

SERIES: LIVING THE GOOD LIFE
PART 3: HOW TO RELAX BECAUSE OF GOD'S GOODNESS

Welcome home, this morning, to our CVCHURCH family. We are a multicultural and intergenerational church family. If you are our guest today we consider you family and would love to develop a friendship with you. We're in our 3rd seek of a series I am calling LIVING THE GOOD LIFE. I encourage you to take notes this morning (afternoon). If you are new here to our family you will find fill-in notes that will help you get more out of what I will talk about today. One of the big myths in Southern California is that every one here is laid-back and easy going. Yeah, right. You know that we're famous for our SC vibe, beachgoers, entertainment and the over all fun capital in the US. But it is also a haven for workaholics. Surveys have shown that SC residents would actually rather work than play or pray. For that matter, studies have shown that we actually prefer employment over enjoyment and all of this great weather creates a lot of workaholics.

The truth is a lot of people don't know how to relax. We're addicted to adrenaline. We don't know how to slow down. This is true of pretty much all Americans. We had a date night after all of our guest left Scottsdale where we just vacationed. Kathe wanted to dress up a little bit and walk from the residence club where we stayed to the Hotel, which is about 2-3 blocks away. By this time I had walked over 80 miles in two weeks. When I hike, I walk fairly fast, so we were holding hands, and I just naturally took off dragging her behind me, and she took my hand and jerked me back and said, "We're not on a hike, we're on a leisurely date. Let's just enjoy each other." I laughed and said, "Yes, you're right." About 3 minutes later she had to jerk me backwards and said, "Please slow down." After the 3rd time I got it and was able to slow down. We don't know how to slow down, and again, sleep studies show that the average American today is sleep deprived. The average American today gets two hours less sleep a night than we did 50 years ago. We just don't know how to relax, and for many, they just refuse to admit that they need rest, relaxation

and rejuvenation. I did not grow up in a family that took vacations. My father was definitely a workaholic. So when I was first introduced to the idea in college that recreation means a time to experience recreation, I was blown away. A lot of Americans are like the verse in Job 20:18 here on the screen. It says, in the Message paraphrase, **“They are unable to relax and enjoy anything they’ve worked for.”** They are busy getting more.

Here is a little quiz to see if you have any workaholic tendencies in you. You don’t need to shake your head or raise your hand. Are you always in a hurry? Is your to-do list always unrealistically long? Do you use your days off to catch up on unfinished work? Has more than one person ever told you to slow down? Do you feel guilty when you relax? Do you have to get sick to get time off? You know you’re a workaholic when all your Christmas cards come back from business associates. You know you’re a workaholic when you head out for back to school night and you don’t know which one of your kids attends the school. You know you’re a workaholic when you leave your cell phone on at church for texting, or you either have a texting addiction. You know you’re a workaholic when your family refers to you as occupant. And you know you’re a workaholic when you take business-related reading material into the bathroom.

People can have a tendency to try to heap guilt on us if we don’t work like they do. I heard a story where a lady said to her pastor, “You know, Pastor, I tried to call you all day on Friday,” and he said, “Well, I’m sorry, but Friday is my day off. It’s my Sabbath.” She said, “Well, dear Pastor, the devil never takes a day off.” My pastor friend said, “Yes, and if I didn’t take a Sabbath I’d be just like the devil. So you need me to take a day off.”

Our series is based on the most famous chapter in the Bible, Psalm 23. This incredible Psalm demonstrates a deep commitment of trust and confidence in the protective and providing nature and character of God. This Psalm models for us the 10 ways that our Good Shepherd, our Great Shepherd and Chief Shepherd takes care of us His sheep. He leads, feeds and meet our needs. A lot of your worry, hurry, scurry and restlessness actually comes from not understanding and believing in the goodness of God in your life. When you understand what God has done for you and wants to do for you in the future,

you can relax, you can learn to rest, you can learn to let down and let go. You can truly live in the goodness and the unfailing love of Jesus that actively pursues you all the days of your life. One of the ten activities that our Good Shepherd Jesus does for us is to make sure that we get enough rest in order to stay healthy. This takes us to verses one and two. Would you read out loud with me these two verses? They are on your notes and on the screen. **“The Lord is my Shepherd; I have all that I need. 2 He lets me rest in green meadows; He leads me beside peaceful streams.”** Psalm 23:1-2. Please write in your fill-ins:

These images of green meadows and peaceful streams represent rest and refreshment.

Please circle the words **“He lets me.”** Some translations say, “He makes me,” but that is not an accurate assessment. Jesus can lead you to rest but you must be willing to do so. So let’s look at Pt # 1

I. What causes people to overwork and not get enough rest?

What are the reasons that so many of us resist resting and relaxing in God’s purposes and plans for our lives? There are many but I want to share five with you. Please write this statement in your notes: **To give God my best requires rest!** Let’s look at five reasons the Bible gives that people won’t relax.

A. Misplaced identity: Basing my worth on work

We fall for this all the time don’t we? One of the reasons the Bible says we can’t relax is that we confuse our work with our worth. People confuse their net worth with their self-worth and that their value comes from their valuables. If I work real hard I will succeed at work, then I am valuable. If I don’t work and I don’t produce then I’m not productive, and, therefore, I’m not valuable, and that’s a total lie friends. It’s a myth. In our Western culture our identity often revolves around our work, so we overwork in an attempt to prove ourselves. Ecclesiastes 10:15 says this, **“Fools are so exhausted by a little work that they can’t**

even find their way home.” The Bible says that life is more than work. Work is important but your life is far more than the work you do. When we have a misplaced identity we think our worth is based on our work, then we’re going to put all of our time, our money, our energy, and our effort into our work.

B. Materialism: Always wanting more things

The truth is the more things I have--then I’ve got to make more money to maintenance them and replace them when they wear out. I’ve got to work harder and longer hours. Yet the Bible says not to do this. Proverbs 23:4-5 warns, **“Don’t wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit. 5 In the blink of an eye wealth disappears, for it will sprout wings and fly away like an eagle.”** You can lose all your money. The Bible says don’t spend all of your life trying to get something you could lose so quickly, because they can fly away like an eagle. It’s my observation that many people spend the first half of their lives sacrificing their health overworking in order to get wealth. Then they spend the second half of their lives sacrificing wealth in order to get their health back. Have you ever thought about that? God says to us that this is not a wise way to live your life--always wanting more. In Luke 12:15 Jesus says, **“Watch out! Always be on your guard against all kinds of greed, because your life is not defined by how much you make or how many things you own.”** Materialism, just like misplaced identity, causes me to overwork.

C. Envy

This is where I try to keep up with my neighbors. I try to keep up with every one I am comparing myself to. This will cause me to do thing that I don’t really have the time to do. Too busy trying to keep with others. This is envy. Their kids have dance lessons, so we have to have dance lessons for our kids. Their kids are involved in these five extracurricular events, so our kids have to be involved in these five extracurricular events. Not necessarily. My girlfriend and all of my friends are on social media all the time, so I have to be on social media all the time also. We do things we don’t need to do because other people are doing

them. King Solomon noticed this problem and pattern of envy literally thousands of years ago. In Ecclesiastes 4:4 he says, **“Then I observed that most people are motivated to success because they envy their neighbors. But this, too, is meaningless--like chasing the wind.”** Envy drives us to say to ourselves, “I want to be like them. I want to do what they do. I want to go where they go and have what they have.” They very well could be under more stress than you are, so make sure you’re choosing the right models to follow. Envy can drive you to do things that are actually hurtful to you, according to the acronym we use here at CVCHURCH called **SERFVIP**. It stands for your **Spiritual, Emotional, Relational, Financial, Vocational, Intellectual and Physical** areas of your life. The fourth reason people don’t relax according to the Scripture is when we...

D. Value achievement over relationships

Men we’re more prone to do this than women, but everyone can do this, where you put your career above everything else, including relationships. We’ve all known people who’ve walked away from marriages because of their career, or they walked away from being a good parent, or just being a good friend, because the career was more important. Their work was more important. When goals are more important than people in my life, or when goals are more important than people in your life, you’re skating on thin ice. Again King Solomon gives us God’s perspective on this issue in Ecclesiastes 4:7-9 in the MSG/CEV translations. **“Here’s another thing I’ve seen on earth that makes no sense: Some people don’t have any kids or family or even friends, yet they work obsessively, never taking a break. There’s no end to their toil, and they’re never content with what they’ve done or earned. They never ask ‘Why am I always working to do more?’, and, ‘Why don’t I let myself enjoy life?’, and ‘Who cares? Who will get what I leave behind?’ What a senseless and miserable way to live! You’re better off having someone to enjoy and share the rewards of your work.”** God put you and me on this planet to learn how to love Him and how to love each others. The Bible says it over and over. You are to learn to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength and to learn to love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus is most concerned about the quality of our relationships and how we're truly loving, serving and sacrificing for each other.

E. Insecurity: I'm afraid I won't have enough

A Pastor friend of mine was sitting at dinner with a multi-millionaire, and when my friend asked him this question, "So how much more do you think you need to be secure?" The guy looked him straight in the eyes and said, "Hmm, about 20, 30 million more." This is incredible. Psalm 127:7 God says, **"It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to His loved ones."** How do you do this? How do you and I learn to relax? How do I live a more sane life, a more balanced life, a less stressed and more blessed life? Instead of living a restless life, how in the world do I live a rest-filled life? I want to show you the antidotes to all five of these, because God, in His Word, gives us the antidote to every one of these causes. We learn to rest by trusting our Shepherd. **"The Lord is my Shepherd; I have all that I need. 2 He lets me rest in green meadows; He leads me beside peaceful streams."**

II. How to learn how to relax in God's goodness

A. Remember my value to God

This is the starting point to getting a saner schedule. This is the exact opposite of basing your worth on your work. Please write this down on your notes. **It's not what I do that gives me worth but who I belong to.** You'll never be any more valuable to God than you are right now. My kids are valuable to me, not because of what they do, but because God gave Kathe and me the ability to create them, and we love and cherish Whitney, Benjamin, and Kelsey, his wife, and the little Wood she is carrying in her womb. It doesn't matter who they are or what they've done, they're our creations. We love them and are committed to them, and you are God's creation, and He is deeply committed to you. So the antidote to looking to work for your worth is to just realize how worthwhile you are to God. James 1:18 says, **"He (God) chose to give birth to us by giving**

us His true Word. And we out of all creation became His prized possessions.” Are you broken? Yes. Are you a sinner? Yes--so am I. Are you perfect? Absolutely not--neither am I. Are you deeply loved by God? Yes. Are you flawed? Yes. But are you of infinite value? Yes. God says, “I have engraved you on the palms of My hands.” Ephesians 2:10 says, **“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus. So we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.”**

B. Enjoy what I already have

The key to learning to enjoy what you already have is learning to be content with what God has given you. Contentment does not come naturally to us human beings. You are not by nature a contented person. By nature we are discontented. We always want more and more. Just like the serpent lied to Adam and Eve about God’s character and intent in not having them eat of the tree of good and evil, he is always whispering in our ears, “You deserve more. You need more. You must have more.” But it is an absolute lie. God says, “Use what I have given you by sharing what you have with others.” Have them in your home and offer people hospitality. The more you share with others what God has given you--if He wants you to have more, He will give you more. Paul says in Philippians 4:12-13, **“For I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.”** Learning contentment means I don’t have to have this incessant grabbing for more. We can become so preoccupied in getting more that we don’t enjoy what we have. Ecclesiastes 4:6 says this, **“A little food eaten in peace is better than having twice as much earned from overwork and chasing the wind.”** What is it that you already have? I encourage you every day to thank God for who He has placed in your life and to thank Him for all of the physical and material blessings He has given to you, and begin to think how you can bless others with what you already have.

C. Limit my work to six days a week

You could be saying, “Come on Pastor Scott, you have to be kidding me.” I’m not and neither is God. Keeping the Sabbath is the fourth of the 10 commandments. Exodus 20:9-10a in the Today’s English version says, “**You have six days in which to do your work, but the 7th day is to be a day of complete rest dedicated to Me.**” Would you write in your notes...

“Sabbath” means: A day of rest

God has given us one day a week that we’re not to work so that we can do three things that I will give to you in a minute. God has biologically wired us for a day of rest. God did it so you won’t burn out. One of the reasons people are so stressed out today is because they have forgotten this. Jesus said this in Mark 2:27-28, “**The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!**” God made the Sabbath for our sake, not for His. When I ignore God’s laws I get hurt. There is a lot of confusion about the Sabbath. So much so that one denomination has called themselves 7th Day Adventists, and they adamantly follow the belief that Saturday is the Sabbath. I don’t have time to go into detail on this but in the New Testament the early church began to worship on Sunday because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But the truth is you must choose what day is your Sabbath. My Sunday is not my Sabbath, because it is one of my most important work days. My Sabbath is every Friday. I recommend that you do not call your Sabbath your work day because you will cheat on your day off, but if you take your Sabbath seriously you won’t. I don’t do any work on Friday. You have to plan for this and commit to this. There are three things on your notes for you to write down the three things God wants you to do on your day off.

1. Rest my body. You know the fact that if you don’t take time off your body will make you take time off. I do every thing within my power to sleep in on Friday and even take a nap if I need to later on in the day. You must give your body the needed rest it must have.

2. **Recharge my emotions.** You must find what recharges you. Spending time with Kathe. Going to movies. Doing something that I consider fun. Walking and exercising. Everything Kathe and I read and listen concerning health, especially as we get older--they say that exercise is key to your health especially some amount of cardio where you keep your heart strong.

3. **Refocus my spirit.** That is what we do when we worship individually and together as we are today. I want to challenge you, church, if you will take the Sabbath seriously you will begin to learn to relax and you will feel better. Proverbs 14:30 says, **“A peaceful heart (a relaxed attitude) leads to a healthy body; jealousy (envy) is like cancer in the bones.”**

D. Adjust my values

Why is this so important? Because if you're going to reduce the busyness in your life, you're going to have to change the way you think about what's important. You will want to ask yourself the question, “What is really important? Look at this verse in Mark 8:36-37 **“What good is it for a person to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? 37 Is anything worth more than your soul?”** But you might say, “But look at all the stuff I accomplished with my work!” How's your soul? Did you forfeit your soul? Did you forfeit your relationships? Did you forfeit loving God? Did you forfeit loving your neighbor as yourself? What does it profit a person's soul if you're on the cover of Time Magazine and you lose your soul? To adjust my values means I will have to look at my priorities and see which priorities need adjusting also. If you will, you will find yourself learning to relax in the goodness, love and acceptance of God.

E. Exchange my restlessness for God's peace

This is where I make the commitment to give up my restlessness. I will allow the Shepherd of my soul to let me rest in green meadows. To exchange means that I actively look for the green meadows to rest in. I commit to giving up my tendency to roam, and to wander and my tendency to veer off God's course for my life. I choose to exchange my restlessness for God's Peace. I want to

challenge you to start putting these principles into practice immediately. This week plan which day you are going to start making your Sabbath. I have told you mine is Friday. God's way is not only right, it's the only healthy way. It's the enjoyable way to live. If you are tired of living the way you're living, here's God's answer to you. Come to Jesus. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus gives every one of us this incredible invitation to come to Him. I want to read it to you from the Message paraphrase, **"Are you tired? Are you worn out? Are you burned out? Come to Me!"** And notice He didn't say "Come to a doctor, come to a class", but He says, "Come to Me." He points us to a relationship with Him. **"Get away with Me and you'll recover your life. And I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me and work with Me and watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."** The answer is for you to come to Jesus. He isn't going to load more on you, but He's going to take the load off of you. Let me summarize what I just taught you.

Remember my value to God
Enjoy what I already have
Limit my work to six days a week
Adjust my values
Xchange my restlessness for God's peace

What does that spell? Exactly. That is what God wants you to do.

Let's pray together.