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The Nature and Purpose of Work and Productivity

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The authors discuss the importance of the work-rest cycle for daily living.

As the bell tolls for the beginning of a new millennium, the hectic pace afforded our lives in the 20th century is apparent. It is difficult to find the rest so often needed and required. Our lives fly by at a pace difficult to maintain and sometimes impossible to enjoy. At times, the beauty of God's creation and God's dealing in our lives pass as a gentle breeze blowing above the opening of a volcano. What will be the pace of the 21st century? Will rest become a true priority to the children of God, or will life continue at a pace so rapid as to interfere with one's walk with the Master? To understand the nature of rest, and in particular the Sabbath-rest in Scripture, one must first come to a theological understanding of God's purposes for work and productivity in the created universe.

Work plays a substantial role in all of our lives. Whether one has primarily a "muscle or a mind" job, labor and productivity are an important part of each of our lives. In the creation, God

worked both as a "hands-on" worker as well as in a professional, supervisory capacity.

It is not an exaggeration to say that God is depicted in Genesis 1 and 2 first as a white-collar worker and [then] as a blue-collar worker because we see in Genesis 1 such activities as planning, designing, issuing instructions, and managing. But He is also seen as a blue-collar worker, mainly because he depicts Himself as an artisan, in particular as a potter, forming and fashioning things with His own hands. So when God made man in His own image, male and female, He made us as workers, too (Colle, 1995, 2).

God also acts as a "gray-collar" worker (an individual responsible for tending and maintaining machinery and information flows). He is actively involved with His creation, providentially intervening to maintain and sustain our world.

The Meanings of the Word Work in the Scriptures

In order to gain a biblical perspective of work, one must determine some of God's intended purposes for work. A good beginning point will be a brief overview of the Hebrew and Greek words used for work in the Bible. These biblical words and their etymology reveal a variety of nuances and shades of emphasis, which help broaden and deepen our concept of work.

First, the Hebrew word *abad* conveys the idea to work or to serve. A derivative noun *abodah* also has the perspective of labor or service. The Greek word *ergon* carries the thought of rendering service. Certainly work can be viewed from the perspective of that which allows us to serve or minister to the needs of others and attend to the common good. "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need" (Ephesians 4:28). Service to others is emphasized in the scriptural words for work.

Another crucial emphasis that comes out of Hebrew and Greek derivatives for work is the concept of worship. The idea in Hebrew is "to do" or "to

perform" and, by implication, "to do" the law of God. This "doing" is closely connected to the idea of "worshiping God" as demonstrated by a life of obedience to Him. The Reformers picked up on this concept when they considered one's work as worship and occupation as constituting a "calling of God." It is purported that a Christian cobbler asking how he could let his customers know of his Christian faith once approached Martin Luther. The cobbler's idea was to put a cross on the bottom of each shoe. "Martin Luther's reply was classic; 'A Christian cobbler is not known by whether he makes a cross but by whether he makes a good pair of shoes'" (Augsburger, 1989, 65). Indeed, both in its process and its product, work should be a demonstration of our worship to God and should reflect favorably on the glory of God.

It is the Marxists who see man as "manufacturing man," whose productivity is the essence of his humanness. It is the Bible that sees man as "worshiping man," a man who works indeed, but then lays aside his work on the seventh day or the first day of the week in order to worship (Colle, 1995, 3).

Within the Hebrew word *yaga* and the Greek *kopos* is articulated the idea of labor, work, or productivity which is carried out to the point of utter physical exhaustion. This is the Greek word used in I Thessalonians 1:3 when it speaks of a “labor of love.” The implication is that our love is demonstrated through our exertion on another’s behalf, even to the point of weariness.

Lastly, as we look at the Hebrew and Greek words for work, work is shown to be a demonstration of obedience to a sovereign authority. This is partly revealed in the above ideas of service and worship, but also comes through clearly in Ephesians 6:5, “[S]laves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.” This facet of work is reflective of God’s design in the constituted authority structures of life.

The Purposes of Work

To understand the theological purposes of work, one must begin with the cultural mandate to subdue and exercise dominion over the created order. This cultural mandate is stated in Genesis 1:28, “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and

increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’”

In fact, history could be viewed as mankind laboring and producing in order to carry out this dominion covenant. Much of the activity of man through history is the operationalizing of the “dominion covenant” or “cultural mandate.” This is accomplished by the transforming of the created order and can be viewed as the reworking of the raw materials that God created *ex nihilo*.

Translated “subdue,” the Hebrew word *kabash* means to bring under subjection. The concept is to tread down and bring into bondage. The word translated “dominion” is the Hebrew word *radah*. This is usually used in connection to a King and his subjects, but it can mean to prevail against or to trample under foot. “*Radah* comes from a word meaning to prevail against or to trample down and suggests the image of one treading grapes in a winepress in order to secure their juice” (Kantzer, 1989, 22).

Man’s first assignment in carrying out this “dominion covenant” is reported in Genesis

2:15, which states, “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work [*abad*] it and take care of [*shamar*] it.” Combining the meanings “to work” and “to take care” provides the idea of conservation, maintenance, or preservation. In addition, the words connote the idea of improving and causing something to be productive and fruitful. So certainly one of the divine purposes that God intended for work and production was the purpose of taking the created order of raw materials and not only preserving them but actually causing them to be transformed into a more fruitful and usable form.

Even with humanity in its fallen state, work and labor may still reflect man’s attempts to fulfill this commandment. Man’s labor and energy used to transform the created order constitute a reversal of or a retardant to the effects of the Fall and its curse. In this context, production and work then are an “impeding factor” to the Second Law of Thermodynamics.¹ The grass in the lawn will overgrow unless you mow it. Automobiles will rust unless someone utilizes labor to wax and protect the car from rust.

This tendency towards decay was introduced at the Fall. Mold will form on cheese and bread unless the energy of the refrigerator impedes the molding process. The Fall introduced decomposition into God’s creation. In order to delay this decay, work and energy must be exerted.

After the Flood, the words “subdue” and “dominion” are noticeably absent from the text of the Word of God. This noteworthy absence is because work has taken on a slightly different character after the Fall. Work and productivity, instead of having a primary emphasis of subduing and dominating, now provide preservation and maintenance. This is simply a shift in the shade of emphasis. Restoration of the creation from the curse of the Fall is a future promise.

Yet another crucial purpose for work is given in I Timothy 5:8, “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” Consider again Ephesians 4:28, “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.” Labor is a means whereby

needs are met. This takes place at the individual level as well as in the family and community. Work and fruitful productivity constitute God's designed method of meeting physical needs. This does not preempt His ability to supply our needs more directly (manna, quail, etc.), but it does suggest that work was his primary intended method of supplying essential material needs.

God has also designed work to be a method through which man can exercise inventiveness. God imputes value to his created works (Genesis 1:31). "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." Because he bears God's image, man is able to assign or impute value to what he does and what he makes. Within the makeup of man is a need to ascribe value to the creation of his hands. He must do so because he is an image bearer—*imago deo*. In transforming and changing the raw materials of God's creation, men and women in a truly reflective way mirror God with the value they ascribe to the work of their hands.

Through his work, man has the opportunity to most precisely express the creative aspect of the image of God. Our creation in the image of God being expressed through the product of our hands

and minds is clearly seen in the small child who works with play dough to design and create something at his level of ability.

To be meaningful ... work needs to have an element of creativity. Workers must be able to see part of themselves in the finished product. They must be able to say, "I made it. I see my personal touch in the final product. When I see the product I feel a sense of pride because I made it" (Chewning, Eby, & Roels, 1990, 86).

This implies a subpurpose of work and work's routine; work can be therapeutic or possess a healing nature. When one is struggling with mental fatigue or even struggling with feelings such as unworthiness and low self-esteem, work and work's routine can be the catalysts that serve to reinstate therapeutically that subjective sense of the creative image of God in our own personhood.

Another purpose is that labor and work serve as ministry opportunity. For example, our work can open an avenue to share and live out the gospel before a needy and hurting world. Daily labor may be more than "another day, another dollar."

For the believer, the opportunity may arise to serve and share the gospel of Christ in a very tangible way. The result may “be another day and another soul nurtured into the kingdom of God.”

This, of course, must be done with propriety. As Christians we owe our employer a “full day’s work for a full day’s pay.”

But certainly the occasion may arise where with discretion and propriety the gospel may be shared.

In addition, the process of our labor reveals a further purpose of work. If our labor is completed with a good attitude, graciously and energetically, we give a

testimony of the grace and provision of God in our lives.

The process of how we perform our work may be a lost and dying world’s only exposure to the gospel. We must allow the light of God’s grace to shine through our lives so our colleagues “may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). This is not only expressed in the content of our jobs (what we do), but also in the context (how we do our work). Labor that may not be traditionally considered

“Christian ministry” must be done to the glory of God (Colossians 3:17).

Work can also become the means to make another person successful. One’s accomplishments in work and life and for the Lord would not have been possible without the hard work and long hours of others. Conceptually, humanity resembles bricks in a large building where people and their work provide support, mutually undergirding one another in productive enterprises and successes. Through all of life God must receive the glory.

Perhaps the key purpose intended by God for work is to illustrate to

Through his work, man [can] express the creative aspect of the image of God.

us the concept of working and resting in Him. Ultimately there is coming a final

rest (Sabbath-rest). This final rest would be made possible through the death of His own dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture clearly reminds us that God rested from His labors and His creative activities (Genesis 2:2). God intends us to live balanced lives. He created the necessity of work for His children and thus built labor into the texture and fabric of our existence. However, the text of

Scripture is also clear that the principle of work-rest permeates the entire realm of His creation. The work-rest dichotomy is built-in to God's order. It is so common, people seldom stop to consider the importance of adhering to and the consequences of disobeying this principle.

The Work-Rest Cycle

Implicit within God's design for His creation is the necessity of the created order to obey the work-rest or tension-release cycle. Not only did He build this rhythm into His design for the planet, but He Himself serves as the living illustration of this pattern.

This principle is also applicable to the things made by man himself. Even such things as capital equipment and machinery must obey this mandate. A piece of machinery must be given intermittent periods of rest and "off-line" times or its depreciation will be accelerated. God allows for freedom of choice and expression thus allowing spontaneous and meaningful worship of Himself through our work and rest. The work-rest cycle will be violated only at great cost to our physical and spiritual well-being. Humans are not designed to be continually

"on." We must have our "off" times. The "off" times serve to refresh, renew, and regenerate our ability to work and be productive.

The One-out-of-Seven Principle

God established a one-out-of-seven ratio when He instructed us and modeled for us the work-rest cycle. People need not be rigid and force rest on every seventh part of every activity. It is crucial, however, that humanity recognizes God's design in this area. People are dependent beings and must implement the principle in our lives in creative yet consistent ways.

The Lord created or worked six days and then rested on the seventh day. The Lord's primary purpose in His own resting was not due to a depleting of His energy or resources. God's rest was carried out with the primary intent to instruct and illustrate people's need to follow this cycle in our individual lives. God created humanity with a need to replenish strength and renew perspective through times of rest.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor 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 manservant or
maidservant, nor your animals,
nor the alien within your gates.
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*
(Exodus 20:8-11).

This passage illustrates God's design and makes the work-rest cycle normative for all humanity.

The Desire for Balance

Life is made up of cycles. The work-rest cycle is only one of the many cycles God has built into His creation. Ecclesiastes 3, for example, pulsates with cycles in constant refrain: "a time to ... and a time to" Verse 7b gives a glimpse of the tension-release cycle in communications when it states, "A time to be silent, and a time to speak." This passage describes the balance God has designed for life. The Psalmist addresses balance in productive activities when he states, in Psalm 127:1-2,

*Unless the LORD builds the house,
its builders labor in vain.
Unless the LORD watches over
the city,*

*the watchmen stand guard in vain.
In vain you rise early
and stay up late,
toiling for food to eat—
for he grants sleep to those
he loves.*

One can sense the balance in production God wants us to have between trusting in Him and serving others through our own efforts.

Consider a passage such as Ecclesiastes 4:5,6—"The fool folds his hands and ruins himself. Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind." Note the balance of the work-rest cycle. The Scriptures are clear people are not to be slothful, but on the other hand they are not to be workaholics, making an "end" out of work and materialistic acquisition. This behavior constitutes idolatry. Humanity is to blend the cycles and rhythms of life with faith and trust in a sovereign and loving God.

Jesus mentors and models a lifestyle for his disciples that elucidates the rhythms of life. Consider the following admonitions. "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (Mark 6:31). Many Scriptures enforce the expression "you need to come apart or you

will come apart.” Matthew 8, Mark 4, and Luke 8 all give accounts of Jesus falling asleep and resting even in the midst of great storms that would keep any of us awake. He was often departing to a solitary place to be alone. He was practicing not only what He Himself needed in His human estate, but what He knew the disciples needed as well.

The Work-Rest Cycle Applied to Land

One of the best biblical supports for this tension-release cycle is its application to land. Listen to God’s restatement of the work-rest cycle, especially as it applies to the soil.

For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused.

Then the poor among your people may get food from it, and the wild animals may

eat what they leave. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove. Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as

well, may be refreshed (Exodus 23:10-12).

The passage describes the instituting of the Sabbath year. This “year off” allowed the earth and soil to “take a nap.” During this resting time, nutrients in the soil are restored and the land becomes even more productive and fruitful. If the Sabbath year rest for the land was violated, God knew the soil would become depleted of necessary nutrients which allow the soil to give forth abundantly.

The tentacles of the work-rest cycle entangle themselves in the arena of care for the poor. How society should go about meeting the needs of the poor, the stranger, and the sojourner is addressed in instituting the Sabbath year of rest for the land. The poor were to benefit from the

leaving of the vineyards and land on the seventh year. One is struck with the rather

Rest is pictured in the Bible as the fruit of an obedient and faithful life.

thorough “social security” system God designed for the nation of Israel through family, the Sabbath year, the Jubilee year, the Leverite marriage principle, etc. Such government-sponsored programs as food stamps,

Medicare, and Medicaid were not needed, and yet God was able to meet the basic needs of those less fortunate. And of course the Jews were to count off seven Sabbaths of years and institute the year of Jubilee on the 50th year. The Jubilee year was also a form of release and rest. But in addition to the land resting, there was a release of debts by fellow Israelites.

God was quite serious about the Jubilee and Sabbath years. They were intended to give insight into the dynamics of the reversal of the curse upon the land. God was always illustrating with a variety of object lessons that an ultimate Sabbath-rest is coming. The ultimate Sabbath-rest was to come through the Messiah. God was intent on Israel obeying his dictates in reference to these years of rest and release. Recall the primary reason for the Babylonian captivity was that the nation failed to keep and obey the clear principle of the work-rest cycle. God collected one year for each seven years that Israel had violated the Sabbath-rest. Thus they were in captivity for 70 years because of profaning the Sabbath for a period of 490 years.

He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who

escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah (II Chronicles 36:20-21).

The Work-Rest Cycle: Its Prophetic Implications

To the Israelites, this cycle served, along with the feasts and holy days, as a porthole or picture window through which to peer and see the divine and spiritual implications of the coming Messiah. He would give them rest from their sins and ultimately a Sabbath-rest. But the Israelites failed to see, as if blinded, and they missed and even stumbled over the divine point of these illustrations.

Ultimately both Jews and Gentiles are to enter into a Sabbath-rest through Christ's accomplished work on the cross. Rest is pictured in the Bible as the fruit of an obedient and faithful life. Listen as the writer of Hebrews talks of this "final rest," this "Sabbath-rest."

Now we who have believed enter that rest ... There remains,

then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his (Hebrews 4:3, 9, 10).

The entire context of the above passage is that many of the Jews failed to enter into that sovereign rest because of disobedience. But He says again to them and to us, "Today if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts." Yet also there is a real sense in which we enter God's creative rest now. The requirement for entry for the Jews and the Gentiles is faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. In Hebrews 4, the writer reaffirms that to all there is coming an eschatologically complete and restorative rest. "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God."

The Sabbath-Rest: Its Meaning

The Scriptures use this concept of Sabbath-rest in several ways. Consider the following.

- The Sabbath-rest represented for the historical Jew the entry into the "promised land." This is the context of Hebrews 4:1-10.

- For the Christian, the Sabbath-rest can legitimately

represent salvation. The use of an aorist tense participle (the ones having believed) in Hebrews 4:3, "Now we who have believed enter that rest," indicates believers enter the Sabbath-rest. If one contemplates the nature of the restorative dimension of redemption, and that one may present no works to God to accomplish his own salvation, it is easy to understand this as "redemptive rest" (Bruce, 1964, 73).

- In the Hebrew text there is a current sense in which the believer has entered into this Sabbath-rest. This is also confirmed in such passages as Matthew 11:28-29, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

The Christian's rest might be called a "sanctifying rest." It is the rest the "saint" of God experiences in the midst of trials and tribulations as one journeys through life.

- For the believer, there are two senses in which this concept of "rest" is used in an eschatological way. (1) Saints look forward to heaven. "I am going there to prepare a place for

you” (John 14:2). “Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one” (Hebrews 11:16). Even Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration spoke to Jesus about “... his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31).

The reason Christ’s departure was on Moses’ and Elijah’s minds is they were “in heaven on credit,” and the crucifixion would pay in full their sin debt. (2) There is coming a perfect eschatological rest, which is a “confirmation in holiness.” The curse placed on the created order will be lifted and the degenerative nature of the curse will be reversed.

He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” ... No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him (Revelation 21:5; 22:3).

The Sabbath-Rest: Its Cultural Implications

The Sabbath-rest must be examined from a culturally integrative perspective. When we individually or corporately violate God’s laws, there will be consequences. The spiritual

significance of this Sabbath-rest has not been altered since the Old Covenant in the mind of God. If we sacrifice our worship for work, if we become a nation of workaholics, we will pay dearly. If we sacrifice our children and our marriages on the altar of constant activity, we, like Israel, will be carried away into captivity. Our bondage is ultimately spiritual. We are shackled to the god of work, unable to worship God freely and serve one another with joy. If we continue to draw the blanket of activity and noise over our contemplative times, we will surely die. Even as the Israelites were warned, “Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death” (Exodus 31:14).

Sabbath-Rest: Re-Creation, Not Inactivity

The rest portion of the work-rest cycle is not total inactivity, but an inviting of God into our activity, causing our labor and productivity to be a ministry to the glory of God. F.B. Meyer captures this thought so vividly:

We are not summoned to the heavy slumber which follows overtaking toil, nor to inaction or indolence; but to the rest which is

possible amid swift activity and strenuous work; to perfect equilibrium between the outgoings and incomings of the life; to a contented heart; to peace that passeth all understanding; to the repose of the will in the will of God; and to the calm of the depths of the nature which are undisturbed by the hurricanes which sweep the surface, and urge forward the mighty waves. This rest is holding out both its hands to the weary souls of men throughout the ages, offering its shelter as a harbour from the storms of life (Meyer, 1950, 73).

A definition has been provided for the work-rest cycle. Its importance in Scripture and the overall scheme that God intended for the work-rest cycle in teaching integrative truth eschatologically have been shown. In conclusion, one must examine a few practical outworkings of this principle in life.

The Work-Rest Cycle: Some Practical Implications

If God intended land, machines, beasts, and people to all rest, one would expect to find numerous illustrations and examples in life of either adherence to this principle or

observed consequences of its violation. Beginning with one's favorite easy chair or favorite hobby, types of relaxation can be examples of adhering to God's rest in our own personal lives. Of course, anything can become an idol in our lives, but an adequate amount of recreation to the glory of God is pleasing to Him.

All through creation this work-rest principle is at work. For example, take the common bow. The bow must be unstrung when not in use or it loses its ability to be productive in giving arrows accurate and sustained flight. The speed of machinery must be governed and shut down regularly for maintenance or excessive depreciation will result.

Often students will ignore this rest portion of life. During finals week, they will often work beyond their capacity, staying up long hours to study. This leads to loss of productivity and lower levels of performance (test results). Once the student does rest, it may take several days to recuperate. Students may use the colloquial term "crashing." Perhaps a more biblical analysis to describe this phenomena would be "a violation of God's intended rest cycle." It is imperative people include this concept of the

rhythms of life and, in particular, the rest rhythm into their personal lives. Each person has a personal productivity cycle. Everyone should become aware of how God designed each of us to carry out the work-rest cycle. Only by obeying this “rest” in our own

lives can His reputation be enhanced among those who watch our daily activities.

Each person has a unique productivity cycle. Some are at high levels of productive output in the morning, some at midday, and others in the evening hours. Some are even bimodal in their efficiency times. A professor at Cedarville College indicates that he reaches maximum efficiency in the middle of the morning, has a low around noon, but recovers by mid-afternoon.

To understand when personal productivity is highest and lowest is important to understand God’s design and becoming wise in Him. Also, to understand this cycle in others will aid in overall team output and harmony. This understanding is a key to being more gracious to one another. This understanding is important to have effective and

efficient communications. People best communicate with one another when both are at high productivity times.

Students sometimes experience low productivity in an 8 a.m. class. Instructors teaching at this hour usually choose the

early morning hour and may very well be at peak productivity. Classes at an early hour are

very difficult for some students.

Understanding some of these basic corollaries to the work-rest cycle and how to keep productivity at higher levels and honor God with rest is crucial in understanding burnout in the ministry. Also, scheduling a college faculty or staff committee meeting will be influenced by the work-rest cycle. Maximum efficiency and productivity from a group of people with differing work-rest cycles can only be attained by considering individual’s rhythms.

This cycle is clearly evident in agriculture. A number of years ago, the government instituted “set-aside” programs. The purpose of these programs was to “set aside” land so the supply of certain crops (for

Everyone should become aware of how God designed ... us to carry out the work-rest cycle.



example, soybeans) would be restricted, thus driving up price. Farmers all over the country set aside land in order to get a refund from the government. The land was allowed to take a rest. When it was brought back “on line,” the soil was so fruitful that it yielded a crop that more than made up for the year that the land was allowed to rest. The results, of course, were just the opposite of what the government policy framers had intended.

The bountiful crop that resulted from the rested land depressed prices and farm income. This is another clear illustration of God’s intended design for His creation.

Another example, clearly reflective of the cycle, is the use of the traditional “coffee break” in companies. Employers can actually get more productivity from a laborer in seven hours allowing “coffee breaks” in the morning and afternoon than out of eight straight working hours. This is true because a break in the tension of the day is needed every seventh part. When a break is taken in the morning and afternoon, it refreshes and restores the employee. Because of refreshment, productivity is enhanced. Executive quiet times or meditative times serve the same purpose. The birth of a baby

clearly demonstrates the rest cycle. The process of labor is one of exertion and release. The mother “pushes” then “relaxes” in the birthing process. Even in speaking, the use of humor and breaking the tension of the audience is a well-known technique to increase learning.

Conclusion

By following the work-rest cycle in these practical ways, one is able to glorify God by conforming to His will for the amount of work we are able to accomplish. It is only by subjecting ourselves to God’s work-rest cycle that we are able to regain the control over the hectic pace dictated by our culture. The pace of life in the 21st century may accelerate, crowding out time necessary for the truly important things in life. Believers must learn the lessons in God’s Sabbath-rest if we are to be vessels fit for our Master’s service. To capture the new millennium for our Lord and Savior, we must take the time needed to rest and recover, that we may be able to serve at full potential.

ENDNOTES

¹The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that unless an external source of energy is

introduced into a system, the system will move to a state of disorganization, chaos, and decay.

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