



## WEEKLY STUDY

### WEEK 2

In the second week of our series on Practicing the Way, we identified one of the many traits that make up the Way of Jesus—how to rest. He was simply living out God’s commandment to observe the Sabbath which is the idea of stopping on the 7th day of every week. God Himself modeled this at creation as we’ll read below. The Father and Son both practiced Sabbath and we have received the commandment to practice it as well. So what is it? May your time of prayer and study this week and next bring you a greater understanding of what it means to experience God’s gift of rest.

Peace of Christ,  
Dr. Mark Youngman  
Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt. Pray this or another prayer as you move into your day.

*God,  
Teach me to rest.  
Show me the space to steal away and be with you.  
Guide my practice and give me grace  
Amen.*

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### DAILY STUDY

#### MONDAY: MATTHEW 11.28-29

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

- In true Jesus fashion, we are invited to lay our burdens down *and* to take up a yoke (something that is placed on beasts of burdens) at the same time! Jesus is redefining the category of yoke, and redefining what it means to rest. Jesus is gentle and humble in heart so practicing his way will

lead us to find rest for our souls. **Do you desire rest for your soul? How is that rest different or the same as rest for your body?**

- *Jesus, thank you for this groundbreaking gift of rest in you. I come to you now seeking sabbath joy. Amen.*

## **TUESDAY: GENESIS 2.1-3**

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

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

- We can't know all there is to know about God. God is mysterious even though He has made Himself known to us. But it makes sense to say that God didn't have to rest. The infinite God did not get so exhausted by making the earth and everything in it that God couldn't continue. But God chose to rest and thereby established for us a pattern that was meant to inform our practices and lead us to a full life. **What prevents you from resting after a season of labor?**
- *God, you have given me the gift of Sabbath. Guide me to a new or increased practice of resting in you.*

## **WEDNESDAY: EXODUS 33.12-14**

*Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.'"<sup>13</sup> If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."*

<sup>14</sup>*The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."*

- God is reiterating a call for Moses to lead the holy people of Israel to the promised land. It was the calling of Moses' life and it involved leadership in hard times, exhausting travel and extreme patience. He wanted to know who was going to be on his side, and God told him "I will be with you." And in the middle of the long journey to the promised land, "I will give you rest." **Have you ever been part of what felt like a monumental task? Who was with you? How did you find rest?**
- *God, let me hear the words you shared with Moses. May they be for me today. May they be a reminder that you offer me rest in the middle of hard things. Amen.*

## **THURSDAY: PSALM 4.6-8**

*Many, Lord, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?"*

*Let the light of your face shine on us.*

<sup>7</sup>*Fill my heart with joy*

*when their grain and new wine abound.*

<sup>8</sup>*In peace I will lie down and sleep,*

*for you alone, Lord,*

*make me dwell in safety.*

- One of the things that can keep us awake and on the run is fear. We fear that we won't have everything we need. We fear that someone or something will come up against us. But we are most

at home when we delight in the good things we have, the joy in our hearts and the peace that comes from knowing we are safe. That home is God. **When or where does the light of God's face shine on you? When is your heart most filled with joy? As you enter into your times of rest or Sabbath, let this Psalm by your prayer.**

- *God, Let the light of your face shine on me. Fill my heart with joy. In peace I lie down and sleep for you are my place of safety. Amen.*

#### **FRIDAY: ISAIAH 40.28-31**

*Do you not know?*

*Have you not heard?*

*The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.*

*He will not grow tired or weary,  
and his understanding no one can fathom.*

<sup>29</sup>*He gives strength to the weary  
and increases the power of the weak.*

<sup>30</sup>*Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;*

<sup>31</sup>*but those who hope in the LORD  
will renew their strength.*

*They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint.*

- We gain strength when we worship a God who does not grow tired...but rests anyway. We can turn to God and know that God will meet us in our moments of fatigue and weariness. We can know that God will meet us in the moments that we are about to stumble. Everything we need for the journey of following after Jesus is waiting for us in the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. **In what areas of your life are you at most at risk of succumbing to an overwhelming sense of fatigue? Which part of this passage most seems to address that?**
- *God, will you renew me today as I rest in you? Give me strength for I have put my hope in you. Amen.*

#### **SATURDAY: MARK 6.30-31**

*The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup> Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."*

- Jesus and the disciples were witnessing a great movement of God. People wanted to hear and see all that God had done through this man Jesus. Surely it was tempting to power through and fight through their hunger and fatigue. But Jesus knew better. Jesus was there at creation and experienced the rest of the original Sabbath day. **What guardrails do you have in your life to help you stop and rest? Do you have someone whom you've given permission to tell you when it's time to stop and eat?**
- *Jesus, I long for an experience like the disciples shared with you. Draw me to a quiet place and give me rest. Amen.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Pastor Mark quoted the study we will be using for our Monday night Practice the Way experience of Sabbath. Walk through each suggestion and share what it means for you. Can you begin to picture what a practice of Sabbath might look like for you?

### 1. **Start small.**

Start where you are not where you should be. If a full 24 hours is like the craziest thing you could ever think of. Start with a half day. If that's too much, start with a few hours. Start small. I believe God will bless that.

2. **Think subtraction, not addition.** Please do not "add" Sabbath to your already busy, overfull life. Think: what can I cut out? a house project, emails on the weekend. This practicing the way of Jesus and this is crazy is going to mean doing less not more.

### 3. **Remember the J-Curve**

The J curve is a principle of learning, learning something new. It means it gets harder before it gets better. Like a golf game, or lifting weights. So don't be surprised if you have been an overbusy person or family if this has a lot of starts and stops and awkward moments and difficulty, but keep practicing.

4. **There is no formation without repetition.** Spiritual formation is slow, deep, cumulative work that takes years not weeks. The goal of what we are talking about with practicing the way is "who is up for following Jesus on a journey for a lifetime?"