

# Buy A Cabin—The Theology and Practice of Rest

## A Discussion Guide

### PART I—THE THEOLOGY OF REST

#### 1. In God's Image

- Do you agree that theology is “a logical understanding of how the teachings in the Bible fit together” (Chapter 1) and is “a building of your own making” (Appendix A)?
  - Could your theology be wrong?
  - How can you improve your theology?
- What is the significance of a working-resting God?
  - Thought experiment: What if God was an impersonal life force or did not exist?
  - How has God's work-rest nature effected the design of all of creation?
  - How does this impact you, who are made in his image?

#### 2. What is Work?

- Describe the relationship between work and food in the Dominion Mandate (Genesis 1:28-29).
  - Is this applicable today since there are so few farmers?
- Do you equate “work” with “pay?”
- Is ministry work?
  - Describe your ministry.
- Can you improve upon this definition of work: “Activities that provide for your needs, your family's needs and the needs of others.”

#### 3. The Purpose of Rest

- Do you understand how God can be refreshed by rest (Exodus 31:7)?
  - Is this only a metaphor, i.e. a figure of speech that cannot be literally applied to God?
- How are you refreshed by rest (Exodus 23:12)?

#### 4. What Did Jesus Do?

- Describe how rest was mandated under Mosaic Law (i.e. the Old Covenant)?
  - Was a specific practice of rest required prior to Mosaic Law?
- What was Jesus' response to the charge that he was a Sabbath breaker?
- Did Jesus rest? How?

#### 5. Rest Freedom

- Do the apostles write about Sabbath rest?
  - What do they say?
  - How does this relate to the larger issue of the Christian and the Mosaic Law?
- What is the principle that should guide the Christian's rest...and everything else?

## **6. Future Rest**

- Do you agree that the work-rest order extends throughout history—the Creation, Old Covenant, New Covenant and Re-Creation periods? Why or why not?
- Is the “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13) referring to the intermediate state or the final state?
- What is the biblical evidence for future work in the Re-Creation?
- How does an expectation of future work and rest shape your perspective of your current work and rest?

## **7. Take a Deep Breath—Summary Pause, No Questions**

## **8. Two Buckets**

- How do you categorize the things that you do?
- Are work and rest labels a new concept to you?
- What difference do your labels make?

## **9. Secular Work**

- Do you consider your work to be “secular?”
  - If you do, does this shape how you value your work?
- Did Jesus require his followers to change vocations?
- Did the Protestant Reformation address this issue?
- What kind of work will there be on the New Earth?

## **10. Spiritual Rest**

- Describe the spiritual realm using biblical texts.
- What is a “spiritual” man (1 Corinthians 2:13)?
- Give an example of how Jesus explains a spiritual truth by relating to the physical world.
  - Does Jesus conclude that physical things are worthless or, at least, worth less?
- What is the writer of Hebrews point about rest in chapters three and four?
- Do you think that you do not need rest because Jesus is the spiritual fulfillment of rest?
- Is asceticism commanded or condemned in the Bible?
  - Give an example from Christian history of when it was practiced?
  - Has asceticism influenced evangelicals? How?

## **11. Worldly, Earthly Fleshiness**

- Do you agree that World, Earth and Flesh have both positive and negative connotations in the New Testament?
- What is the danger of only emphasizing the negative usage of these terms?
- What is the danger of only emphasizing the positive usage of these terms?
- What difference will this make on your perspective on rest?

## **12. Theology Complete—Summary, No Questions**

## PART II—THE PRACTICAL THEORY OF REST

### 13. Painting with Mr. Churchill

- Do you agree that “change” and “concentration” are the essential elements of rest?
- Describe the rest activities that are most refreshing for you?
  - What re-charges you the most—exercise or repose, travel or retreat, solitude or gaiety?
- Give an example of how one person’s work can be another’s rest.
- How does marriage and children necessitate an adjustment to your rest activities?
  - Do you ever rest with your family or only apart from them?
- Are you working when you are thinking about work?

### 14. Unconcentrating

- What are the greatest challenges to rest at this time in history? Why?
- How do “gizmos” effect your rest?
  - What are you going to do about it?

### 15. No Time for Rest?

- While reading this book, have you thought: “I don’t have time for rest?” Why?
- Do you assume that work and rest subtract from each other (i.e., more work = less rest and more rest = less work)?
  - What happens when you redefine work from “time *at work*” to “productivity?”
  - What happens when you redefine rest from “time *at rest*” to “refreshment received?”
  - Does rest become a multiplier of rest?
- Are you in an Exhaustion Spiral because you are trying to minimize rest in order to accomplish more work?
  - Are you overworking in one area to avoid your responsibilities in another?

### 16. What Am I Doing Under the Cabin?

- What is rest worth to you?
  - How much time and money do you spend to buy it?
  - Are you getting a good return on your investment?
- Do you have some “useful rest” activities that provide for some need?
  - Are these work or rest? Why?
- If you have children, do you think of them as all work? Should you?
- Why is knowing whether you are working or resting important?

### 17. The Fellowship of the Exhausted

- Do you agree than many paid Christian workers overwork on their jobs?
  - Is this a cultural expectation in the Evangelical community?
  - What are the results?
- What about the unpaid? Do they under rest? Why?
- How can a church or ministry promote a balance of work and rest?

## 18. Idleness Revisited

- Why is idleness not rest?
  - Do you consider some of your rest to be idleness or vice versa?
- Is your gizmo an enabler of your idleness?
- If you are enslaved to pornography (or another addiction), how can you break free?

## 19. Structure

- How is your structure (i.e. your habits) related to your rest?
  - Describe your structure style. Are you a Maria, the Captain or someone else?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses of various structures in the practice of rest?
  - Do you keep trying in a structural pattern that doesn't fit (like devotions in the morning)?
- Describe a "change point" you have experienced and the structural adjustment it caused.
  - Was this for the better or worse?
- Share how you have "put off" one habit and replaced it by "putting on" a better one.

## 20. The Rest-O-Meter

- Do you practice Sabbath observance? How? Why?
- Show how the Rest-O-Meter displays your work, rest and idleness through a typical week.
- How should you compensate for a particularly intense work period?
- Do you typically slip into idleness from working or resting too long?
- What is the difference between imitating someone's virtues and mimicking their structure?

## 21. Resting With God

- Is your devotional time primarily characterized as "working for God" or "resting with God?"
  - Describe the difference.
  - Does this question upset you? Why?
- If it is mostly work, what can you do to experience more rest in the relationship?

## 22. Lower Your Expectations

- How should the fall of man (Genesis 3) temper your expectations for work and rest?
- Do you "live to work" or "work to live?" If so, should you?
- How do you handle disappointments?

## PART III—THE EXPERIENCE OF REST

## 23. Reading for Pleasure

- Do you read for rest (i.e., for pleasure)?
  - What type of books do you enjoy the most?
  - Do you try new genres?
- Do you have objections to reading for pleasure?
  - What are they?
  - Are you willing to defend them?

- Is reading productive rest?
  - What are its benefits?
  - When does it become destructive rest?
- Have you built reading time into your structure?

#### **24. Get in the Game**

- When are sports work?
- When used for rest, describe the elements of change and concentration.
  - Both for playing sports and watching sports.
- How does anger and frustration effect the refreshment value of rest?

#### **25. Going Somewhere Else**

- Share an interesting travel experience.
- Why is traveling so refreshing?
- What type of traveling is appropriate for your current stage of life?

#### **26. Roughing It**

- Have you had “roughing it” adventures?
- What was your purpose for them?
  - Was it rest?
  - Why or why not?

#### **27. The Cabin**

- Do you have a “holy” place—a place set apart for rest?
  - Describe it.
  - How important is it to you?
- Do you have both solitary and communal times of rest?
  - Have you learned to enjoy both of them?

#### **28. Everything Else**

- Share your best rest activities.

#### **Final Thought**

- What do you look forward to? Describe for:
  - Daily activities.
  - Weekly activities (including weekends).
  - Special activities (holidays, vacations, etc.)