

## 週一嗎哪 午間查經分享祈禱會

MONDAY MANNA  
September 5, 2022

### THE AMAZING PARADOX OF REST By Rick Boxx

In Jordan Raynor's book, *Redeeming Your Time*, he uses a story from the 1800s to encourage us to remember the importance of Sabbath rest. Raynor writes that during the famous California Gold Rush, some of the adventurous individuals, embracing visions of striking gold and instantly becoming rich, traveled westward toward California seven days a week. Others, however, only traveled for six days each week, stopping to rest each Sabbath.

The differing travel schedules apparently had paradoxical results one might not expect. "The Emigrants Guide to California," which was published in 1849, offered the observation that, "If you rest one day out of seven, you will get to California 20 days sooner than others who do not."

This finding, that those traveling by covered wagon only six days a week out of seven actually advanced faster than their relentless, everyday counterparts, confirms what the Bible teaches about taking off one day for rest and physical renewal. In Leviticus 23:3 it says, "*There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of Sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work.*"

This was a command God gave to the ancient people of Israel following their release from bondage in Egypt. But establishing one day a week for Sabbath rest is as relevant today as it was many years ago.

There is a related verse that addresses seeking a proper balance between work and rest. In another Old Testament book, we are told, "*If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success*" (Ecclesiastes 10:10). One application of this teaching is that once the blade of an ax has become dulled, it requires more effort and more time to accomplish the same result.

American President Abraham Lincoln is reputed to have said, "*If I only had an hour to chop down a tree, I would spend the first 45 minutes sharpening my axe.*" Envision one man frantically chopping without stopping, trying to cut down a large tree, while another keeps his ax blade sharp so it will cut easily.

Many people in the business and professional world work extremely long hours, sometimes seven days a week, ignoring their need for personal refreshment. They ignore this paradox of being able to accomplish more if we work less, setting aside time for much-needed rest. They do not stop to "sharpen the ax."

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In some nations, people observe “Labor Day” or an event by a different name, declaring it a national holiday – a day of rest – to celebrate the values and virtues of work. In the U.S.A., it is traditionally the first Monday in September. Work is honored, but appropriately by setting aside an additional day for rest.

Reading through the Bible, we find many teachings about the importance of hard work, recognizing how initiative and enterprise in the workplace generate great rewards, both financial and in terms of enjoyment and fulfillment. For instance, Proverbs 10:4 states, “*Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.*” Also, “*The laborer’s appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on*” (Proverbs 16:26).

However, these passages do not ignore the importance and necessity of rest. Even in the biblical account of Creation, it says, “*By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from his work*” (Genesis 2:2).

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### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. What is your work routine like? Do you work long hours, convinced that if you do not invest excessive amounts of time to your tasks and responsibilities, you will not succeed? Explain your answer.
2. Are you familiar with the term, “workaholic,” someone seemingly addicted to work? Who do you know – perhaps even yourself – that would fit such a description? How would you evaluate their quality of life, and level of personal satisfaction and fulfillment?
3. Does the concept of “sharpening the ax” sound familiar? Is this something you have made a habit of doing in your own approach to work? If not, what steps could you take to start doing this “restful” practice?
4. Knowing the Bible says that after doing His work of creation, even God took a day to rest, what does this have to say about those who pursue non-stop, seven days a week work schedules?

#### **NOTE:**

*If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:  
Proverbs 12:11,24, 14:23; Ecclesiastes 9:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17,23-24*

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