

STRENGTHENING YOUR GRIP

HOW TO BE GROUNDED IN A CHAOTIC WORLD

STUDY TEN

Strengthening Your Grip on Leisure

Genesis 2:1–2; Matthew 6:24–34; Ephesians 5:15–16

Leisure must become a part of our day, not just a part of our year. It must not be always connected with a camping site or an old swimming hole when we were children. Leisure must become a way of life to keep us in touch with the eternal.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WE work from dawn to dusk and still can't get it all done. So we take work home! The drive to produce more, achieve more, and earn more is unrelenting. Even when we're not on the clock, we keep our foot on the accelerator. We check e-mails while cooking dinner, listen to self-improvement podcasts while folding laundry, or scroll through social media while eating—constantly multitasking to squeeze the most out of every minute. Anxious hearts and repetitive burnouts are the price we pay in our effort to become highly productive.

Christians can fall into the trap of viewing overworking as a sign of spiritual maturity. Tiredness is next to godliness, right? Our perpetual busyness can make leisure feel like a waste of time—as though we lack motivation and discipline. However, our Savior invites us all to *find rest* in Him.

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28, emphasis added)

Does it surprise you that God encourages rest? Not laziness but restorative, replenishing, renewing leisure. In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll step into the footprints of the great Creator of the universe, our model for rest, and learn the value of leisure in our walk with Him.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Prayer is essential when studying the Bible. It expresses a heart posture of humility. Read the psalmist's prayer,

*I am your servant; deal with me in unfailing love,
and teach me your decrees. (Psalm 119:124)*

Use your own words to ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand His eternal truths and inscribe them on the tablet of your heart.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Paul urged us to “imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children” (Ephesians 5:1). Just as children mimic the mannerisms of their parents, we should mimic certain qualities of our heavenly Father. He is loving, just, and righteous, so we should be like Him in how we treat people, seek their best, and do what's right.

We can mimic God in other ways, too, and one of those ways is rest. Surprised? Yes, God rested, and He wants us to enter His rest. We can't fling stars into space or make matter out of nothing, but when He created the world, He displayed characteristics of leisure we can imitate.



Observation: God's Leisure Time

During *observation*, we spend time seeing what is written in the text. Take notes of what you can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell.¹

Tracing God's footprints in creation, we discover four guidelines for leisure. First, read [Genesis 1:1](#) attentively. What quality of God's nature can we imitate?

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Then read *Genesis 1:26–31*. Before and after creating humans, God communicated. Why do you think God valued communication while He was creating?

Now observe *Genesis 2:1–3*. What happened on the seventh day? How would you describe this aspect of leisure?

Read *Genesis 2:8, 18–22; 3:8* carefully. See the Creator of the universe noticing Adam's need for relationship. The Father built into us the need for relationships, and, even after Adam and Eve sinned, He kept relating to His children. What do you see in God's value of relationships? How do you think we can imitate this quality?

Observing God's creativity, communication, rest, and relationships gives us insight into how God made us and how to refresh our souls through leisure. Let's dig deeper to grasp how these guidelines work together.



Interpretation: God's Leisure Time Explained

During *interpretation*, we guard against bringing our own views to the passage by seeking the meaning of Scripture.

Interestingly, the English word, *leisure*, comes from the Latin root that means, "to be permitted." When we take time for leisure, we're giving ourselves permission to take care of our souls. There are no more refreshing ways to care for our souls than taking time to create, communicate, rest, and relate. Let's look closer at these God-imitating principles.

Not until we give ourselves permission and see leisure as a priority will we in fact have leisure. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Create. Look up the term *create* in the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary. Write its meaning and significance to modern-day readers.

There are aspects of who God made me to be that are never expressed unless I take time to create. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Communicate. Look up the term *communicate* and write its meaning below.

God's creative work that led to His communication was not a waste of time. It was not a little significant. It was not lazy or irresponsible. It was a full expression of divinity. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Rest. Look up the word *rest* in the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary. Write its meaning below.

Also, look up *rest* in a Bible dictionary. You have free access to Baker's Evangelical Dictionary at biblestudytools.com. Read it carefully. Based on what you read, write down the meaning of *rest* and its significance to believers today.

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God stopped. It wasn't because He was tired. It wasn't because there was not something else to do. It wasn't because He had run out of things to fill His time. It was a deliberate stopping of work, so there could be a deliberate beginning of leisure—to look at, to gather the value of it, to think it through . . . to enjoy it all. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Relate. Reread [Genesis 2:8, 18–22; 3:8](#). How do we build relationships in times of leisure?

Adam didn't come to God one day and say, "God, I've had it being in this garden alone. I am really up to here with those lonely days and nights." Rather, Scripture says, "God saw that it was not good for man to be alone." You know how God knew that? He took time to observe. He related. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Give heed to this command to touch the world with your creative strokes, unique musical notes, inimitable dancing steps, and good food. Don't forget your daily dose of leisure! Share, listen, care, and get to know God, yourself, and others. Take deliberate stops or vacations to contemplate and thank Him for the work accomplished.



Correlation: God, the Giver of Rest

God established the first workforce in the garden of Eden in [Genesis 1:27–28](#). Yet, He was the first to model rest after creation in [2:1–3](#). In [Exodus 20:8–10](#), God instructed the nation of Israel to embrace patterns of regular rest.

Compare [Genesis 2:1–3](#) and [Exodus 20:8–10](#) with [Ephesians 5:1, 15–16](#). What is the common theme in these three passages?

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In *Psalm 46:10* in the NASB and God's Word translations, the psalmist relays God's words to His people: "Stop striving" and "Let go of your concerns." Then, the Lord says, "You will know that I am God." What is the goal of being still? Why is leisure essential to achieve this goal?

Read *Matthew 11:27–28* in various translations. How can those who are weary and burdened find rest?

In our high-tech day of high-level pressures, Jesus offers us rest. While so many others are demanding, He is gentle. While competition is fierce and being in partnership with hard-charging, bullish leaders is tough, being yoked with Jesus is easy. Instead of increasing our load of anxiety, He promises to make it lighter.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Finding peace in Jesus requires us to place our trust in Him. Compare *Matthew 6:24–34* with *Psalm 46:10*. How can we avoid allowing worry about nonessentials and things we can't control to consume us and hinder the goal of leisure?

If your pursuit is to make a lot of money, you cannot serve God! However, in serving God, He may graciously give you the outflow of prosperity.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Application: Imitate God's Leisure Time

Think about how you can plan leisure into your schedule. For instance, stop and smell a few flowers, listen to a bird or two, or let the sunset sink into your soul. Write your plan below.

Think of some practical ways you can find rest in Jesus when life's trials try to rob your peace. Note them below.

God's guidelines for refreshing leisure include creativity, communication, rest, and relationships. Pick one of these guidelines. How can you put it into practice soon?

No more guilt for taking a break. No more hesitation to sit back and put your feet up. Make yourself comfortable. Find your rest in your Savior. Allow yourself the time to get a grip on leisure.

Where do you go to find enough stillness to rediscover that God is God? Where do you find rest when your days and nights start running together? What special spot becomes your hideaway so that a little perspective is gleaned and a little sanity returns? How do you get relief from the fever-pitch extremes of your own experiences? Jesus says to come to Him. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the Holy Scriptures, where we can find Your footprints to follow. As Your beloved child, help me imitate You well in the way I take time to create, to communicate, to rest, and to build relationships. May Jesus be the center of my existence. Help me to enter into the rest that only You can give. Help me experience Your promised peace in Jesus' name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1981, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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