



SABBATH

Countercultural Practices | 7.27.25

Haley Terry

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Haley Terry 0:00

It is so good to be with you this morning. My name is Haley, like Steve said, and I'm so excited to share with you about the practice of Sabbath. And I want to start out by talking about a characteristic of Jesus that I have caught on to, as I've been reading through his life in the Gospels. It's this characteristic that Jesus was very interruptible. If you look at a lot of stories, he's often going and traveling from one location to the next, and somewhere on the midst of his journey, he gets interrupted by people. Now what stood out to me is not just that Jesus gets interrupted, but it's how he responds to these interruptions. If you look at a lot of these stories and these so called interruptions, they often result in miracles. I think of the story of the healing of the bleeding woman in Mark five, the healing of the blind beggar in Mark 10, the healing of the man with leprosy in Matthew eight, Jesus heals, forgives and restores time and time and time again, and these interruptions are met with his compassion And with his presence. There's a theologian named Kiyaki Koyama who spent a lot of time studying what he called the pace of God. And it's this concept that Jesus, God incarnate, physically walked the earth no more than three miles per hour. And Koyama describes this that God walks slowly because He is love. I'm so struck by this pace of God and by the compassion that Jesus extends to people who are interrupting his journey, because I see such a stark contrast from this in our hurried, anxious, often angry culture, the Lord has been kind to me to reveal areas of my own life that if I weren't to slow down, if I weren't to stop, my heart posture may be tempted to be led astray from compassion to contempt. And if you're anything like me, it's so easy to get stuck in the standard pace of society, which moves way faster than three miles per hour. I know for a fact I walk faster than that, and I certainly can talk faster than that. We are bombarded by these devastating news cycles. We're expected to wear burnout like a badge of honor. We get caught up in this relentless pursuit of success. We have a heightened sense of productivity, and we have social media all around us telling us what we should look like, how we should behave, what we should buy, how we should vacation, what our families should be like. And my guess is, if I were to ask any one of you in this room how you're doing today, your response would be something like, I'm good, just busy. The pace of our culture is so fast, and they've actually coined a term called hurry sickness. I'm going to roll through just some of these symptoms and just see if any of these feel familiar to you, irritability, hypersensitivity, restlessness, workaholicism, emotional numbness, out of order, priorities, lack of care for your body, escapist behaviors and isolation. I translation. The reality is, most of us, if not all of us, are feeling really exhausted. We're moving at a pace of life that is unsustainable to the kingdom of God, and it creates infertile ground for what God is trying to grow in our souls, love, joy and peace. The author John Mark Comer, he writes that love joy and peace, they're not just pleasant feelings. They're actually the kind of people we become as we apprentice to Jesus, who embodies all three, love, joy and peace are at the heart of all Jesus is trying to grow in the soil of your life, and all three are incompatible with hurry. There is a problem with the pace of many of our lives, and the cost is the health of our souls. A theologian John Ortberg puts it this way, that for many of us, the great danger is not that we'll renounce our faith, it's that we'll become so distracted and rushed and preoccupied that we'll settle for a mediocre version of it, that we'll actually just skim our lives instead of living them. But the way. Joy of Jesus is life, abundant life, and so many of us have the desire. We crave this abundant life that overflows with love and joy and peace, and yet we're tired and we crave rest. And Jesus knew this. He famously invited us in Matthew 11:28, to come to Him, all who are weary, and he will give you rest, or how. Eugene Peterson paraphrases he writes, are you tired? Are you worn out, burned out on religion, come to me. Get away with me, and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me, work with me. Watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't weigh anything heavy or ill feeling on you. Keep company with me, and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. So this morning, we're going to talk about the spiritual practice that will help us become aware again of God's presence and His invitation to rest, not even just for a day, but to step into a spirit of restfulness, Sabbath, or in Hebrew, the word Shabbat, it actually means to

stop and to delight. It's this beautiful gift of humanity that's introduced all the way back in Genesis two, where after God creates, he rests on the seventh day. He declared that day holy, and he blessed it and sanctify it and set it apart. God actually modeled for us what it looks like to embrace rhythms of rest. And I can't help but connect the dots between the rhythms of rest, of Sabbath and what Eugene Peterson called the unforced rhythms of grace, this gift of Sabbath, setting aside a day for God's purposes, a day to humbly surrender our attention to him, our will to him, to abide in His goodness, a day to become aware again of who you already are in Christ, this kind of Sabbath Day is necessary for reorienting our entire hearts and centering them upon him. It's actually about participating in the life and love of God himself.

Haley Terry 7:28

In the time of Jesus, many of the religious leaders at the time were arguing about Sabbath and about the rules and regulations that they were creating to make it a certain way. And so in Mark Two, Jesus responds to this conversation, and he says that the Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath. There are some of us in this room who need to hear that second half. That Sabbath isn't this legalistic workbook where you check all these boxes to get it right, but I think there's a lot of us in this room that actually need to hear the first part, that Sabbath is made for us, that it is a gift to us, freely given by our Creator who knows us best, by the Creator who created the days themselves and knows best how to use them. In Luke six, we see that Jesus actually refers to himself as the Lord of the Sabbath. And I love where he goes in verse six. In Luke chapter six, because he gets right to the heart of the Sabbath. If you have your Bibles, you can turn Luke six, verse six says, On another Sabbath, He entered the synagogue and was teaching a man was there whose right hand was shriveled. The scribes and the Pharisees were watching him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath so they could make a charge against him. But he knew their thoughts, and he told the man with the shriveled hand, get up and stand here. So he got up and he stood there. And then Jesus said to them, I ask you, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do evil to save life or to destroy it? After looking around at them all, he told the man, Stretch out your hand. And he did, and his hand was restored. They, however, were filled with rage, and started discussing with one another what they might do to Jesus. See, Jesus longs to bring healing and restoration, no matter the time or day, but what I love in the story is that he gets right to the heart of Sabbath, that Sabbath isn't about rules and regulations. It's about restoration. See, we may not have physically dried up hands and shriveled hands like this man, but many of us, if we are honest, that is exactly the state of our souls. Our souls have become shriveled up and dried up and we are depleted in. US, and the culture around us is a lot like the Pharisees that were filled with rage by witnessing this restoration. The enemy would love nothing more than to keep you from restoration. He would love nothing more than to keep you from living your life from a place of restfulness in Christ and so like I said at the beginning, the Lord has been very kind to me in revealing a need for slowing down, and actually a need for Sabbath in my life, I'm going to be honest, this is a difficult practice to start. It feels unproductive and forced at times, and what I've realized is that the very fact that I found it so hard to Sabbath was the exact idol that the Lord was wanting to knock down in my life. For me, this rushed, hyperactive, over committed schedule was just becoming the norm, and the busier that I got, the more distance I felt from God and the crankier I was with people around me, and it's actually the practice of Sabbath that brought me back to myself and who I am in Jesus. It's this practice that the God, that God used to water the parched desert of my soul. And it's looked different to me, whether I was single or married with young kids, but what I've recognized becomes consistent whenever I make this a rhythm for me, is that I actually lean into being human, accepting my limitations. I take myself off the throne of keeping the world together, and I lean into the sovereignty of God. And what I found is I actually delight in being fully alive. I delight in depending on God. I delight in His goodness and how he's orchestrated the world and how he's made me I find delight in this practice. Now, Sabbath is not about perfection. The goal isn't actually to practice Sabbath. It's not really about being well rested and happy. Sabbath is actually about God and how God forms us. And so if you've never practiced the Sabbath or in the past, you felt like this is really burdensome for you. I want to go through the super helpful framework from the work of Pete scazz arrow and John Mark comer, they've created four guiding points for a Sabbath day that are not legalistic, but are really, really helpful in getting practically started with this stop, rest, delight and worship. We have to actually be intentional about Sabbath, like all of these practices, we actually have to incorporate them into our lives, and we have to make the active choice to stop and go against the cultural tide. It's not about adding more into your week. It's about making space for what is most important, and stopping and stepping out of this rat race that we can get so entangled in, it helps us to remember our humanness and our dependency on God, and that living from there is so much better to Sabbath we have to resist The internal restlessness that we feel of discontentment, striving, anxiety, we have to say no to some good things so we can say yes to better things. Resting on Sabbath is about releasing the belief that you have to earn love. It's about resting in who you already are in Christ and remembering that you're already loved before you've done anything productive or successful, and that there's nothing you can do to be more loved. Marva dawn a theologian, as she reflects on her Sabbath experience, she writes, As I spend the day

reflecting on the character of God, I'm overwhelmed by his love for me as I feast upon His goodness in all its beautiful forms, I realize more profoundly that I am a special part of his creation designed especially for his purposes and a uniquely beautiful way. Once you've stopped and you begin to rest in your soul and remember who you are in Christ, you actually begin to delight. Sabbath is about experiencing and delighting in who God is and who we're created to be. It's about reflecting and looking at the incredible, beautiful world around us. And I'd argue that this is especially important now, where at any moment's notice, we can just see such horrific and devastating news cycles. We need a time weekly where we are sitting and resting and remembering that our God is good and that the world is beautiful and true. It's about actually curating a worldview that sees the world as beautiful, good and true for how God created it. As Comer writes, we actually get to delight in God Himself, in the access we have through Jesus' death and resurrection and the coming of the Spirit, we enter into the inner life of the Trinity. He says that through all the practices, but especially Sabbath, we get to participate in the flow of love, joy and peace that's going between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, just by setting our life before God and lifting up our heart to Him in prayer, it's in delighting in who God is that we're led to worship. And worship can be singing, but biblically, it's really about reorienting our whole lives and our hearts and our minds, making God the center. It's about contemplating the good news that God has given his life to us in Jesus, and that it's actually our joy to give our lives back to Him and worship. Stop, rest, delight and worship. Sabbath isn't rigid, like I said. It's not a rule book. It can look like a lot of things, going for a walk, eating good food, enjoying time with your loved ones, hanging out with friends, listening to worship music, making a gratitude list, reading scripture. Sabbath can look like a lot of things, but when you stop, you rest, you delight and you worship. God moves through this practice to continue transforming you. There's this haunting quote that says few people will enter into the Sabbath and sanctify it to make it holy, because a whole day of delight and joy is more than most people can bear in a lifetime, let alone a week.

Haley Terry 16:47

Man to be a church that's not afraid of the capacity of joy, to be a church that's just overflowing with Christ's joy, love and peace, who's not afraid of the capacity of joy, not because we're neglecting the state of the world or the hardships around us, but because we believe that God is who He says He is, and that his promises are true. He promises come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest when we create Sabbath as a rhythm into our routine, we actually have the opportunity to live in harmony with God, with ourselves and with the world around us. Sabbath is a practice that is so disruptive to our culture that it will be noticeable when you incorporate this into your life, and what an opportunity that is to share about how your life is marked by the way that Jesus lived his. John Mark writes again that Sabbath is more than just a day. It's actually about being in the world. It's a spirit of restfulness that comes from abiding and from living in the father's loving presence all week long. I want you to imagine for a moment, and if you're comfortable, I want you to close your eyes. It's okay. You can actually do this. I want you to imagine for a moment that you could feel truly rested. Imagine that you didn't have those under eye bags and a growing to do list. Imagine that you put aside social media and endless notifications and were present right where your feet are. Imagine you felt deeply connected to God. You felt connected to your family and to your friends. Imagine you are loved right now as you are. Imagine laughing and praising God and going for a walk and looking around and admiring the beauty of everything around you. Imagine being at peace in your soul. Imagine a day that just felt like an exhale. Come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Can open your eyes. This is not imaginary. This is real. The invitation of Jesus to step into a life of rest and to abide in who you are in him is a real and true invitation for you right this moment. So I just want to invite you to try to practice Sabbath this week. Just ask yourself the question, what would it look like, maybe for an hour, 10 minutes or a whole day? What would it look like if you could set aside time to fill your soul with deep, overflowing joy that made you overflow with wonder? And awe and gratitude and praise. What would it look like to make space to allow God to remind you of who you are in Him, Sabbath has truly become one of my favorite days of the week, and I just wonder if that could be true for you too. There's a famous quote that our hearts only find rest in one place, and his name is Jesus. So will you abide in him this week? It's a beautiful practice that the Lord has been so kind to shift my heart from contempt to compassion. What would it look like to overflow with the fullness of Christ's joy? This week, Jesus, I'm so grateful for you and the way that you show us what it looks like to live a life of rest. Thank you for being a God that showed us what it looked like to incorporate a rhythm of Sabbath to intentionally stop and rest, to delight in you, to worship who you are and your goodness, and remind and reorient ourselves to who you say that we are God, I pray this week that as we step into intentional time with you through silence or solitude or Sabbath, that we'd be overwhelmed by your love for us, that we would step into deeper intimacy with you, and that our lives would look changed because of that God you long for us to just overflow with who you are. So may that be true in US this week, Jesus, I pray all of this in your powerful and precious name, amen. Amen.