

**Changing Lanes – Pt. 6**  
**“Turn It Off!”**  
**The Principle of Restoration**

**Introduction:**

Over the past two months we’ve been going through a series called “Changing Lanes,” focussed on how to make positive change in our lives. Today is the conclusion of the series. Just before we get into it, let’s review.

Part 1: Put God First – The Principle of Priority

Part 2: Take Out the Trash – The Principle of Transformation

Part 3: Do Your Own Dishes – The Principle of Responsibility

Part 4: Do It Now – The Principle of Inertia

Part 5: Write It Down – The Principle of Clarity

That brings us to this morning’s message: Turn It Off – The Principle of Restoration. My wife and I just returned from a week-long vacation about a week-and-a-half ago. As we were getting ready to leave I remember the stress and the pressure to get things done. There were plans to be made, messages to finish, a wedding to prepare for, that would take place as soon as I got back. My wife had schedules to prepare and amend, lessons to plan, and many other stresses to cope with.

But once we got on the plane, we settled in, put on a movie, enjoyed the view out the window and thought about reconnecting with people we hadn’t seen in a long time. The week was a whirlwind of activity, talking, laughing, reminiscing and enjoying one another’s company. We didn’t intentionally set out to be renewed and refreshed but it happened, because we were able to turn off the work motor and give our minds and bodies a break. That’s the way that we are designed.

We live in a world that is constantly telling us to do more, go faster, hurry up, work harder, earn more,. And sometimes, those messages are true and good. God made us to be productive; there is a dignity and value in hard work and creativity. If we don’t have an outlet for those things there is something lacking in our lives. But the same God who created the world in six days set us an example by taking the seventh day as a day of rest.

He didn't do that because He was tired; He did it in order that we would know that we should rest as well. In Exodus 20:8-11 as God was handing down the law to the Jewish nation through Moses, He said this: *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”* It is the fourth commandment.

The law was given as a part of the covenant agreement with God's people, the Jewish nation. There is still a lot of discussion about what the law has to do with us who live on the other side of the New Testament. My purpose today is not to dig too deeply into that, but I will touch on it. The Bible tells us that Jesus came to fulfill the law and He also came to establish a new covenant with us – a covenant of grace. Paul wrote about the Sabbath in Colossians 2:16-17 – *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”*

Hebrews 4 speaks about the Sabbath rest for the people of God and how that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ by His finished work on the cross. Because of what He did, we no longer have to “labour” in law-keeping in order to be justified in the sight of God and this includes the observance of the Sabbath. Jesus was sent so that we might rest in God and in what He has provided.

By saying, *“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”* (Mark 2:27), Jesus was restating the principle that the Sabbath rest was put in place to relieve man of his labours, just as He came to relieve us of our attempting to earn salvation by our works. We no longer rest for only one day, but forever cease our labouring to attain God's favour. Jesus is our rest from works now, just as He is the door to heaven, where we will rest in Him forever. There is no other Sabbath rest besides Jesus. He alone satisfies the requirements of the Law, and He alone provides the sacrifice that atones for sin. He is God's plan for us to cease from the labour of our own works.

There is nothing sacred about any particular day, either. The Old Testament Sabbath was Saturday. After Jesus' resurrection, the early church changed

the day of worship to Sunday, the first day of the week, likely in remembrance of the day that Jesus rose from the dead. But in Acts 2 and elsewhere we see that the early Christians also met on other days of the week. In our culture, for centuries, Sunday was set aside as a day of rest and worship because the vast majority of people were Christians and Sunday was when public services were held. Stores were not allowed to be open, there were no organized sports on Sunday, and most everyone took the day off work. I don't think we've gained anything by changing that.

However, all that being said, the principle of restoration still applies in our lives, not as some kind of legalistic thing that we must do to win favour with God, not to make anyone feel guilty who has to work on Sundays, but as a practice that enables us to be refreshed and refocused on a regular basis.

We're not made to have the switch always set to "on." John Ross Schroeder called the condition of our age "Hurry Sickness." It's to the point that many feel like a hamster on a wheel. They get on as a young adult and can never find the way off. But let's look at what we see in the Biblical pattern.

We see, in the way that God has created nature, that there is an order to everything. The earth orbits around the sun every 24 hours and spins on its axis so that there is a day and a night. From the dawn of creation, the day has been for work and the night has been for sleep. Before electricity this was especially so. People would wake at first light to take advantage of the sun and they would sleep at night. Studies have revealed that, on average, we sleep 90 minutes less than our ancestors just 100 years ago. With the rise of the internet and satellite and cable TV, we're sleeping 25 minutes less than we did even 10 years ago.

God also divided time up in chunks of seven days. There are seven days in a week – not 50. Our Creator knew that we have limits, and we need a break every seven days. You can manipulate that any way you want to, you can pretend that you're invincible and work crazy shifts for weeks on end without a break, but eventually it catches up to you. We all need that break.

Time has become such a valuable commodity that we joke about wishing there were more hours in a day. I don't wish that. I find that no matter how many hours there are in a day, I can fill them with busyness. What I need is wisdom to know how to manage those 24 hours properly. In Psalms 90:12 we read: *"Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of*

*wisdom.*” Alan Redpath, former pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, had a plaque on his wall that read: *“Beware of the barrenness of a busy life.”* So, time is important; it is a precious commodity. What should we do need time for as it relates to our subject today?

### **Time to rest.**

We need time to rest. It doesn't matter who you are, how smart, how strong or how talented – you need times of regular rest. I have learned this the hard way in my own life. I know that many have joked that pastors only work one day a week, but I think you'd be surprised. There are times when I've allowed the demands of ministry to crowd out my schedule to the point where it seemed that days off were only a rumour. I've foolishly allowed myself to be stretched beyond where I could easily recover. It's interesting that the time the board advised me to take off to recuperate was called a “sabbatical” – a time of rest.

Jesus, entrusted with the most important mission in the history of the world, regularly took time apart to rest. He also encouraged His disciples to do the same. In Mark 6:31 it says, *“Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.’”*

We all need it. For you workaholics out there - Stop! It's okay to take a break.

### **Time to recreate.**

When we think of recreation we usually think of sports or outdoor activities – things that we do. What do they have to do with our well-being? Merriam-Webster defines the word “recreate” like this: “to give new life or freshness to.” Particularly for those of us who sit at a desk for a good portion of our day, it's important to get out and do something that gets the motor running.

Looking back on our trip to Oregon, it's amazing how many activities we packed into a short period of time, and how good it felt as we were doing those things. Recreation is literally the refreshment of one's mind or body after work through activity that amuses or stimulates. For some that may mean a long walk, for someone else it might be a good book or a puzzle; for others it might be strenuous physical activity, but it really does recreate us.

## **Time to reflect.**

The late author Norman Cousins observed: *"We in America have everything we need except the most important thing of all, time to think and the habit of thought."* In a world that is chaotic and non-stop and where mindless entertainment is available 24/7, one of the most important things that we can do is to unplug from all of that and allow our minds some activity.

Taking some time apart allows us the space to really look at our lives. For a lot of people I know, the thought of that terrifies them. They have no desire to stop and consider the current state of things. It's much easier just to keep running. What is going well in your life? Are your relationships healthy? Are you fulfilled? Are you growing? Are you happy with the direction you are headed? What problems are you facing? What can you do to face them and fix them? Pick your own questions.

Read good books that inspire and challenge you. Listen to good music that lifts and motivates you. Engage your mind in something challenging. It might hurt the first few times, but you'll get over it.

## **Time to reconnect...**

**With Others.** The final subject I want to touch on is the need to reconnect. It seems that the inevitable thing that falls through the cracks of our busy lives is relationship. We love our family and we love our friends, but in our busyness, we just don't have time to keep those relationships healthy. But when we live on purpose, and by our priorities, we can change that.

God made us for relationship. Much of what Jesus shared in the Gospels was on the subject of relationships. He gave us the Golden Rule: *"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."* The writers of the letters of the New Testament followed His lead. In Ephesians 4:32 Paul wrote: *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."* I have a list in my files of all of the "one anothers" in the New Testament. It's a lengthy list. "Love one another, bear one another's burdens, care for one another, pray for one another..." The list is an extensive one.

It was John Andrew Holmes who said *"It is well to remember that the entire universe, with one trifling exception, is composed of others."*

**With God.** When we get back to the heart of the principle of the Sabbath rest, the underlying need is for us to remember our desperate need of God. We are so prone to forget Him. As the old hymn we sang today says, “*Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.*” I wish I could write a song that captures that sentiment for this generation the way that one did in the 1700s. What’s the point? The point is this – if God is to be the priority in our lives and truly be the rock upon which we stand, we have to regularly take the time to re-center ourselves on that reality.

We need to take the time to read and hear His Word; we need to take the time to foster a relationship with Him through prayer; we need to take the time for corporate worship; we need to stop and focus our minds attention on Him: His Word, His will, His world. When we take the time to create an opportunity and an openness, God will speak to us. But we have to take the time. What has God been speaking to you about lately? If you don’t have an answer to that question, why not?

*“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” – Psalm 46:10*