Session Six: The Sabbath

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

Matthew 7:24-25, ESV

What is the outcome of striving for 1 Corinthians 16:13-14? Of praying to become a man who is on guard, able to stand firm in the faith, courageous, strong, and doing everything in love? The book of Matthew recounts a story Jesus used to distinguish between two types of men—one with a sturdy house built on rock and another with an unsteady house built on sand. When a storm came—and they do come—the house on the rock stood. This is the house of the 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 man.

Being “founded on the rock” means putting into practice what God is teaching us (Matthew 7:24-25). However, this kind of wisdom goes far beyond obedience. To be “rock solid men” means living in the joy of knowing Jesus Christ as our rock and redeemer. Operating out of duty and performance leads to burnout, but operating out of a relationship with the true Rock leads to freedom. What are you operating out of? All of us fall somewhere on this spectrum:

Law −−−−−−−−−−−−−−Liberty−−−−−−−−−−−−−−License

When we operate out of the Law, or rule-following, we find little rest for our souls, and guilt and obligation are our key motivators; our identity isn’t in Christ, but in our own effort. When we operate out of license, we take advantage of the grace that has been so richly given to us and remain willingly in sin; we experience a lack of growth and intimacy with God, and our identity may be more in the world than in Christ. Instead, the rock solid man finds the truth between these two extremes, operating out of liberty that is fueled by both grace and obedience.

Consider This...

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KEY PASSAGE

Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

—James 1:16-18, 22-25, NIV

MEMORIZE THIS

Rock Solid Tool: The Sabbath

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

—2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV

When your life is built on the Rock, you are a new creation! Your ultimate hope is in Christ, not your own effort, work, or will power. It is finished. The Sabbath is a regular time set aside to intentionally rest in this truth. Let it refresh and inspire you.
Talk About It

1. How did you do on last session’s Rock Solid Challenge?

2. Think about a storm that hit you at some point in your life. Did you feel like you could weather it on steady ground? Why or why not?

3. What are you operating out of in your Christian walk most of the time? Use the scale below and discuss.

   Law  Liberty  License
   1  2  3  4  5

4. What does James say is the outcome of obedience? What does it give us?

5. Do you feel like you can rest in what Christ has done and is doing in your life?

6. Do you feel burnt out—spiritually, emotionally or physically? If yes, what could alleviate it? How can the other guys be praying for you?

ROCK SOLID CHALLENGE:

Set aside time to be refreshed.

Sabbath means rest. For centuries, theologians have discussed at great lengths the Sabbath as a command and its implications for a certain day of the week. For this study, we are focusing on its purpose, and the responsibility and privilege we have to enjoy a regular time of rest. Jesus reminded the Pharisees and his disciples, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27, NIV). The Sabbath is a gift to us, meant to refresh us physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Why is it so hard for some of us to regularly take a break from busyness and work? Patrick Morley writes, “The Sabbath expresses our trust in God’s provision. Our obedience communicates that our faith is in God—not in ourselves. By resting we say, ‘I believe God will take care of me. I don’t always have to be scrambling. I can trust Him’” (A Man’s Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines, 84).

Be intentional about setting apart time for rest this week. Make this a time to be refreshed and refocus on God and His provision. For now, don’t think about a strict set of rules for what you can and can’t do during this time—God is always interested in your attitude and motives. Whether your Sabbath includes napping or exercising, solitude or time with family and friends—or all of these things—consider the end result: are you rested and closer to God?

In the 1981 Best Picture, Chariots of Fire, based on a true story, Olympian Eric Liddell says, “I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure.”

What helps you feel God’s pleasure? What stirs your affections for God and refreshes you? Make time for these things.

Activity Idea

Go back through the activity suggestions from the previous weeks. Was there something you wanted to do as a group that you didn’t get to yet? Schedule it for some time in the near future as a way to check in with each other and catch up!