



May 25: (Believing Study)

Group Study: The Exodus

Discussion Questions

1. Why is the Exodus considered the defining moment of Israel's identity? How does being "the people of the Exodus" continue to shape Israel in the future?
2. How does the story of deliverance from Egypt shape our understanding of God?
3. How does the Exodus foreshadow Jesus' work of salvation?
4. Read the Song of Moses (Exo 15:1-18). Notice that Moses and the Israelites sing together! What does this song tell us about how the Israelites understand God's work of deliverance?
5. What does the concept of Sabbath teach us about living in God's economy of abundance rather than Pharaoh's economy of scarcity?
6. How can we practice remembrance of God's faithfulness in our lives?

Good Faith Bible Study

Kathy and Nathan Maxwell

May 25, 2025

"The Exodus"

Belief: Sabbath

<https://goodfaithmedia.org/bible-studies/>

This week, our podcast will focus on a concept that's closely related to the "Exodus identity" of God's people—the concept of Sabbath. The biblical concept of Sabbath is sacred. It's subversive. And it's life-giving.

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We're drawing on the wisdom of theologians and Old Testament scholars Walter Brueggemann and Travis West, who both offer powerful visions of what Sabbath really means. Here's a spoiler: Sabbath is not just about taking a nap. And it's not just about going to church.

Brueggemann famously calls Sabbath resistance—in fact, he wrote a wonderful, challenging book called *Sabbath as Resistance*, which I highly recommend. Sabbath is God's gift of resistance to the systems that want to grind us down, commodify our time, and define our worth by what we produce. Travis West builds on Brueggemann's ideas, showing us that Sabbath is not only a resistance to something, but a turning toward something else. It's a way of being that's rooted in freedom and delight and trust.

The command to observe the Sabbath is given at Mt. Sinai, not long after the event of the Exodus. Moses has led God's people out of slavery in Egypt and away from their lives under Pharaoh's brutal economy of scarcity. Pharaoh always demanded more of the people—more work, more bricks, and no more straw!

Later, in Deuteronomy 4:20, God's saving work is described like this: "But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron-smelter, out of Egypt, to become a people of his very own possession, as you are now." And when God's people find themselves receiving the ten words of God at Mt. Sinai, God is tracing for them a way of being that is completely other than the ways of Pharaoh. Sabbath is an astonishing gift given to the people who were now invited into God's economy of abundance.

In Exodus 20:8-11, God describes Sabbath: "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it."

Notice that the "rest" commanded here is not just for God's people but for creation, all the people in their community, and even for God.

In Egypt, there was no rest. No seventh day. Only endless quotas. But the first thing that God gives the people, even before the Promised Land, is the rhythm of rest. A gift. A

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boundary against burnout. A way to say: We trust that the world will not fall apart if we stop working.

In his book *The Sabbath Way*, Travis West says that Sabbath is about more than rest. It's a "reorientation of the heart." It's a practice that slows us down not just to pause, but to relearn how to live. He writes that Sabbath "pulls us out of the trance of urgency" and lets us remember that God is not in a hurry ... and we don't have to be either.

That is a radical word in our culture.

We live in a world where urgency is worn like a badge of honor. Where the question "How are you?" is often answered with "Busy." Exhaustion is treated like a virtue, and stillness feels like a failure.

But Sabbath tells a different story.

Sabbath says: You are enough. Right now. Not after you finish the project. Not after the promotion. Not after the house is clean. You are just ... enough.

Brueggemann calls that "God's abundance." And West echoes it, reminding us that when we stop striving, we learn to see the goodness of the world again. We make space for beauty and for laughter and connection. We make space for God.

Sabbath, in that way, becomes a prophetic act. It's how we say no to the endless pressure of performance and yes to the rhythms of grace. It's a boundary, and it says, "I will not be swallowed by this culture of scarcity. I will live in the truth that there is enough—enough time, enough grace, enough love."

And here's the thing: Sabbath isn't just about you or me—it's about us. West reminds us that Sabbath is communal. It's about making sure that everyone gets to rest. It pushes us toward justice. A Sabbath-shaped world is one where no one is overlooked, underpaid or left behind.

Centuries after the Exodus, the prophet Isaiah delivered a word from the Lord, a word that speaks of the ever-expanding covenant people of God. Listen to these words that

extend God's offer of relationship to the foreigner, to the eunuch and to the outcasts. The beginning of Isaiah 56 says:

"Thus says the Lord:
Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come,
and my deliverance be revealed.

²Happy is the mortal who does this,
the one who holds it fast,
who keeps the sabbath, not profaning it,
and refrains from doing any evil.

³Do not let the foreigner joined to the Lord say,
"The Lord will surely separate me from his people";
and do not let the eunuch say,
"I am just a dry tree."

⁴For thus says the Lord:
To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths,
who choose the things that please me
and hold fast my covenant,

⁵I will give, in my house and within my walls,
a monument and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that shall not be cut off.

⁶And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,
to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it,
and hold fast my covenant—

⁷these I will bring to my holy mountain,

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and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.

⁸Thus says the Lord God,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.

Do you hear the one commandment referenced again and again? Sabbath. Sabbath is possible because of God's holiness, and Sabbath is what builds space into our lives for loving our neighbor.

So, what would it look like for you to live the Sabbath Way?

Could you let yourself stop—not just physically, but spiritually? Could we trust that God has called us out of Pharaoh's system of scarcity? Can we resist—can we choose not to be ruled by a system that demands more and more of us and of others? Could you unplug and reconnect with yourself and those around you, as the beloved ones of God?

This week, I invite you to make some space for something sacred, something simple. Light a candle. Put down your phone. Sit, just with your breath. Share a meal ... slowly. Listen for God's voice in the quiet.

Because Sabbath isn't just a pause in the week. It's a path toward freedom. It's how we remember who we really are.

May we walk the Sabbath Way—resisting fear, embracing abundance, and resting deeply in the God who is still leading people out of bondage. The God who is still whispering, “You are more than your labor. Come rest with me.”