

Preventing Burnout and Preserving Power

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Nehemiah 15.

B. This is the story of the reinstatement of the Sabbath rituals and the refusal of Jewish intermarriage.

II. The Sabbath was very important to the Jews, but Nehemiah found that the people were neglecting it.

A. Nehemiah rebukes the people.

B. Nehemiah used his authority as a governor to place hard restrictions on the people.

C. Nehemiah saw the Sabbath as something that was more than a ritual—God took it very seriously.

D. Nehemiah humbly prays that God would guide him in his venture.

III. The Sabbath regulations today.

A. The Sabbath was a shadow of something more important.

B. A person observes the Sabbath when one fulfills what the Sabbath portrays.

C. The Sabbath portrays rest.

1. We are a restless people facing stress and burnout.
2. The Sabbath was God's stress management program.
3. Our bodies need rest.
4. Our emotions need rest.

D. Reasons for the inauguration of the Sabbath.

1. To designate God's rest in creation. (Exodus 20)
 - a. God rested because He accomplished His objective.
 - b. Man too must rest when He is finished.
2. To reflect on God's ability to work. (Deuteronomy 5:15)
 - a. We rest in the New Creation—resting in the work that God has done for us.

b. We rest in the mighty delivering work of God.

1) This is a process of learning how to keep calm and poised looking to God for power to work. We are to trust His work.

2) We are to follow Him and obey Him to watch Him at work in our lives.

IV. The problem of intermarriage.

A. When the fathers disobeyed the children suffered.

B. In the church, when leaders are disobedient the children forsake the church forgetting the spiritual language of the people of God.

C. Nehemiah takes drastic measures: he rebukes them, calls them cursed, pulls many by the hair, and makes them take an oath.

1. These things are shadows, which we are not to repeat ourselves.

2. We are to fulfill the meaning and not the exact same actions.

D. When a church begins to run itself by a business process and the philosophies of the world to seek honor and prestige, it is doing against what Nehemiah warns us.

E. The priestly office is a picture of Jesus—the church is called to do the same work of Jesus. The role of the priest is to lead people into freedom from sinful habits and into opposition of the powers of darkness. (Luke 4)

Application questions:

1. In what ways are believers called to rest?

2. How would you respond to someone who says that one need not attend a Sunday church service since Sabbath is only a picture?

3. What dangers do we face in the church when we rely too heavily upon world philosophies to determine our course? Explain.
