

10 HABITS of Highly Healthy Homes



Habit 4: Renew Your Relationships

Sunday, June 18, 2000

*You are cordially invited to join us for **The Re-Wedding** on Sunday Evening, July 30 at 6:30, as dozens of couples renew their marriage vows in the biggest wedding in the history of Saint John.*

Ten Habits of Highly Healthy Homes

**Examine Your
Priorities**

**Avoid The
Counterfeits**

Take God Seriously

**Renew Your
Relationships**

**Respect Your
Heritage**

**Value The
Individual**

**Protect Your
Marriage**

**Maintain Your
Integrity**

Speak The Truth

**Discover Real
Contentment**

Exodus 20:8-11 (NLT) ⁸ Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days a week are set apart for your daily duties and regular work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any kind of work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; then he rested on the seventh day. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

- Do you ever get tired just thinking of all the stuff you have to do?
- Do you ever bring work home with you or use the weekend to catch up?
- Do you ever feel guilty when you relax? **YOU'RE NOT ALONE!**
 - 1 in 5 Canadians work more than 60 hours per week.
 - 2 in 3 employees say that their job is causing them to "unravel."
 - 1 in 50 feel they are on the verge of a breakdown due to their job.
- TODAY WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT WHAT GOD HAS TO SAY ABOUT TAKING A DAY OFF. THAT'S WHAT THIS COMMANDMENT IS ABOUT.
- **To the modern mind, such DOWNTIME seems ludicrous:** "Just in terms of allocation of time and resources, religion is not very efficient. There's a lot more I could be doing on a Sunday morning." – Bill Gates, quoted in Time Magazine
- "Most middle-class North Americans tend to worship their work, to work at their play, and to play at their worship. As a result, their meanings and values are distorted." – Gordon Dahl
- **It's interesting that God has more to say about taking a day off than He does about either murder or adultery!** But God knew we might not take this one seriously, so He expresses His wishes intensely. This is the longest of the Ten Commandments. God is saying, "This is not a SUGGESTION, I am COMMANDING you to take a day off every week. I don't want YOU, your CHILDREN, your SERVANTS, your ANIMALS, or your GUESTS to work on the Sabbath day!"

- God makes it clear in His Word that for human beings to function optimally over the long haul – to maintain an attitude of joy and peace, a positive perspective toward God and other people, and physical and emotional health – they have to break out of their weekly routines.
- An automobile will run longer and better if you keep it on the maintenance schedule recommended in the Owner’s Manual. That’s the way it is with human beings, too ... and the Bible is our Owner’s Manual. It says, “Take a day off every seven days!”
- God told us 3000 years ago what production analysts have concluded only recently – that reasonably spaced work breaks increase productivity. Statistics show that after approximately 40 hours of work, concentration levels drop, mistakes increase, and morale takes a nosedive. Even one’s health is affected, with workaholics leading the charts in work-related disorders such as high blood pressure and premature heart attacks. If we refuse to cease from our labors on a regular basis, we will inevitably experience the telltale signs of an impending breakdown.
- More than our bodies need a break! In our technologically advanced society, fewer people experience the physical stress of battered muscles and calloused skin. Many, however, experience the emotional stress that accompanies a schedule filled with too many people and too many demands. They need what God says they need – a BREAK!

DEFINING THE SABBATH

- **WHAT IS IT?** The word “SABBATH” simply means “day of rest” or “to cease.” When God created the world, He wasn’t exhausted on the seventh day, but He ABSTAINED from work to set a pattern for us. The first six days were “GOOD,” but the seventh day was “HOLY.”
- **WHEN IS IT?** God says that we are to take a sabbath every 7 days. The Muslim Sabbath is Friday, the Jewish Sabbath is Saturday, and the Christian Sabbath is Sunday. But not one verse in the Bible commands us to worship on Sunday. So why are we here? Because Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, the “Lord’s Day.” (Rev. 1:10)
 - **Romans 14:5-6a (NLT)** ⁵ *In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. Each person should have a personal conviction about this matter.* ⁶ *Those who have a special day for worshiping the Lord are trying to honor him.*
- **WHY IS IT?** The Sabbath is God’s antidote to burnout! It is a day of “RE-CREATION” more than just recreation, a time to rejuvenate oneself. **It is not only about TIME OFF, but also about SACRED TIME.**

(It’s obvious that cultivating a relationship with God necessitates much more than a weekly “check-in.” God calls His people His Bride, and it is ridiculous to think of trying to build a strong marriage by visiting one day a week! But, one day SET ASIDE for God is still irreplaceable!)

- **Mark 2:27** *Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made to benefit people, and not people to benefit the Sabbath.”*
- **Exodus 23:12** *Work for six days, and rest on the seventh. This will give your ox and your donkey a chance to rest. It will also allow the people of your household, including your slaves and visitors, to be refreshed.*
- **Illustration:** Perhaps you’ve seen film of some of the early attempts at manned flight, with mustached gentlemen in their Victorian suits flapping wing-like contraptions, peddling belt-driven propellers, and bouncing around ridiculously in useless gyrocopters. They are amusing now, but they weren’t back then. Many people lost their lives in the search for the secret to flight. The reason they look so silly to us today is that they didn’t understand the fundamental principle of flight. Today we understand that their flapping, running and jumping was useless. It wasn’t until the Wright Brothers learned how to apply Bernoulli’s Principle of Pressure Differentials using a curved wing edge that take-offs stopped looking like a clown act, and the course of human history was changed on December 17, 1903 at 10:35 a.m. **Before that, those well-intentioned aviators could not have succeeded because they weren’t dealing with reality. They had a faulty theoretical model, so they couldn’t get their contraptions to fly!**
- Discovering the meaning of the Fourth Commandment is a lot like the Wright Brothers’ breakthrough. The Sabbath is all about the way God has constructed us. In order to function successfully, we must understand its principles and apply them. **We will never “find time” for the important things in life, we must “make time.”**
- **ROCKS ILLUSTRATION (Stephen Covey):** The container represents a week of your time. The small rocks represent all the things you normally do in a week. The big rocks represent family time and other things that are really important to you, things you should do but have a hard time fitting into your schedule. Your task is to fit as many of the big rocks into the container as you possibly can. But you can never get them all in! You need a paradigm shift – PUT THE BIG ROCKS IN FIRST! **If you don’t put the big rocks in first, they hardly ever fit in.**
- THAT’S WHY WE NEED A SABBATH, A TIME TO RE-EVALUATE WHAT WE’RE DOING WITH THE “BIG ROCKS” OF LIFE!

- Some people say, "I spend QUALITY TIME with my family, not just QUANTITY time." But quality time doesn't always happen when you want it, simply because people are not always ready for it. It is in the QUANTITY of time that the most QUALITY moments will accumulate. Quality time comes when you least expect it!
- God has two words for time: **CHRONOS**, which means "time governed by the clock" (QUANTITY time) and **KAIROS**, which means "time measured by special moments" (QUALITY TIME).
- **The key is that you have to take advantage of KAIROS time at the moment it happens, or you lose it forever.**
 - **Luke 19:41-44 (NKJV)** ⁴¹Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴²saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the **time** of your visitation."
 - **Acts 24:25 (NKJV)** Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient **time** I will call for you."
 - **Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)** And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due **season** we shall reap if we do not lose heart.
 - **Ephesians 5:15-16 (NKJV)** ¹⁵See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the **time**, because the days are evil.
- LIFE IS NOT A **DESTINATION**, IT IS A **JOURNEY**!
- We must make a conscious effort to "keep" the Sabbath on a weekly basis. Those that ignore God's command may end up observing "accumulated Sabbaths" in a hospital room! That's what happened to Israel – the length of the Babylonian Captivity was determined by the extent of their abuse of the sabbatical year.
- **Leviticus 26:34-35 (NLT)** ³⁴ Then at last the land will make up for its missed Sabbath years as it lies desolate during your years of exile in the land of your enemies. Then the land will finally rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. ³⁵ As the land lies in ruins, it will take the rest you never allowed it to take every seventh year while you lived in it.

KEEPING THE SABBATH

- If God says that a Sabbath is crucial, that it is imperative to RENEW OUR RELATIONSHIPS, then we must understand how to observe or "keep" the Sabbath. It is to be a "holy" (set apart, different) day compared to the other six days of your week. How do I keep this day "holy"? By using it the way God intended!

THREE THINGS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SABBATH

1. Use the day to REST MY BODY

- **Psalms 127:2 (LB)** *It is senseless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, fearing you will starve to death; for God wants his loved ones to get their proper rest.*
- This principle is so important that God used Himself for an example when He created the world!
- There are more work saving devices than ever before, yet people are working harder and longer than ever before. A survey by Inc. Magazine reported that two-thirds of North Americans would agree with the statement, "I have burned out or I am on the way."
- If you're burning the candle at both ends, you're not as bright as you think you are! You can get so many irons in the fire that you put out the fire! Our bodies were not built for non-stop work.
- **Ecclesiastes 10:15 (GN)** *Only someone too stupid to find his way home would wear himself out with work!*
- An old Indian proverb says, "You break the bow if it's always bent."
- You say, "When I relax, I feel guilty." Jesus relaxed and He never felt guilty about it – and nobody accomplished more than He did. Even God took a day off after creation – WHO ARE YOU?
- An unwillingness to take a day off is basically saying, "I've got so much work to do, I'm so important, I'm holding up the world." You can resign as General Manager of the Universe; it's not going to fall apart! A reluctance to rest is a sign of immaturity; that's why your kids don't like to go to bed on time!
- But I've got to get all of this done! God says, "I don't care about the deadline – every seventh day, you don't work!"
- Rest will take care of physical fatigue, but it will not take care of emotional fatigue – that's why God says you need to do other things on the Sabbath besides just resting ...

2. Use the day to RECHARGE MY EMOTIONS

- In the French Revolution, they tried to throw out all of the old laws of France, one of which declared Sunday to be a day of rest. The revolutionaries declared that every day would now be a day of work. But within a few months they had to rescind that law and reestablish one day off per week. The health of the French people was collapsing – their idea for more productivity didn't work!
- The stresses of work drain you, and the pace of your workweek keeps you perpetually in a hurry. We need regular doses of inspiration and encouragement to recharge our emotions!
- HOW DO WE DO THIS? INCLUDE 3 THINGS IN YOUR SABBATH:

A. Include time for QUIETNESS

- **Psalm 23:2-3 (CEV)** *You lead me to streams of peaceful water, and you refresh my life.*
- In our world of noise pollution, quietness and soul restoration go together. Part of your Sabbath needs to be a quiet time when you get alone with God.
- **Isaiah 30:15 (NLT)** *In quietness and confidence is your strength.*
- **Psalm 46:10 (CEV)** *Our God says, "Calm down, and learn that I am God!"*
- Many people use the whole weekend to relax and have recreation, but they never have any quiet time. Then they can't figure out why they're still stressed out when they go back to work on Monday!
- **Mark 6:31 (CEV)** *But so many people were coming and going that Jesus and the apostles did not even have a chance to eat. Then Jesus said, "Let's go to a place where we can be alone and get some rest."*
- If you don't come apart, you'll come apart!

B. Include time for FAMILY

- **Ecclesiastes 9:9 (LB)** *Live happily with the woman you love through the fleeting days of life, for the wife God gives you is your best reward down here for all your earthly toil.*
- **Proverbs 17:22 (GN)** *Being cheerful keeps you healthy. It is a slow death to be gloomy all the time.*

- **Proverbs 14:30 (LB)** *A relaxed attitude lengthens a man's life.*
- **Do you want to live a long time? Then CHILL OUT!** Relax and enjoy your family. You're not wasting time; God says it's important time.
- Half of North American fathers say they don't spend enough time with their children. The average parent spends only 17 hours a week with their children, leaving them to be brought up by daycares, schools, or – worse yet – television producers. Half of our children watch more than two hours of television a day, but three-quarters of them say that if they could choose between spending time with their families and watching television, they would choose family time. In the US, substitute care for children is growing 33% faster than the US child population! BUT GOD SAYS THAT FAMILY TIME IS NOT OPTIONAL!
- The fallout of this kind of neglect is well documented. Increased drug and alcohol abuse, crime, promiscuous sexual behavior, depression, and suicide among young people are directly correlated to the condition of their families. A Sabbath day for worship and family time is almost a sure protection against many of these problems.
- At First UPC, we are committed to strengthening families. That's what this sermon series is about. That's why we don't have something going on every day of the week! You need time to RENEW YOUR RELATIONSHIPS.

C. Include time for FELLOWSHIP

- **Hebrews 10:25 (CEV)** *Some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other, especially since you know that the day of the Lord's coming is getting closer.*
- **Psalm 122:1 (NLT)** *I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."*
- Why did David look forward to the house of God? Because there's rejuvenation that comes by getting together with other believers! WE NEED EACH OTHER!
- **Proverbs 11:25b (NLT)** *Those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.*

- In the New Testament, Christians did many things TOGETHER (the word occurs 31 times in Acts, along with other phrases like “in one accord”). The relationships they forged helped sustain them even through persecution.
- Patch Adams, a revolutionary health care provider, subject of a hit movie, and founder of the Gesundheit! Institute, says “Laughter is not the best medicine; friendship is the best medicine.” Almost all the literature of the last 100 years deals with alienation and loneliness. People need to RENEW THEIR RELATIONSHIPS on a regular basis!

3. Use the day to REFOCUS MY SPIRIT

- The most important part of keeping the Sabbath is WORSHIP, the act of tuning out the world temporarily so we can tune in to God.
- ***Psalm 95:6 (NLT)*** *Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.*
- **Worship brings into focus the most important things of life.**
- The tragedy is that many people, on their day off, take the day off! They use the Sabbath to take care of their physical and emotional needs, but they ignore their most important need. Their spirit is empty and in desperate need of being filled with God’s presence.
- ***Mark 8:36-37 (CEV)*** ³⁶ *What will you gain, if you own the whole world but destroy yourself?* ³⁷ *What could you give to get back your soul?*
- God wants you to stop every seven days and ask yourself the question, “What am I giving my life to? Where are my priorities?”
- WORSHIP is the first thing you need to do on your day off – it is by far the most important. Parents, you need to faithfully model this to your children, even when you are on vacation. YOU DON’T TEACH VALUES TO YOUR KIDS, YOU MODEL THEM.
- In his book “It’s About Time” Leslie Flynn has a piece entitled, **“IF YOU ARE 35, YOU HAVE 500 DAYS TO LIVE.”** His premise is that, when you subtract the time spent on sleeping, working, tending to personal matters, hygiene, odd chores, medical matters, eating, traveling, and other time-stealers, in the next 35 years you will have the equivalent of only 500 days to spend as you wish.
- ***Psalm 90:12*** *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*
- **THE BIBLE TEACHES US TO “GET A LIFE!”**

- Novelist Anna Quindlen, in her Commencement Address at Villanova University, had some profound things to say about life ...

I’m a novelist. My work is human nature. Real life is all I know. Don’t ever confuse the two, your life and your work. The second is only part of the first. Don’t ever forget what a friend once wrote Senator Paul Tsongas when the senator decided not to run for re-election because he’d been diagnosed with cancer: “No man ever said on his deathbed I wish I had spent more time in the office.” Don’t ever forget the words my father sent me on a postcard last year: “If you win the rat race, you’re still a rat.” Or what John Lennon wrote before he was gunned down in the driveway of the Dakota: “Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans.” You walk out of here today with only one thing that no one else has. There will be hundreds of people out there with your same degree; there will be thousands of people doing what you want to do for a living. But you will be the only person alive who has sole custody of your life. Your particular life. Your entire life. Not just your life at a desk, or your life on a bus, or in a car, or at the computer. Not just the life of your mind, but the life of your heart. Not just your bank account, but your soul. People don’t talk about the soul very much anymore. It’s so much easier to write a resume than to craft a spirit. But a resume is a cold comfort on a winter night, or when you’re sad, or broke, or lonely, or when you’ve gotten back the test results and they’re not so good. So here’s what I wanted to tell you today: get a life. A real life, not a manic pursuit of the next promotion, the bigger paycheck, the larger house. Learn to love the journey, not the destination. Life is not a dress rehearsal – today is the only guarantee you get.

- **The Sabbath asks the question: Is my work or my worship the most important thing in my life?** The lifestyle Jesus taught is not a difficult lifestyle, it is the most logical lifestyle. God knows how you are made!
- ***John 10:10 (NLT)*** *The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.*
- One of the clearest signs that your priorities are out of order is that you are chronically fatigued, both physically and emotionally. If your life is like that, the Bible tells you what to do ...
- ***Matthew 11:28 (PH)*** *Come to me, all of you who are weary and over-burdened, and I will give you rest!*
- **RENEW YOUR RELATIONSHIPS** – especially the one with God!