

“Top 5 Sabbath FAILS!”

SOME NOTES ON SABBATH-- Marking one day as set apart from the others make us out of step with the world. Whether our neighbors and friends work tirelessly and by keeping a Sabbath we slowly fall further and further behind, or whether those around us take a day of rest to enjoy hobbies and to enjoy entertainment –either way, we will find ourselves envious and resentful of the Sabbath, or we will realize that God's people do not belong in either of the situations our neighbors chase after.

God's two sets of reasons for commanding the Sabbath reconnect us to His two greatest works: creation and salvation. We rest, because God crowned the seventh day of creation as set apart and holy by his own rest. We rest, because we were once slaves toiling endlessly to satisfy the demands of a master that would never be fulfilled (the Egyptians, and the Law). By Jesus' resurrection we are reconnected to both those realities. Jesus rested on the seventh day by laying in the Easter Tomb. When he arose Easter morning he initiated a new creation which we now enjoy by faith.

So why would we rest? ...

...because God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh –it's built into the very fabric of time.

...because Jesus rested in the tomb, his salvific work complete.

...because we once were slaves and God redeemed us from lives of slavery. We continually need reminders of this fact and need to remind one another as well.

...because God knows life is busy, and that without a dedicated time to stop and gather around his gifts, we won't make time to receive them.

Sabbath isn't a command to slavishly follow to the letter of the law and beyond, neither is it cast off as something we need not consider or value at all, freeing us to “rest” with empty leisure and entertainment to hopefully put meaning back into our lives.

Sabbath is nothing less than entering into the rhythms of creation and salvation, syncing ourselves up with the God who made us and redeemed us, and calls us through the very patterns of our lives to live and find rest in Him.

*STAGING -- Imagine this like some sort of YouTube countdown compilation (“Top 10 Reasons Why Polka is Better Than Disco!”) –the scenes are little vignettes which would work best if able to “cut” back and forth between two or more areas of focus. While you're watching one 'FAIL', the other set is getting organized for the following 'FAIL'. You finish one then draw attention to the scene that's freshly arranged, and the previous set starts to get ready for the **next** 'FAIL'. Clear as mud? If you're short on space, try using a curtain or sheet (held up by youth?) as a screen that 'slides' back and forth across the stage, effectively 'hiding' one 'set' as it gets ready.*

*Consider “announcing” the FAILS over a microphone with a big, booming, countdown voice:
NUMBER FIVE!*

Script

Sabbath Fail #1 – When you run out of steps

Kid 1 276, 277, 278 . . . [*keeps counting while Kid 2 is talking*]
Kid 2 So you can only take a certain number of steps on the Sabbath?
Kid 1 280 . . . yeah . . . 281 . . . you're not supposed to work on the Sabbath . . . 282, 283 . . . and walking too much is like work . . . 284
Kid 2 It is?! . . . Well, what happens if you run out of steps?
Kid 1 295, 296 . . . I don't know -297 -I've never run out before -298 . . .
Kid 2 How many do you have?
Kid 1 299, 300! [*stops abruptly and looks awkwardly at friend*]
Kid 2 Oh, that many. But we're still like three blocks from 7/11 . . .
Kid 1 [*long awkward pause*] Come here. [*He jumps on Kid 2's back who begrudgingly obliges*]
Let's go!
[*They trudge off stage*]

Sabbath Fail #2 – When you planning on living your life

Youth heading out the door. Mom offstage to start.

Youth [*calling offstage*] Mom, I'm going over to Kieran's house to play, I'll be back for dinner.
Mom [*Walking on stage very serenely*] Uh-uh-uh – you're forgetting something. It's Sabbath. We're *resting* today. [*ridiculously over emphasize the word 'resting'; maybe make an exaggerated movement like laying your head on your hands or pretending to recline*]
Youth Uh, yeah. I was going to . . . rest . . . at Kieran's.
Mom I'm afraid that's not *restful* enough. [*ridiculous motion*]
Youth Oookkkaayyy . . . well then I'll go . . . 'rest' . . . on my computer.
Mom With all those flashing lights and bleeps and bloops?
Youth No video games? Fine. I'll watch some TV. [*Mom makes 'restful' motion*]
Play some catch? [*'Restful' motion -more absurd*]
Phone a friend? [*Most 'restful' motion of all*]
Well can I read my Bible?!
Mom [*pause --thinking*] You might get a paper cut –better to just 'rest'.
[*Mom awkwardly wrangles/cajoles/smoothes youth into a horrifically uncomfortable 'rest' position, probably sprawled out on the floor*]
Now, isn't that 'restful'?
Youth [*in extreme discomfort*] Very restful. I'm sure Moses would be proud.
[*Mom smiles down sweetly.*]

Sabbath FAIL number THREE! – When God dwells in a golf tee

Three people playing golf (ridiculous golf clothes encouraged). One is sitting on the ground in a classic meditation posture. One is about to tee off, and the other is standing on the other side watching.

- Jerry FORE! [*big golf swing; watch golf ball sail into the distance*] Did you see that? 10 feet from the green. Best shot of the day! Did you see it?
- Jill Huh? Yeah, great shot [*not paying attention*]. Hey Jerry, what's up with Dave?
- Dave Ohmmm . . .
- Jerry Oh, that? He thinks he's "communing with God" [*air quotes*].
- Jill [*puzzled look*]
- Jerry His church is starting some kind of Sabbath practice, and Dave's trying to convince his pastor that his Sunday morning golf game is where he "finds God".
- Dave [*pops up*] My shot? [*bustles over; tees up and swings; watches ball sail into the distance*]
- Jill [*while Dave is watching his ball land*] So Dave, you have any luck finding God this Sabbath?
- Dave Sure did. He's over in that sand trap! Hand me my wedge and I'll introduce you to him over on the green!

Sabbath FAIL number FOUR! – When you're not fooling anyone

Sunday morning church service. 'Pastor' leading the service (could be your actual pastor, someone offstage, or a youth playing the pastor). 4 – 10 (or as many as you want) congregation members sit in 'pews'. We join the congregation partway through a responsive reading of Luther's Small Catechism, the third commandment of course.

- Pastor What does this mean?
- Congregation That we should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and his Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.
- Pastor Please be seated. The text for our sermon today is . . . [*Pastor begins 'speaking' in unintelligible noises (like the teachers in Charlie Brown), signaling that none of the parishioners are listening. If the 'pastor' is onstage, play around with his actions during his gibberish sermon –monotone and stock still? –hellfire, fist slamming damnation? --over-excited hand talker?!*]
- Congregation *No one is paying attention. One person sleeping (whose snoring progressively grows louder?). One person on their phone (volume on? Earbuds in?). Someone writing out grocery list. Someone painting nails. Siblings pestering each other with a parent continually trying to stop them, etc.*
- Make up as many as you like, or for as many youth participating. Feel free to make some of them over-the-top and absurd to emphasize how distracted we can be, and what that means for our concern for God's Word being preached. Ideas:*

- *Cooking a meal*
- *Doing yoga*
- *Folding laundry*
- *Martial arts sparring*
- *Practicing an instrument . . .let your imagination run wild!*

Let the chaos grow and grow and eventually come to a crescendo just as the pastor says . . .

Pastor Amen.

Congregation instantly snaps back to attention in their pews like they had been quite and attentive listeners all the way along.

Sabbath FAIL number FIVE – When your friends ask too many questions

Two friends hanging out, doing some sort of activity:

- *playing video games,*
- *eating chips,*
- *watching TV,*
- *playing catch,*
- *whatever works best in your space.*

Dale What'd you do this weekend?

Erin Huh? Me? I had basketball on Saturday, then went to a movie. Sunday I went to church.

1 You went to church all day?!

2 No! Just for the morning.

1 Yeah –right. I knew that. [*pause for a while; friends continue whatever they're doing*]
What'd you do after that?

2 After church? I dunno. Just kinda rested.

1 . . . were you tired? Did you go to the late movie? Don't tell my mom, but I actually get pretty tuckered out if I stay up for the late late show. Is that what it was?

2 No! What is this, the Spanish Inquisition? I wasn't tired. I did a bunch of stuff, but I just needed time to sort of soak up what I heard in Church. I did stuff, but I, like, didn't . . . rush around doing it.

1 Ookkaayyy . . . So you were in slow motion. Got it.

2 Slow motion? Really? . . . It's more like after church it felt like all the things that day were put into focus –like I got a new pair of glasses! I spent the rest of the day taking time to notice how all the things I did looked a little bit different after being in Church.

1 Dude, you wear contacts, not glasses.

2 [*rolls eyes*] It's called a metaphor. Try reading a book sometime.

1 I know what a meta-fork is!

- 2 Not metaf-- . . . never mind. How about this –here's an example, I called my grandma and she told me a story about when my Mom was in Sunday School. Normally I would have zoned out, but God sort of put me in a space to see that He's been working in my family for generations –first through my grandparents, then through my parents, now in me. Or like when I spent some time drawing, and instead of getting super frustrated when I smudged up my page, I thought about how sometimes my life gets smudged and smeared when I mess up, but then Jesus is like a big eraser that makes my page clean again, makes the picture of my life whole and complete.
[*Rushed and awkward, embarrassed for over-sharing*] That's not stuff I normally think about!
- 1 No, it's cool. It's awesome when life sort of slows down enough to let you connect to what's important.
- 2 Yeah, it's sort of like that, but bigger, deeper, like it's everywhere. It's not just what's important, it's everything! God made me –and everything else! –so it's like he sort of owns everything, or at least knows how it all works --even time! He's laid out day and night and all the seasons, which kind of have rest naturally built into them. Then Jesus comes along and changes everything again. Now we also get to rest because we know God doesn't *need* our best behavior or incredible sacrifices to make Him happy. Jesus makes our whole life with God a sort of Sabbath.
- 1 So then why do you only do your rest-y thing on Sundays.
- 2 I guess we could do it other days, but Sunday is when Jesus rose from the dead, so it sorta helps connect us to that life of rest he won for us. And we can't *only* rest –God still uses us in the world to care for others, so we just set aside the one day to be reminded, both by going to church and also by shaping our lives around God's time instead of the world's.
- 1 . . . so . . . let me get this straight . . . God is like Dr. Who . . . and church is like a TARDIS . . . and Jesus loves naps . . . right?
- 2 Not quite. Why don't you come to church with me next Sunday and I'll introduce you to my pastor. He loves a tough nut to crack.
- 1 Now there's nuts?! No wonder you need so much rest, this Bible stuff is confusing!

END