

Priorities of Faith

DAY 9 — THE BLESSING OF THE SABBATH

“That will happen when you stop sinning against God’s law about the Sabbath and when you stop doing things to please yourself on that special day. You should call the Sabbath a happy day. You should honor the Lord’s special day by not saying and doing things that you do every other day of the week. Then you could enjoy the Lord. As the Lord himself says, “I could carry you up to the highest mountain and let you enjoy the land that I gave to your father Jacob.” (Isa. 58:13-14)

Sign of Our Identity

One blessing that is truly important for human life is Sabbath rest. The Sabbath day reminds us that God created us and He is our Maker (Exod. 20:8-11). It also shows God’s grace as our loving Savior who freed His people from slavery (Deut. 5:12-15). So, celebrating the Sabbath is a powerful sign of our identity as humans. This identity does not come from how much money we have or how busy we are. It does not matter if we are employers or employees. The Sabbath is God inviting us to rest in Him and enjoy the good things He has given us by His grace.

If you understand the Sabbath, you know that it is a time not to hurry but to go slow. It teaches us to rest from rushing to do more to succeed. By resting on the Sabbath each week, I show that God is more important than my work and to-do list. My resting shows a change in my priorities and who I am loyal to. The Sabbath allows me to slow down and rest in God’s presence. It lets me enjoy the promise that God alone is enough. Not doing normal business activities on the Sabbath is important to show our loyalty to God, but resting in God’s love and care is far more than choosing not to work. Sabbath rest is fulfilled in our having planned, meaningful time with our Creator. When we learn to rest in God’s constant love, and when we focus on His goodness, we experience joy, peace, and a desire to worship God with our all.

Being joyful and faithful in keeping the Sabbath becomes an important sign of who we are and who we belong to. We must do much more than not work on the seventh day to keep the Sabbath, with moments of peace, joy, and calm. We need to plan and prepare during the week for the special time of Sabbath peace. Keeping the Sabbath sets us apart from other people in a different culture and they see our different lifestyle. The Sabbath protects us from becoming too focused on buying things. Rather than always trying to get more and more and competing for power and control, we are invited to pause and honor God and His goodness and grace. This is very different from our being proud and selfish. When we keep the Sabbath, we become students of Jesus Christ, who always kept the Sabbath as was His habit (Luke 4:16).

To keep the Sabbath holy, to set it apart, and to dedicate it to God for His special purpose helps us focus on what is truly important in our relationship with Jesus. Sabbath is not just a day to sleep in and do nothing; it is a day to worship the only true God. This becomes a meaningful sign that we have changed our lives to focus on the living God of the Bible.

Let’s pray together.

Prayer Time (30–45 Minutes)

All prayer groups have different ways of praying together. We want you to spend the next 30-45 minutes praying together, however the Holy Spirit leads you. Short informal prayers (1-3 sentences) are good. This way, more people can pray many times. Below are some examples of praying with Bible verses based on the theme. You may also pray through other Bible verses and include other topics in your prayer time. See the Leader's Guide and World Church Prayer Requests for other prayer ideas.

Praying God's Word — Isa. 58:13, 14

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"Call the Sabbath a Delight"

Father, You gave us an amazing gift in the Sabbath. Thank You that we do not have to always be busy, but that we were created to experience communion and peace with You in a special way every seventh day. God, too often, we have forgotten the reason for the Sabbath and made it the busiest day of the week. Forgive us, please. Teach us how to keep the Sabbath holy and make it a happy time for all people around us. Amen.

"Not Talking About Worldly Things"

Jesus, we give You honor and glory because You are holy and worthy. Thank You that the Sabbath is a day when we are free to focus on You, Your Word, Your Creation, and on being a blessing to others. But, too often, we have spent these holy hours filled with talking about worldly things and doing things that do not honor You. Please forgive us. Teach us how to make the Sabbath inspiring, beautiful, and holy. Amen.

More Prayer Suggestions

Thanks and Praise: Give thanks for specific blessings and praise God for His goodness.

Confession: Take a few minutes for private confession and thank God for His forgiveness.

Guidance: Ask God to give wisdom for today's challenges and decisions.

Our Church: Pray for local and world church needs (see separate sheet with requests).

Local Requests: Pray for needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

Listen and Respond: Take time to listen for God's voice and respond in praise or song.

Song Suggestions

SDA Hymnal: Day Is Dying in the West (#51); O Day of Rest and Gladness (#382); Wonderful Peace (#466)

Other Songs: This Is the Day; Surely the Presence of the Lord, A Temple Made of Time