

LT2 Module 5 - Caring for Ourselves as Leaders

Video Outline and Notes

Introduction:

What does it look like to care for ourselves in the ways God is asking us to? How can we ensure that we ourselves remain strong and fit in heart, soul, mind, and strength for the long haul? And how can we model for our groups the ways to do the same? How can we build into our lives a resilience that keeps us growing and flourishing in our journey with Jesus through good times and bad?

As leaders, you are people who have chosen to step out and give yourselves away for the sake of Jesus and others – you are leading a 2 Timothy 2:2 lifestyle, where the things you have learned from others about the life of faith, you are actively investing in others who will also pass along these same things to still others. So this training module presumes that your life is a reservoir with streams flowing out to others. And any reservoir that has streams flowing out must also have streams flowing in, or eventually it will simply dry up. This training module is meant to help you ensure that you yourself don't dry up – that you are consistently filled by the streams God intends, and that the groups under your care are also nourished and fed by God, as well. This module is all about helping you care for yourself in the Lord, and as a result, to help maintain an atmosphere of care in the groups God has entrusted to you.

Outline -

- I. Why is taking care of ourselves important?
 - a. **Jesus** modeled it.
 - b. **Scripture** teaches us the importance of self-care.
 - c. **Wisdom** requires it.
- II. What does it look like to care for oneself practically?
 - a. We must **rest**. (Get good sleep and observe Sabbath.)
 - b. We must be **renewed**. (A consistent relationship with God in prayer, worship, and reading the Bible.)
 - 1) Prioritize spending relaxed time with friends and family.
 - 2) Pay attention to what you eat and drink.
 - 3) Get moving and get outside.
 - 4) Pay attention to and do what feeds your soul.
 - c. We must **retool**. (Participate with God in ways that will help mature and deepen us in some aspect of our life and faith.)

- 1) Read, take classes, go to conferences or seminars as God gives you grace to do.
- 2) Covenant Groups - Groups that are focused on intentional development of their members in some specific area of Christian maturity, ministry, knowledge, or growth.
- 3) Small Group Leader Training 3 - On-line and/or on-site classes designed to help you grow in some area of Christian maturity or competency.
- 4) Vineyard Institute - Dozens of classes that will help you grow in Biblical literacy, theological depth, competency in ministry, and personal maturity.
www.usa.vineyardinstitute.org

Continue to exercise sheet.

LT2 Module 5 - Exercise Sheet

Understanding and Living Sabbatically

Sabbath is the intentional rest of God's people for the purpose of spiritual and bodily renewal. Before reading through the outline and participating in the exercises, take a few minutes and read Genesis chapter 1 and the first three verses of Genesis chapter 2. Then pray and ask God to reveal what Sabbath rest you may need to engage in as you study and do the exercise.

Outline:

- I. The existence of sabbath presumes a life of diligent work
 - A. Six days of work, one of rest
 1. We are participatory partners with God in all the work of the Kingdom – in the work of creation, in the work of stewardship, and the work of redemption
 - B. Leadership is characterized by *diligence*
 1. In Romans 12, Paul instructs each of us as members of the body to exercise the gifts – the particular graces given to us to contribute to the health and work of his body, the church – and to exercise those gifts in a particular way. He says one thing about each gift, and to those gifted with the grace of leadership, he says one thing – to lead with *diligence*
 2. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. (Romans 12:8b | NLT)
 - C. So our starting point is the assumption that each of us is diligent in our labor and is given to fruitful work unto the Lord, whether it is in our leadership in the church, or in your regular daily work – diligence is a given
- II. The priority of Sabbath
 - A. God himself rested on the seventh day
 1. On the seventh day God had finished His work of creation, so He rested from all His work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when He rested from all His work of creation. (Genesis 2:2-3 | NLT)
 2. See, **the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day.** (Exodus 16:29a | NASB)
 - a) The pattern is that God provides for us sufficiently that we need not constantly work – the flourishing of our lives does not, in the end, depend on our work, but on God's provision. Sabbath teaches us this fact.

3. [The Sabbath] is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but **on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed.** (Exodus 31:17 | NASB)
 - a) A looking back on past labors and a look forward to future labors – even for God, who is all powerful, the practice of savoring the work he has already done and reflecting on future labors is somehow “refreshing” (and this is indeed a theological mystery!)
4. "Tell the people of Israel: ‘Be careful to keep My Sabbath day, for the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between Me and you from generation to generation. **It is given so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy.** (Exodus 31:13 | NLT)
 - a) Sabbath is a step of faith – to cease the stream of our words and the flurry of our deeds and to trust that as Paul says in Romans “it does not depend on the one who wills or the one who runs, but on God who has mercy.” (Romans 9:16)

III. The practicalities of Sabbath

- A. Biblical Sabbath exists in the context of a life given to diligent labor, even as God himself is by his very nature given to diligent labor
 - a) Sloth is Sabbath that has overflowed its banks, and it brings no true rest in the biblical sense, for biblical rest is always accompanied by fruitfulness
 - b) Sloth is rest without diligent labor, and leads to a deteriorating life
 - (1) I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, then your poverty will come as a robber and your want like an armed man.” (Proverbs 24:30c-34 | NASB)
- B. **Sabbath is the ceasing of our labor, accompanied by the practice of more fully opening ourselves to God in some way, that we might be refreshed.** We do not approach sabbath legalistically – for example, some weeks it is “sabbatical” for me to rake leaves in the yard, while other weeks, it is not. We need to be sensitive and honest before ourselves and God when determining what constitutes sabbath rest and genuine refreshment on any give day or week. Some “sabbatical” activities are listed below, but this is by no means an exhaustive list, and these are activities that are, of course, refreshing any day of the week, whether it is a day you are designating as sabbath.
 1. Worship
 2. Time in the Word

3. Prayer
4. Solitude
 - a) Being alone allows us to encounter God that we may miss when we are always with other people.
 - (1) Jesus on repeated occasions retires alone to a remote place for prayer or for solitude
 - (a) Extraverts: this is particularly important for you.
 - i) It is sometimes easy to lose all sense of self-awareness and God-awareness in the midst of our actions and interactions
5. Silence
 - a) "Be still ("Cease striving" (in the NASB), and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world. (Psalms 46:10 | NLT)
 - b) Eat a silent meal alone with God.
 - c) Take a walk without your phone.
 - d) Fast the internet for a day a week.
 - e) Leave the radio off in the car.
6. Sleep
 - a) Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted. Unless the Lord protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good. 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 (Psalms 127:1-2 | NLT)
 - b) Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep (or, "he gives sleep to his beloved.") (Psalms 127:1-2 | NASB)
 - c) Jesus models this when he sleeps in the boat, even in the face of crisis, in Matthew 8/Mark4/Luke 8
 - d) There are times when the most spiritual thing you can do is to go to bed, to take a nap, or to sleep a little longer
 - e) Be honest about how much sleep you actually need to be rested, and do what you need to do to get that sleep
7. Celebration
 - a) Friendship
 - (1) Calendarize renewing relationships
 - b) Food and drink
 - (1) Sharing an ordinary meal with my own family is one of the chief graces of my life.

(2) Pay attention to what you eat and drink, and take time to savor it. Ask God how you can better learn to love him with your sense of taste.

c) Fun

(1) Figure out what is renewing to you and make it a regular part of your life

(a) For me, it is cycling, hiking, hanging out with Kathryn, hanging out with my family or with close friends, reading poetry and philosophy, etc.

d) Creativity

(1) For me, writing poetry, doing simple art, working with my hands

(2) Find out what creative outlets give you life, and take some time to do those things

IV. Resistance to Sabbath

A. Cultural resistance

1. Work

2. Social media

a) You may actually find that there is more spiritual benefit to fasting internet connectivity or social media than there is to fasting food and drink in the 21st century

3. Our inner voice

4. Fear of missing something

a) We do not need to know everything about everyone all the time, and we fray our inner life when we attempt to do so.

V. Responding to Jesus

A. 5 minute of silence exercise

1. Five Minutes of Stillness (From *Beginning to Pray* (1970), by Anthony Bloom, pp. 85-86.)

Sit down and say, "I am seated, I am doing nothing, and I am doing nothing for five minutes," and then relax, and then continually throughout this time (one or two minutes is the most you will be able to endure to begin with) realize, "I am here in the presence of God, in my own presence, and in the presence of all the furniture [or people, or natural surroundings, etc.] that is around me, just still, moving nowhere." There is, of course, one more thing you must do: you must decide that within these two minutes, five minutes, which you have assigned to learning that the present exists, you will not be pulled out of it by the telephone, by a knock on the door [by an incoming email or text or tone on your phone, etc.], or by a sudden upsurge of energy that prompts you to do at once what you have left undone for the last ten years. So you settle down and say "Here I am," and you are. If you learn to do this at lost moments of your life when

you have learned not to fidget inwardly, but to be completely calm and happy, stable and serene, then extend the few minutes to a longer time and then to a longer while still.

VI. The voice of Jesus

A. There is nothing more important in your life than maintaining a close and living relationship with Jesus, and living in such a way that over all other voices, you maintain your ability to hear his. This is a struggle, and an increasingly bloody battle in the face of 21st century technology, and it will only get harder with each passing year.

1. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. (John 10:4 NLT)
2. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:27 NLT)
3. Listen to His voice:
 - a) Then, turning to His disciples, Jesus said, “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. Look at the ravens. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to Him than any birds! Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? And if worry can’t accomplish a little thing like that, what’s the use of worrying over bigger things? “Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, He will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? “And don’t be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don’t worry about such things. These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and He will give you everything you need. So don’t be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom. (Luke 12:22c-32 | NLT)
 - b) “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32 | NASB)