



CEASE

INTRODUCTION and PREPARATION

Before we immerse ourselves in this study, let us first prepare our hearts, minds, and reflect on our previous experience of living **R = 6 + 1**.

Take 2-3 minutes to simply sit quietly, slow your breathing, allow yourself to connect presently with God and yourself. Consider transitioning from this time of quiet by saying a simple prayer like, "Lord, thank you for this gift of time to remember you, seek you, and to grow more fully toward you as I learn to live in your desired rhythms."

RECAP –Take a few minutes to review your previous +1 Day and [+1 Day Planner](#).

Describe your experience of your last +1 Day.

What worked well?

What about it was life-giving for you (and your family, if applicable)?

Where did you experience dissonance, challenge, or frustration?

What adjustments will you make to live more fully into your next +1 Day.

STUDY FOCUS FOR THIS WEEK: CEASE

The Bible calls the +1 day *sabbath* which literally means: to stop or cease, to be complete, or to celebrate (often overlooked). Two important Scriptures open the window for our consideration.

GENESIS 2:1-3 (The Beginning)

*Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; **so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.** 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.*

LESSON ONE:

If God ceased and celebrated on the seventh day (1/7), so would we.

Why? If God is good and holy (which he is), and since we are created in his image (Gen 1:26-27), meaning we are to mirror his goodness and represent him in this world, then it is a big deal that God initiated and lived in 6 + 1. Not only did God take one day to cease, stop and celebrate his work, he made it holy—the first thing in all creation.

EXODUS 20:8-11 (Commandment #4 of 10)

*Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, **but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work**, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, **but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.***

LESSON TWO:

God commands his people to stop and help others do the same.

Why does God now command (the longest and most detailed of the 10 Commandments) us to cease from the normal, to stop working? Perhaps a little Bible context will be helpful.

In Exodus, God hears the cries of the people who have been in slavery for hundreds years in Egypt and their task was to be the labor force that will build the empire of Egypt—and there were no labor unions back then. The Israelites worked EVERY day for hundreds of years—not 24/7, but 24/10 (the Egyptians had a 10 day week)! Imagine that!! And when they complained, more work was assigned (higher quotas) in tougher conditions.

What do you think is the impact on a person, group of people, or a whole culture when all people do is work every day and never stop producing?

Seriously, answer this question and expand “work” to mean always being tethered to work (whatever that may mean to you—normal tasks of daily life) or being on, connected, and never stopping from normal.

HAVE WE GONE BACK TO EGYPT?

So much could be written and has been on the impact of modern life over the last hundred years in western culture and the astonishing statistics that have emerged on the impact of technological advances in just the last 20 years alone. We are more wealthy and connected than ever before.

- **So why are stats on joy, happiness, and contentment dropping at a steady rate each year?**
- **Why are statistics rising at alarming rates for anxiety, depression, the number of teenagers (or younger) on medication for anxiety and depression, fatigue, fragmentation, relational strife...shall I keep going?**

Perhaps it is because we have recreated Egypt—always being on, never stopping. This new reality has become our new normal at every age in our culture.

Smartphones and other tech devices have given us **24/7** connections to work and any information we could ever want—at our fingertips. Social media platforms have us scrolling morning, noon and night, never ceasing but always calling us to keep up and manage our image. Between school and homework, travel sports (everyone plays on an “elite” team these days) or other extracurricular activities, we have kids expending massive energies for 12-14 hours per day leaving weekends for more games and homework just to keep up. We can buy, sell and shop every minute of the day—our virtual stores are always open.

You get the point. Stop and think about the rhythms of your days. The intention of this study is not to be negative, just realistic about the realities and data all around us.

LESSON THREE:

When you are “on” seven days/week, there is an impact. Your life is shaped by it. The results are in. When we do not stop, the accumulated results are revealed in: **fatigue, burnout, anxiety, depression, busyness, starved relationships, worn down immune systems, anger, tension, cloudy or restless minds, confusion, and sense of fragmentation.**

Why do we keep running on this hamster wheel?

Why do we keep trying to sustain a life of always plugged in...actively on...working?

Are we listening? Do we desire something different?

Does something need to change?

THE POWER OF CEASING

Here are just a few practical benefits from learning to cease. God, thousands of years ago, saw that humanity must live in good rhythms in order to thrive in life so he gave us a rhythm: **R = 6 + 1**. This is not to limit us, but to unleash the best in us.

Consider just a handful of benefits that result in learning to do the first step—CEASING from the *normal* 6.

CEASING:

- Actually brings more value to work. When one day we do not work, we deepen the value of the 6 days we have to produce.
- Counters workaholism and reminds us who we are and where our true identity needs to reside (not accomplishments, performances, or what we accumulate).
- Produces greater holistic health. There are proven physiological, mental/psychological and relational benefits in stopping, ceasing, slowing one day each week. Current research in the sciences is booming with statistics on the benefits of ceasing, resting and recovery time on a weekly basis. If you don't want to take God's work on it, others are speaking as well.
- Creates room and space for joy-building activities. What are the things you or your family love to do? What fills and refuels you? I doubt it is more work.
- Deepens times of worship and gratitude in your life.
- Shifts and broadens our perspectives. Uninterrupted time allows us to distinguish between what is truly important and what appears to be urgent. Slowing helps us declutter our minds and focus.
- Reminds us that rest, renewal and reverence take time.
- *What is that worth to you?*
- What else can you think of...?

...we have come to find that Sabbath never just happens. In our 24/7 world, I have never once seen someone accidentally keep a Sabbath. Sabbath is an action of great purpose, one that demands feisty intentionality. It requires us to live in a rhythm that squarely opposes the dangerous pulse and habits of our world.

—Ruth Haley Barton

STUDY OBSERVATIONS & APPLICATION

In one sentence, what do you observe as the *Big Idea* of this week's study?

Revisit your Cease List in your guidebook. What else would you add to your Cease List? Are the challenges of ceasing something you can solve?

What will you do with the insights and learnings from this session?

What are you called to do or how will you respond to this session to live more fully in *rhythm*?

PRESSING FORWARD

- Complete your next [+1 Day Planner](#).
- Complete the next session in the study guide and interact with the reflection questions.

*Rhythm as a
Way of Life*

