

Retreating Before You Charge



Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 20, The Sabbath:** “The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God’s kingdom.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 84-86.

FIVE-MINUTE RETREAT

Viktor Frankl miraculously endured the seasons of horror in the Nazi death camps during World War II. One of his most basic needs, however, was to experience quiet moments of solitude. Even under the most grueling circumstances he would find a sweet release and the presence of mind to endure the hardship and the horror that confronted him daily. Viktor Frankl recalls finding opportunities to take five-minute retreats of quietness on the way to and from tasks in the camp. He worked in a place where dozens of people were crowded into one spot, so any chance he had to retreat behind the mud hut he seized. There, surrounded by barbed wire and covered by a canvas tarp, corpses were thrown for disposal. Amid the stench of rotting bodies and the constant reminder of death he would sit alone and gaze out at the Bavarian countryside. In the quietness of those moments he would leave behind the hopelessness of the death camps and be renewed enough to survive until the next opportunity to spend five more minutes came along. He recalls the dire circumstances and the reminders of death all around him. While the sight and the stench of decaying bodies might have been difficult to ignore in his moments of solitude, more distracting than anything else were the footsteps of guards coming, marking the end of his time alone with God.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read 2 Timothy 4:2.
- » Jenna is in the eighth grade. She writes: “I invited my neighbor Cassandra to spend the weekend at my house while her parents were away. I take time to reflect and pray every night before I go to bed. Cassandra noticed I was praying and said her mother does the same thing because of yoga classes. ‘It’s all the same,’ she said. I didn’t know what to say. I don’t want her to think that spending time with God is the same thing as yoga. But I didn’t want to offend her by telling her she was mistaken. What could I have said? Was it right just to leave it alone? It just seemed like a good opportunity to share, and I think I blew it.”

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE SABBATH

- » Read Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13, 14; Ezekiel 20:12.
- » Rest. Our minds and bodies need it to be healthy. Our spirit needs it to remain in contact with our Lord and Savior. Every day we need to spend time with God. When we spend time with God, He helps us to make decisions and to know what is right. And God has given us the Sabbath—a day to set aside our worldly interests and get to know Him and His will for us. It is a day to celebrate not only creation but salvation! Time spent with God during the week and on Sabbath restores our minds, bodies, and spirit for the work God has for us to do.
- » How do you spend quiet time with God?

- » What can you do to guard against distractions during your quiet time?

- » The Bible story from Mark 1:29-35 (NKJV) shows how Jesus honored the Sabbath rest and how He took time to spend with His Father early in the morning. Indicate with numbers the correct order of the verses.

_____ “So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her.”

_____ “Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew.”

_____ “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”

_____ “And the whole city was gathered together at the door.”

_____ “Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases.”

_____ “At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed.”

_____ “But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick with a fever.”



Tuesday
REFLECTING

- >> Read Mark 1:35.
- >> At first, spending quiet time with God may feel unusual. But, if you keep doing it, you will discover a joy and peace that nothing else gives.
- >> Think you are too busy just to sit and listen for God to speak to you? Look at how busy Jesus was in Mark 1—the whole chapter is fast-paced. But Jesus gets up before the sun because more than sleep He needs to know what His Father has planned for Him on this day. He also wants to be sure His life is in the hands of His Father. After His prayer time, He knows what His Father wants Him to do. God may have instructed Jesus that it was time to move on. Perhaps He would say, “Let’s move on to the next village—we have work to do there.”
- >> Time with God is a precious privilege. What are the obstacles in your life? A few minutes of extra sleep? A phone call cut five minutes short? One less e-mail or text message to write? What would our church be like if young people became involved? Imagine a whole generation of teenagers who make Jesus a priority in their lives. What might happen if young people would take time out of their busy lives to get in touch with the One who bought them eternal life? What is holding you back from making God first in your life?

Thursday
CONNECTING

- >> Read Mark 6:30, 31.
- >> Review the memory text.
- >> The image of God waiting for us to spend time with Him is powerful. God is waiting for His children—you and me—to want to be with Him. We don’t spend time with God because it is required. We do it because we enjoy it so much and want to spend time with Jesus! God is not interested in us having “devotions” as much as He is interested in our “devotion” (loyalty, faithfulness, dedication, and love). Devotions have a beginning and an end. Devotion is a lifetime commitment.
- >> In the Bible we clearly see Jesus hanging out with sinners all the time. The Pharisees would ask, “Why does He eat and drink with sinners?” The religious leaders may have snarled at Jesus, but His Father was smiling. No matter how busy Jesus was, He made sure to take moments of solitude—away from the people and teaching—just to be with God. No one, not even Jesus, could keep going day after day without quiet moments with God. And God smiles when we demonstrate our love to Him by sharing time with Him.
- >> God waits for you. He patiently watches you. When you hear God calling you, answer and give Him some of your time. Ask God to remind you if you need help doing this. He is more interested in moments alone with you than anything else. You will be amazed at how much He can do for you and through you when you invite Him to spend time with you.

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS

- >> Look up the following texts in the New International Version of the Bible, and answer the questions.
1. Matthew 14:13—How did the crowds follow Jesus?
2. Mark 1:35—When did Jesus go out to pray?
3. Mark 6:32—How did they go away by themselves?
4. Luke 4:42—What time of day was it when the people tried to keep Jesus from leaving?
5. Luke 22:39-44—Where did Jesus pray this prayer: “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done”?
6. John 7:53-8:1—Where did Jesus go?
7. John 6:15—Where did Jesus go this time and why?
8. Mark 6:30, 31—What did Jesus say to His apostles and why?

“Christ’s words of compassion are spoken to His workers today just as surely as they were spoken to His disciples. ‘Come ye yourselves apart, . . . and rest awhile,’ He says to those who are worn and weary. . . . 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” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 362).

Friday
APPLYING

- >> Read John 7:53-8:1.
- >> Schedule or spontaneously spend some time apart in the quietness with God. You might want to focus on one thing at a time and journal some of your thoughts and experiences as you go throughout the week.



Ear: What did you hear?



Bible: What verses came to your mind/did you read?



Heart: What honest communication did you have with God from your heart?



Eye: What did you see in God, yourself, or others as you spent time with Him this week?

