**Work and Rest in Balance**

*Your Stewardship of Time*

**Pre-Game**
Americans today - Christian and non-Christian alike - worship busyness and work. What we do, how much we accomplish and how successful we are at our work form the foundation of our identity. Professors, coaches and even ministers often directly and indirectly communicate that the more we do in the better we are. This encouragement - along with the rewards and affirmation that are offered for our compliance - pushes us to endlessly and aggressively pursue work. The result? We are typically unhappy and unhealthy in our busyness. This is an abuse of our stewardship of time. We need to invest our time wisely by following the Biblical mandate for keeping work and rest in balance.

**Theme**
God intends that we keep work and rest in a proper balance in our lives by recognizing that the Sabbath is a call to shift our focus from civil work to the work of worship and family life.

**Practice**
Observe the Sabbath and seek rest by shifting your focus among 3 spheres of work—civil, family and worship.

**Symbol Key**

- Indicates discussion questions

- Indicates Biblical passages to look up

- Indicates application questions to be discussed
I. WORK GONE WRONG

In Genesis 2:15, we find out that man was put in the garden to `work it and keep it.' If work was a part of God's perfect creation, what has gone wrong? Why?

Work has become an idol and we have turned to it in place of God to provide us with an identity, a sense of fulfillment and a feeling of purpose in life. We tend to find our salvation in work, not the cross.

In what ways does our misuse of work negatively affect us?

The epidemic of stress

Work has become burdensome to us and we desperately try to find fulfillment in it. The result? Many are left unhappy and unhealthy, struggling through clinical stress.

The deterioration of the family

With more and more time spent at the office and less and less time spent at home, it is no surprise that marriages are deteriorating and kids are growing up with absentee parents.

The absence of worship

What happens to your time in the Word, in prayer or at church when you are at your busiest?

Whether in college or beyond, at home or at church, our misuse of work, typically in the form of over-busyness, is leaving many unhealthy. This is an abuse of the steward ship we have over our time.

What misuse of your stewardship of time / work—laziness or over-busyness—do you struggle with the most? How does this adversely affect you?

II. WORK BALANCED—THE SABBATH PRINCIPLE

What do you honestly think about a command to take time off of work?

"Work is the salvation of the human race, morally, physically, socially."
- Henry Ford

The epidemic of stress leaves 1000's of people a year hospitalized, according to a 2002 cover story by Fortune Magazine.

Over 50% of marriages end in divorce.

85% of the people hospitalized with stress in the 2002 Fortune article had not taken all of their paid-vacation days.
Read Exodus 20:8-11

- God created a day of rest on the 7th day of his creation. What does this have to say about God’s creation? Do you think that observing the Sabbath is an end in itself or a means to another end?

- What does the fact that we were made in God’s image imply about work and rest in our lives?

Like God, we are to see work as good - Gen 2:15 - but to rest and reflect on the glory of God according to a 1 in 7 principle. We are to see the Sabbath as holy. Rest is not the ‘end’ of the Sabbath—worshipping God is.

Do you think that the Old Testament commandment to observe the Sabbath applies to us today? Why or why not?

Do OT laws apply to us today? Yes, if…
- They are restated in the NT
- They are inherently moral in nature
- We share the same context as the OT audience

Read Matthew 12:1-8

- Do you think that the Pharisees saw the Sabbath as an end or a means to an end? Why?

- What was the point of Jesus using the example of David eating consecrated bread and the Levities making sacrifices on the Sabbath?

God established the 1-in-7 Sabbath principle not merely for rest, but for worship. In fact, rest on the Sabbath comes not from the absence of work but from our focus being shifted from our jobs (civil sphere work) to doing the work of worship.

In the past, have you seen the Sabbath as an end itself or a means to the end of worship? How would realizing that the Sabbath is about doing the work of worship change your perspective?
III. WORK RESTORED—BALANCING 3 SPHERES OF WORK

Imagine this scenario... is there really no time for rest?

What is wrong with this guy’s perspective? Does he really not have time to rest? What would enable this guy to continue in all of his activities without feeling burnt out?

Church and family/friend responsibilities should not be seen as a burdensome extension of an office job, but as a refreshing, restful shift from one sphere of work to another. As with the Sabbath, rest comes from shifting our focus of work, not necessarily from the absence of work.

Are you able to see worship and family/friend responsibilities in a different way than work? What happens in your life if you don’t?

The Bible describes 3 major life responsibilities that demand of us an intentional investment of time (work) as a part of good stewardship.

Read Genesis 1:26-28: The civil sphere of work
Our stewardship of all of creation involves us working in whatever vocation to which God has called us.

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-5: The family sphere of work
Our stewardship of our families/friends involves us working to build meaningful, loving relationships.

Read Matthew 22:37: The worship sphere of work
Our stewardship of faith involves us working to worship God with all our heart, soul and mind.

What happens if you don’t think of the family and worship spheres of your life as work? Can you think of examples of when this happens?

IV. POST-GAME

Part of being a good steward of time is keeping work and rest in balance. Christians need to avoid the idolatry of busyness and the unhealthy lifestyle that comes along with it by recognizing that God has commanded us to observe a 1-in-7 principle of rest. This Sabbath principle calls us to shift our focus off our jobs (civil sphere of work) so that we can do the work of worship. In fact, Christians should find rest not just from the absence of work, but from alternating our focus among the 3 spheres of work that Scripture identities—civil, family and worship.

What would it take for you to begin to find rest by shifting spheres of work? How would this practically change your life at school?