sabbath first because we desire to become like Jesus. This means arranging our daily life around his presence and values. Jesus’ spirit of restfulness, calm, and kindness is the spirit of the Sabbath. To habituate ourselves to the practice of Sabbath, we begin by *slowing down and ceasing* from our busyness and sense of hurry. Read through the practices below and consider how to engage in them this month:

### Choose a Sabbath Day

- Practice Sabbath on the same time and day each week to build the habit.
- Set aside 24 hours, if possible. If not, try 8 hours (the equivalent of a workday), e.g. 8am-4pm.

### Decide in advance what you will cease from

- Work related to your day job is the obvious one, but you might also set aside tasks that are overstimulating, numbing, or causes of stress, such as social media, errands, or TV shows.
- Consider putting your phone on Focus mode and limit notifications.
- Consider how to slow your pace, perhaps by planning fewer activities or giving yourself more time to get places. How can you eliminate hurry and integrate stillness into your day?

### Set aside a “slow down” time

- Designate an hour (or more, if needed) to prepare logistically and spiritually for the Sabbath
- Create a “hold” list of any to-do’s on your mind or any potential distractions
- Decide if you need to finish any errands now, such as grocery shopping, paying bills, etc.
- Pray and journal over any anxieties on your mind

### Start with a ritual of Scripture reading and contemplation

- Suggested readings: Psalm 8, 27, 33, 62, or 139; Matthew 11:25-30
- Journaling prompts:
  - What are your hopes for this Sabbath?
  - What are the lingering anxieties you’re leaving behind today?
  - What do you need from God to enter into his rest today?