

**Rest in Christ**  
**Living in a 24-7 Society**  
Lesson #1 for July 3, 2021

Scriptures: Genesis 2:1-3; 4:1-17; Jeremiah 45:1-5; Exodus 20:11; 2 Samuel 7:12; Mark 6:30-32.

1. In our modern world and especially in the more developed countries, life tends to be very busy. Technology has made us available to others almost every minute. Times for rest are difficult to find unless there is specific planning for it. It is easy to feel harassed, be unable to accomplish all that we need to accomplish, and lose our touch with God.
2. Think of all the things that you need to do in a given week. Is it easy to pack it all in? We are impacted by rush hours, work hours, online and off-line conversations, medical appointments, school functions, and even shopping. There is constantly a need to hurry and bustle and finish what we are doing so we can move on.
3. What did God have in mind when He created a special day of rest for us?

**Genesis 2:1-3:** <sup>1</sup>And so the whole universe was completed. <sup>2</sup>By the seventh day God finished what he had been doing and stopped working. <sup>3</sup>He blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day, because by that day he had completed his creation and stopped working.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Genesis 2:1–3). New York: American Bible Society.

4. Did God think that Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden were going to become so busy that they would need a day of rest? Or, was that day set aside specifically for a closer communication with each other and/or communion with God and the angels? Or, both?
5. Or, did God realize that trouble was coming and that humans would need to set aside a specified time to honor Him because of His gift of life to us and all that involves.
6. Think of all the so-called labor saving devices that we have available to us in modern times. Communication is so easy. Computers have made the writing of letters and the transmission of information so much easier and almost instantaneous. But, as that happens, we realize that people expect more out of us! They may even want to have access to us 24/7!
7. Why is it that so many people do not think they can get through the day without lots of caffeine? Think of some of the examples in the Bible in which rest was important.
8. Soon after Jesus officially called His disciples to follow Him and while they were all in the territory of Galilee, He began to prepare them to go out as apostles. They were sent out two-by-two with the following instructions from Jesus:  
**Matthew 10:7-8:** <sup>7</sup> “Go and preach, ‘The Kingdom of heaven is near!’ <sup>8</sup>Heal the sick, bring the dead back to life, heal those who suffer from dreaded skin diseases, and drive out demons.”—*Good News Bible*.\*
9. Try to imagine what kind of rush there would have been on any person who had the power to do all of those things! I am not sure why we do not have any records of healings or raising of the dead performed by the disciples while Jesus was still on this earth.
10. If they really were given the power by God to bring people back to life, to heal lepers, and to drive out demons, would it be any wonder that people from everywhere would be coming and asking the disciples to help them? So, notice what happened.

**Mark 6:30-32:** <sup>30</sup> The apostles returned and met with Jesus, and told him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>There were so many people coming and going that Jesus

and his disciples didn't even have time to eat. So he said to them, "**Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest for a while.**" <sup>32</sup>**So they started out in a boat by themselves for a lonely place.**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

11. None of these disciples was doing anything wrong. In fact, what they were doing was wonderful; hopefully, they were spreading the gospel. But, even that kind of work needs to be interrupted by periods of rest, just as Jesus told His disciples. It is possible to be overwhelmed by the responsibilities associated with doing good.

12. Think of the ways in which God has encouraged us to get enough rest.

**Psalms 4:8:** When I lie down, I go to sleep in peace;

you alone, O LORD, keep me perfectly safe.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

**Exodus 23:12:** "Work six days a week, but do no work on the seventh day, so that your slaves and the foreigners who work for you and even your animals can rest."—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

**Deuteronomy 5:14:** [The LORD said:] "But the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work—neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country. Your slaves must rest just as you do."—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

**Matthew 11:28:** "Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest."—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

13. God intends for us to have certain cycles built into our lives: (1) Day and night, and (2) Six work days then Sabbath. He did not leave the results to chance; observing the Sabbath is a commandment! It is not merely a suggestion. It is a prescription for good health!

14. So, what could you do to improve things in your own life? Do you ever feel physically, emotionally, and mentally worn out?

15. While some of us may be rushing around so much that we are physically exhausted, others are strained to the point that they are "emotionally empty." And if these two types of exhaustion combine, discouragement and even depression may set in.

16. Consider the story of Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, as things were getting worse and worse in the city of Jerusalem.

**Jeremiah 45:1-5:** <sup>1</sup>In the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, Baruch wrote down what I had dictated to him. Then I told him <sup>2</sup>that the LORD, the God of Israel, had said, "Baruch, <sup>3</sup>you are saying, 'I give up! The LORD has added sorrow to my troubles. I am worn out from groaning, and I can't find any rest!'

<sup>4</sup> "But I, the LORD, am tearing down what I have built and pulling up what I have planted. I will do this to the entire earth. <sup>5</sup>Are you looking for special treatment for yourself? Don't do it. I am bringing disaster on the whole human race, but you will at least escape with your life wherever you go. I, the LORD, have spoken."—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

17. In order to understand what was going on in Baruch's life, we need to consider several factors.

It was about this time that the Lord commanded Jeremiah to commit to writing the messages he desired to bear to those for whose salvation his heart of pity was continually yearning. "Take thee a roll of a book," the Lord bade His

servant, “and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.” Jeremiah 36:2, 3.

In obedience to this command, Jeremiah called to his aid a faithful friend, Baruch the scribe, and dictated “all the words of the Lord, which He had spoken unto him.” Verse 4. These were carefully written out on a roll of parchment and constituted a solemn reproof for sin, a warning of the sure result of continual apostasy, and an earnest appeal for the renunciation of all evil.

**When the writing was completed, Jeremiah, who was still a prisoner, sent Baruch to read the roll to the multitudes who were assembling at the temple on the occasion of a national fast day,** “in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month.” “It may be,” the prophet said, “they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return everyone from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people.” Verses 9, 7.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*\* 432.2-433.1.†

18. Remember that Jeremiah also wrote Lamentations. That book was not written until about 586 B.C. when Jerusalem was finally destroyed completely by Nebuchadnezzar’s army. Jerusalem became a pile of rubble. What do you think Nebuchadnezzar said to Daniel about Jerusalem when he returned to Babylon? What do you think Daniel said in reply?

**Lamentations 2:20:** Look, O LORD! Why are you punishing us like this?

Women are eating the bodies of the children they loved!

Priests and prophets are being killed in the Temple itself!—*Good News Bible*.\*

19. While Jeremiah and Baruch must have been terribly disappointed as they saw things deteriorating in Judah and Jerusalem, consider how God must have felt!
20. How do you understand God’s relationship to Israel at that point in time? First of all, notice God’s original plan for Israel.

**Isaiah 5:1-7:** <sup>1</sup> Listen while I sing you this song, a song of my friend and his vineyard:

My friend had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

<sup>2</sup> He dug the soil and cleared it of stones; he planted the finest vines.

He built a tower to guard them, dug a pit for treading the grapes.

**He waited for the grapes to ripen, but every grape was sour.**

<sup>3</sup> So now my friend says, “You people who live in Jerusalem and Judah, judge between my vineyard and me. <sup>4</sup>Is there anything I failed to do for it? Then why did it produce sour grapes and not the good grapes I expected?”

<sup>5</sup> “This is what I am going to do to my vineyard; I will take away the hedge round it, break down the wall that protects it, and let wild animals eat it and trample it down. <sup>6</sup>I will let it be overgrown with weeds. I will not prune the vines or hoe the ground; instead I will let briars and thorns cover it. I will even forbid the clouds to let rain fall on it.”

<sup>7</sup> **Israel is the vineyard of the LORD Almighty; the people of Judah are the vines he planted.**

**He expected them to do what was good, but instead they committed murder.**

**He expected them to do what was right, but their victims cried out for justice.—Good News Bible.\*†**

21. So, was God directly responsible for destroying Jerusalem? We know that it was torn down by the Babylonian army. **So, why would God claim responsibility for doing it? Was Satan involved in any way?** If so, why doesn't the Bible mention that?
22. In the Old Testament, we see almost a totally **monist** (that is, God was thought to be the only supernatural force acting) understanding of events beyond human control. There is almost no mention of Satan or any of his angels' activities. This is in contrast to the **dualist** (two opposing agencies—God and Satan) understanding presented in the New Testament, and especially in the book of Revelation. **Thus, in the Old Testament, it was automatically assumed that whatever happened was the action of God Himself because they felt that if He did not do it, at least He did not prevent it.** We know that is **actually true, but not the whole picture.**
23. And finally, God gave Baruch a promise that his life would not be taken. How do you suppose that made Baruch feel? And what about us?
24. A committed Christian has a guaranteed future. We may have a lot of trouble to go through between now and then—even death. However, the future in God's paradise is guaranteed.
25. During this series of 13 Sabbaths, we will be talking about rest. What kind of experiences does the Bible mean when it talks about *rest*?
26. There are several different Hebrew words meaning *rest*:
  - (1) The first word is *Shabbat*, which means "to cease work, to rest, to take a holiday." Of course, that is where we get our word *Sabbath*. In Genesis 2:2-3, we see that God created for us a Sabbath, once a week, during which we are to rest and celebrate our relationship with Him. He gave us an example by stopping His work.  
  
Another example of this word, *Shabbat*, is found Exodus 5:5. Having returned to Egypt, Moses demanded that the children of Israel stop working on the Sabbath.
  - (2) *Nuakh*. This word can be translated as *rest* or *settle down*. It is even used to describe the spirit of Elijah resting on Elisha. See Exodus 20:11; Deuteronomy 5:14; Job 3:13; Numbers 10:36; and 2 Kings 2:15.
  - (3) *Shaqat*. The third Hebrew word for rest is *shaqat*. It means to "be at rest, grant relief, or be quiet." It was used to describe the land after Joshua finished his military campaigns to conquer the land. See Joshua 11:23.
  - (4) *Raga`*. This word is used to describe the loss of peace the children of Israel would experience in exile. It also described the renewed peace that they would get when they returned home to Jerusalem. In Deuteronomy 31:16 and 2 Samuel 7:12, this word is used to describe "lying down" or "sleeping in death."
27. These are just a few of the words describing various aspects of *rest* in Hebrew. Rest is very important to us physically, socially, and emotionally. The Sabbath rest is especially important to us spiritually.
28. For those who believe that death is a sleep, it is encouraging to know that those we have lost to death are at rest.
29. And what does the New Testament say about *rest*? The most common word used in the New Testament for rest is *anapauō* which means to "rest, relax, even refresh." It is the word used

by Jesus in Matthew 11:28: “ ‘Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ ” (NKJV\*)

30. Paul even used this word to describe the cheering up and rejoicing when good friends came to visit him.
31. A second word used in the New Testament for rest is *hēsychazō*. This word is used to describe the hiding behind locked doors the disciples experienced while Jesus was resting in the grave. But, this word can also be used to describe a quiet life or those who at time of trial just keep silent because they have no objections. This verb, *hēsychazō*, is used to describe a very interesting experience that has been important to every Gentile!

**Acts 11:1-4,12,18:** <sup>1</sup>The apostles and the other believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. <sup>2</sup>When Peter went to Jerusalem, those who were in favour of circumcising Gentiles criticized him, saying, <sup>3</sup> “You were a guest in the home of uncircumcised Gentiles, and you even ate with them!” <sup>4</sup>So Peter gave them a complete account of what had happened from the very beginning....

<sup>12</sup> “The Spirit told me to go with them without hesitation. These six fellow-believers from Joppa accompanied me to Caesarea, and we all went into the house of Cornelius.... <sup>15</sup>And when I began to speak, **the Holy Spirit came down on them just as on us at the beginning.** <sup>16</sup>Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>17</sup>**It is clear that God gave those Gentiles the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; who was I, then, to try to stop God!”**

<sup>18</sup> When they heard this, they stopped their criticism [*hēsychazō*] and praised God, saying, **“Then God has given to the Gentiles also the opportunity to repent and live!”**—*Good News Bible*. \*††

32. That story is followed immediately in Acts 11 by this story.

**Acts 11:19-26:** <sup>19</sup> Some of the believers who were scattered by the persecution which took place when Stephen was killed went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, **telling the message to Jews only.** <sup>20</sup>But other believers, who were from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and **proclaimed the message to Gentiles also**, telling them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup>The Lord’s power was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. [We do not even know the names of these brave souls who left Libya (Cyrene) and went to Syria (Antioch)!]

<sup>22</sup> The news about this reached the church in Jerusalem, so they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup>When he arrived and saw how God had blessed the people, he was glad and urged them all to be faithful and true to the Lord with all their hearts. <sup>24</sup>Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and many people were brought to the Lord.

<sup>25</sup> Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. <sup>26</sup>When he found him, he took him to Antioch, and for a whole year the two met with the people of the church and taught a large group. It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.—*Good News Bible*. \*††

33. Peter was being severely criticized for entering into the house of a Gentile and eating with them! But, when six other witnesses confirmed that the Holy Spirit had descended on the Gentiles just as it had descended on them at Pentecost, the church leaders finally stopped

their accusations! Then, **when some unnamed believers began spreading the gospel to Gentiles in Antioch, once again, the leaders in Jerusalem became alarmed and sent Barnabas to see what was going on!**

34. When Paul and Barnabas returned after their first missionary journey, the news reached Jerusalem that they had evangelized a large number of Gentiles without requiring them to be circumcised or to follow all of the Jewish ritual requirements. That led to that famous first “General Conference” at Jerusalem as discussed in Acts 15. Some Jewish Christians were very concerned about what would happen if a lot of Gentiles became Christians. Should the evangelization of Gentiles have caused the Jewish Christians to lose the “rest” that they were experiencing? Or, should we all be rejoicing when even one of God’s children turns back to Him? (See Luke 15:7,10.)
35. There is considerable talk about *rest* in Hebrews, chapter 4. It uses the Greek word *katapauō*, to “cause to cease, bring to rest, rest.” (As you might have guessed, *pauō*, the root word there, gave rise to our English word, *pause*.)
36. What happens to people who cannot seem to find rest anywhere? There is a very sad story told in Genesis 4:1-12 about Cain. After becoming upset that his sacrifice was not accepted as Abel’s was, he asked his brother to go out into the field. There, he killed him!
37. God then addressed Cain, telling him that he could no longer till the soil, and that he would be a homeless wanderer on this earth. We do not know exactly all that was involved in why God “respected” Abel’s offering while He did not “respect” Cain’s offering. But, we do have these words from Ellen White.

Cain came before God with murmuring and infidelity in his heart in regard to the promised sacrifice and the necessity of the sacrificial offerings. His gift expressed no penitence for sin. He felt, as many now feel, that it would be an acknowledgment of weakness to follow the exact plan marked out by God, of trusting his salvation wholly to the atonement of the promised Saviour. He chose the course of self-dependence. He would come in his own merits.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 72.1.

38. In the story, we discover that if one cannot find rest in God, s/he is not going to find true rest anywhere.
39. Imagine being one of the first few humans to exist on this earth. Don’t you suppose that the entire heavenly counsel were constantly focused on what was happening on this earth? So, what was Cain’s response when he heard God’s judgment?

**Genesis 4:13-17:** <sup>13</sup> And Cain said to the LORD, “This punishment is too hard for me to bear. <sup>14</sup>You are driving me off the land and away from your presence. I will be a homeless wanderer on the earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me.”

<sup>15</sup> But the LORD answered, “No. If anyone kills you, seven lives will be taken in revenge.” So the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who met him not to kill him. <sup>16</sup>And Cain went away from the LORD’s presence and lived in a land called “Wandering”, which is east of Eden.

<sup>17</sup> Cain and his wife had a son and named him Enoch. Then Cain built a city and named it after his son.—*Good News Bible*.\*

40. So, after being forbidden to work as a farmer, Cain decided to build a city and name it after his first son. One of the questions that has perplexed some down through the ages is where did Cain’s wife come from. Cain, Abel, Seth, and probably all their brothers and sisters had to choose to marry a sibling or other close relative. There were no other human beings to

choose from. How many children did Eve have? You can be sure that the city that Cain built and named after his son was not dedicated to God!

41. What do we learn about **rest and activity in the New Testament?**

In the estimation of the rabbis it was the sum of religion to be always in a bustle of activity. They depended upon some outward performance to show their superior piety. Thus they separated their souls from God, and built themselves up in self-sufficiency. The same dangers still exist. As activity increases and men become successful in doing any work for God, there is danger of trusting to human plans and methods. There is a tendency to pray less, and to have less faith. **Like the disciples, we are in danger of losing sight of our dependence on God, and seeking to make a savior of our activity.** We need to look constantly to Jesus, realizing that it is His power which does the work. While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the word of God. Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 362.2.†

42. Could our churches become welcoming places for exhausted, tired, depressed people? Could our churches offer them rest? Or, is it possible that we are actually too busy?

In 1899, a speed record had been broken. Someone had actually gone 39.24 miles per hour in a car—and lived to tell about it! Today, of course, cars go much faster than that. And the speed of the processors in our cell phones are much faster than the fastest large computers of a generation ago. And air travel is faster than it used to be—and is getting even faster. The point is that almost everything we do today is done faster than it was in the past, and yet, what? We still feel hurried and without enough rest. What should that tell us about basic human nature and why God would have made rest so important that it is one of His commandments?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Friday, July 2.

43. What do you suppose Adam and Eve did on their Sabbaths in the Garden of Eden? I doubt that they needed real rest. Don't you think that they had wonderful times with God?

44. How serious is the rest problem in our world today? We have already suggested that living a harrowed, harassed, too-busy life can lead to discouragement and even depression.

There is a growing concern among mental health professionals with the increasing number of depressed people they are treating. It is estimated that there are more than 300 million depressed people in our world and that depression will surpass heart disease as the leading cause of death in a few decades.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 13.

45. More than 270 million prescriptions of antidepressants are sold in the United States alone every year!

46. **Why do you suppose God chose a “palace in time” as His premier example of rest?** Human beings like to produce massive buildings such as the palace at Versailles in France which contains 700 rooms and 67,000 m<sup>2</sup> (or over 720,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) of floor space to represent their accomplishment. But, God produced a “palace in time.”

47. Is it clear to you why Abraham Joshua Heschel called the Sabbath a “palace in time”?

48. What do you expect to experience during God's “palace in time”? What kind of rest do you look forward to each week when the Sabbath comes? Do you get a break in dealing with

mental problems, physical challenges, even distressing interpersonal relationships? The Sabbath should be a stress buster. Have you experienced the blessings God pours out on His Sabbath each week? So, what happens if we become so busy that we cannot keep up with all our responsibilities?

(1) We begin to lose focus. It is easy for us to get so wrapped up in our so-called responsibilities that we fail to spend time with God.

(2) As we have seen, we become physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted. It is easy to do things that we later regret. We could even experience burnout; some become so distraught that they commit suicide.

(3) It is so easy to begin to neglect prayer and Bible study. Then, our most important relationships in life suffer.

All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. In them is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and they need to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. **When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. This is the effectual preparation for all labor for God.** Amidst the hurrying throng, and the strain of life's intense activities, he who is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. He will receive a new endowment of both physical and mental strength. His life will breathe out a fragrance and will reveal a divine power that will reach men's hearts.—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*\* 58.3.†

49. Have you ever felt like your life was full of "one mores"—one more letter? One more committee meeting? One more text message? One more responsibility?

50. The rest that God offers us does not mean that we will not have problems; but, it does mean that we have an eternal assurance that He has a plan for our lives that can never fail. He will never leave us or forsake us.

51. So, what have we learned in this lesson?

- **When we become too busy to rest in our Creator's loving care, our lives become filled with stress and anxiety. This stress can lead to physical illness and emotional distress.**

- Our Creator has designed us to rest. This rest is more than a physical rest, as important as that is. This rest is a peace of mind that comes from believing His Word, trusting His promises, and entering the blessedness of His Sabbath rest.

- Living life apart from our Creator, as symbolized by Cain's experience, only frustrates our attempts to have inner peace and lasting joy. **Rest comes from having a trusting relationship with the One who made us. In Christ, there is rest. In His promises, there is assurance. In His presence, we are free from anxiety, worry, and care.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 16.†

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