



- Dustin Moody: Hello and welcome to The Faith & Work Podcast, where we explore our everyday work in God's world. The Faith & Work Podcast is produced and hosted by Denver Institute for Faith & Work. I'm Dustin Moody, and I'm joined today by Joanna Meyer and Brian Gray. How are you guys doing?
- Joanna Meyer: Really good. It's Friday when we're recording this, so I'm excited. I'm heading into my Sabbath.
- Brian Gray: Yeah, I'm doing well. Ready to slow down.
- Dustin Moody: Well, Joanna, I'm excited that you mentioned Sabbath. That's what we're talking about today. So to get us started, I'm curious, how often do you each practice Sabbath, and what does it typically look like?
- Joanna Meyer: You know, Saturdays are my Sabbath day, and we'll talk a little bit more about that later in the broadcast, like why in the world I'm doing it on a Saturday. And I-
- Brian Gray: You're a good Jew.
- Joanna Meyer: I'm a good Jew. And I'm not always perfect at taking it, but for me, I feel like I have an advantage because I'm a single person. I have a pretty low obligation day, if I choose to make it so, on a Saturday. And for me, it's just removing myself from technology, like my email. Removing myself from technology like email, allowing a little bit more relaxation in the day, choosing to do something that's intentionally delightful and feels restful. I go, "Will my heart feel restored and rested if I make time for X in my day?" So it's pretty simple. And I don't always nail it every week, but it's a general life practice that is wonderful for my heart.
- Dustin Moody: Yeah. Brian, what about you?
- Brian Gray: Yeah, I'd say at this season of my life, I've grown pretty religious in the practice of Sabbath; which, at different times, religious would've meant legalistic for me and my background. But I think today, I mean to be more really rhythmical. Sunday is a Sabbath day for me, and for the most part my family. We try to practice that together. So for some of these practices, corporate worship's a really big part of it for me, so that it's a communal practice and not just individual. I intentionally start a Sunday morning more slowly than I normally do, with usually silence, and I still wake up early, but try to create a slowness, that the other days of get up, get ready, get to work or get up and get into the yard and fix some things, et cetera on a Saturday. Those days have that type of start. So Sunday starts more slowly.
- Brian Gray: I look for intentional ways to either gather people into our home or to spend time with friends just to pursue relationship and keep that as a real priority. And

then I'm looking for the types of activities that are really deeply restorative to me. Whether it be a long run or ... It's usually a long run day for me, or taking a nap, sometimes watching a movie with my kids and then stand off the technology. Really hard to find me on my phone.

Joanna Meyer: Amen to that.

Dustin Moody: Yeah.

Brian Gray: Impossible to get me on email.

Joanna Meyer: Yeah.

Brian Gray: You couldn't email me a million bucks on a Sunday and get me to to claim it.

Joanna Meyer: And what I love is that here in our HR policies at Denver Institute, Sabbath is part of our HR policies.

Dustin Moody: Right.

Joanna Meyer: So we're encouraged to choose one of the days in the weekend and we know that we are not expected to touch our work-related technology on that day.

Dustin Moody: Yeah. So as you can guess, we're talking about Sabbath today, and we're going to explore some of the findings from a recent Sabbath survey. Some of you may have seen or heard about it earlier this summer. Many of you listening may have participated in that, and we appreciate all of the feedback and ideas we received.

Dustin Moody: As I was going through the responses to the survey, I realized that there are a lot of questions that people still have about the Sabbath, so we want to try to answer at least a few of those for you today. So Joanna and Brian, my first question kind of gets to the historic nature of the Sabbath, and particularly one of the questions that came up repeatedly through the survey findings was, "Okay, we see the Sabbath outlined in the law, in the Old Testament. We see the Pharisees giving Jesus a hard time in the New Testament, and Christ fulfilling the Sabbath and ... Yeah, what do we make of those two distinctions and how do we model the Sabbath in a way that is typically true?"

Joanna Meyer: Yeah. I look at the Old Testament, I see two key concepts emerge as it relates to Sabbath. The first is in the opening pages of Genesis. You see that we are created in God's image and that God is both an active creator, he's at work. That work is a good thing, but we also see him choosing time for rest and delighting in the good work that he has done. God practices the Sabbath. The very first thing we see God doing is creating and resting. And so we see this beautiful model of what rest looks like.

- Joanna Meyer: Something that stands out to me about that passage is that we see that rest is not an escape from work. It's not like work is this evil, wearisome thing that we have to flee from on our Sabbath day. But it's that sense that rest and work complement each other, and that good work is done when it's done in the context of rest. They need each other. And that's freeing. It makes me think, "Oh, I can delight in a Sabbath and I can also delight in my work as well." So we see that in Genesis.
- Joanna Meyer: And then if you look a little further on when God is giving the 10 Commandments to the Israelites, he codifies the idea of a Sabbath, it becomes law. But what's freeing to me about that is that I think the law was given to them to shape what their culture would look like, that they would be a shining example to the world of how God wanted his people to live. And so you think about the historic context for the Israelites, and they had been an enslaved people. And so how incredibly freeing would it be for your God to say... He's been in slavery for the last few hundred years. "I want you to rest, to have one day a week when you're not having to work"? and that's kind of amazing for people that had never had a choice in their lives in slavery about when they would work or how they would do it. Here's God saying, "I want this woven into the fabric of your public life, and the way you do life as a people, that rest will be part of it." And he even extends it to that their livestock would be given a Sabbath, that their household servants would be.
- Joanna Meyer: So it's very much tied into their way of being in the world. Not a legalism of saying, "This is the law. You will practice a Sabbath," but a sense of the spirit is that I want you to have work and rest built into the way you do life.
- Brian Gray: Yeah. Even included immigrants, refugees that were inside the Gates of Israel.
- Joanna Meyer: Yeah. So even though it's a law, it's a life-giving law. It's not to resort in legalism and nitpicking about what you do and you don't do, but it's a way of being.
- Dustin Moody: Yeah. Brian, there are a couple of ways of viewing today's Sabbath practices, so I'm curious if you could shed some light on those.
- Brian Gray: Yeah, I mean that's the tension, I think, that came up in the survey, right? Which is that Old Testament and the New Testament seem to be a little bit different. And so as you see the [inaudible] legalism around the concept of Sabbath, this creates contention with Jesus on a couple of occasions when he heals. There would be probably two camps as we would think about Sabbath in light of the New Testament.
- Brian Gray: So the one would say that in Christ, all aspects of the law have been fulfilled, and the Sabbath, as an aspect of the law has also been fulfilled in Christ. And therefore it doesn't hold for us, today, as a command. That's actually fair

because the explicit command to Sabbath, it's not as concrete in the New Testament, as it is in the Old. So let's say that to be fair.

Brian Gray: Maybe a second camp would say that there still is a Christian, if you will, Christian version of this Hebrew Sabbath. And that really kind of nods back to the fact that Sabbath wasn't a part of the law, as Joanna pointed out first and foremost. It was a part of the created order. It was a part of what it meant to be human, originally.

Dustin Moody: Yeah.

Brian Gray: And so let's at least say that there are a couple of ways that people interpret this. And so maybe for the sake of our conversation, it's more helpful, whether you sense that Sabbath is a fulfilled aspect of the law, like dietary laws, like clothing with mixed fibers, these types of things which would feel really archaic to us. If you're putting Sabbath in that camp, or if you consider it to still be an ongoing even commandment for Christians today, where we can stack our hands together as that this probably best lives in the idea of Hebrew wisdom, and now Christian wisdom for faithful spiritual practice.

Brian Gray: I mean, most of us aren't going to say ... Wearing clothes with mixed fibers, we say, "Yeah, I don't get that at all. I don't see how that sustaining," but very few people are going to argue with the idea of intentional restfulness from the pace of culture, is something that would be unwise for the follower of Christ to pursue. So I think even though biblically, perhaps it's a little bit gray, I think this is a wisdom context, up for now to the Christian spirituality. It's just, especially in light of our culture that this, to me, is a no-brainer for Christians to consider and to regularly practice Sabbath.

Dustin Moody: Yeah.

Joanna Meyer: What is the spirit versus the law?

Dustin Moody: Sure.

Joanna Meyer: So I'm not concerned if I fire up my oven on a Saturday, on my Sabbath.

Dustin Moody: Right.

Joanna Meyer: Whereas in traditional Jewish tradition, that might have been an issue. But there is a wonderful life giving spirit there.

Dustin Moody: Certainly. So from our survey, we heard a lot about the benefits that people have experienced after Sabbath rest and some of these include a sense of feeling recharged. I feel so much better and relaxed and able to face the new week after taking a day for Sabbath. People talked about having a better

attitude, feeling rested and restored, and even noticing God and the ordinariness of everyday life.

Dustin Moody: What was less clear from our survey feedback was kind of the why of Sabbath rest, and Tara Owens talked about this a little bit in a previous podcast and also on the Scatter course that we'll talk about in a minute, but I'm wondering if both of you could speak to what we can learn from scripture about the purpose behind Sabbath.

Brian Gray: I think Joanna noted it, particularly, the piece of historical context with the Hebrew people coming out of slavery is really critical. But if we ... Even coming back to that first notion in Genesis that God rested, just an interesting question to sit with. Why would God rest in the first place? God as an omnipotent being. He's all-powerful. So at the end of these movements of creation throughout the first six days, over time, if we were to say God needed to rest, we'd be starting to work ourselves into a little bit of a problem, theologically.

Joanna Meyer: Yeah.

Dustin Moody: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brian Gray: God needs to, fill in the blank, is always going to be a theological problem; whatever we fill in that blank with. So in this case, God didn't actually need to rest, but God did rest. And so yeah, I think that there's two things. One, the wonderful community that exists inside of the Trinity wouldn't ... Why not have the sheer delight in the enjoyment of the existence and the pausing and the being together within community? A friend of mine says that God rested for joy's sake, but I would think that it's also part of modeling. We get this idea of the Imago Dei; what's it to be made in the image and likeness of God as we move about in the world? And I think one of the reasons that, additionally, that God rested is to model what it meant to be fully human for us. So a part of Imago Dei is, we'd say it takes expression as we represent God in the world. It takes this expression through a cultural mandate that we would create and we would cultivate and we'd make more of the world from Genesis II, but an aspect of that twinned with it is the need to be ... Human beings are limited. God is not. And so his resting within his limitlessness is a part. It's to demonstrate how and why we might live.

Brian Gray: So I think that that becomes a really rich and important aspect of the why throughout all of the rest of the biblical texts when you'll talking about Sabbath. This is why the legalism issues are a problem. This is why in Isaiah I, God detests their festivals, and to test their Sabbath; to test the thing that he's commanding them to do. Because they've missed the why. Their heart is not behind it. Their lifestyle is one of injustice towards others, and it's not the complete and full following of God.

- Joanna Meyer: Yeah. I think another why is that when we're forced to step back from the enslavement to work, if I can call it that, it forces us to examine how we really experience work in our lives. And so often for many people, work can be a slave driver. I mean, you can feel like I can never abandon or unplug myself from my work emails. It can also help identify idolatry in our life.
- Brian Gray: That's right. That's it.
- Dustin Moody: Yeah.
- Joanna Meyer: That's a huge part of it, of just saying, in what ways might work become an idol for you? It could be sacrificing yourself and your personal health and family relationships for the pursuit of a certain level of professional achievement; that becomes an idol. Or revealing fears. What will happen if I am not fully available? What will other people think? I have loved some of the writing and teaching that Tim Keller has done on this topic, too, of Sabbath being one of the most counter-cultural things you do. It's very much why, is realizing that the Christian life has called you to be different. And so that may look very different than colleagues in your normal workplace.
- Dustin Moody: Yeah.
- Brian Gray: There's a rabbi, Abraham Joshua Heschel. He wrote a really small book from a Jewish tradition on the concept of Sabbath, but it's really thoughtful. He talks about Sabbath inherently brings to human beings, the reminder and the practice of their limitedness. So as you talk about all these other different types of idolatries, our work, in many cases, would certainly beg, what are all the possibilities? Can you do more? Can you do it faster? Can you do it better? But so many aspects of Christian spirituality or about limitedness. There is a limit to my sexual expression. Right? There is a limit to the way I spend my money or don't. And in the case of Sabbath, there's the practice of the limitedness of our time, because human beings are limited. They're not infinite. We are finite. And in that, it starts to push back and it raises up all of these idolatries.
- Brian Gray: I've been, for the past three weeks, behind on a couple of projects that I'm just about to wrap up and I've been working really hard on them. And I come in to Sundays, and I am emotionally white knuckling it.
- Dustin Moody: Yeah.
- Brian Gray: Through laying those down.
- Joanna Meyer: Wow.
- Brian Gray: But it feels really, really important because it is a practice. I said, "I'm being fully human. You are God and I am not," and that work that's going to happen

tomorrow morning, even if I get up early to start cranking on it, that work is the Lord's that I'm responding to. It's not mine. It's not my identity. It's not my performance. It's not all of these idolatries in the heart. Sabbath is an idol buster.

- Joanna Meyer: Yeah. It reveals your trust that the Lord is sufficient in the midst of your own limitation.
- Brian Gray: That's right.
- Dustin Moody: Brian, I appreciate you mentioned the idea of identity as connected to our work. One of the areas of research that I've been working on for my graduate program is identity, and identity in how we define ourselves by the groups we belong to and the groups we don't belong to, as well as identity in the way we define ourselves by the things that we do and the things that we don't do. And I think work tends to be, at least for those of us in a Western context, a source of identity that God did not intend.
- Brian Gray: Absolutely.
- Dustin Moody: So I think of the times of Sabbath that I've taken that have felt most fruitful, have been at when I've been able to step away from where I'm misplacing my identity and remember the practices and that I am a child of God first, not what I do and the organization that I do it for.
- Brian Gray: And what's the command in the Old Testament around the Sabbath and the 10 Commandments? To remember the Sabbath, as you just alluded to.
- Dustin Moody: Yeah.
- Joanna Meyer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Brian Gray: And to keep it holy. It [inaudible] holy. Sanctified, set apart, different from the six days. It already is that. Now just remember it and keep it that way.
- Dustin Moody: Yeah.
- Joanna Meyer: I think it has a special importance for people that are in position of leadership over others, because ... I mean you see that in the 10 Commandments, God says that it extends to your animals, and to your household servants. But you know, if you're a business owner, you're a team leader, even if you're a middle manager in the corporate sector, you create a culture on your team. And even if you have members of your team that aren't followers of Christ, you can extend the spirit of Sabbath to them. It can be life changing for you to draw some boundaries, healthy boundaries about what you expect of them. I mean, how

many bosses do you know that thoughtfully and kindly say, "I want you to have some rest. I want you to work less."

Dustin Moody: Yeah.

Joanna Meyer: I mean, that is maybe the most counter-cultural thing you can do in corporate life. And yet it could be one of the best things for your overall team health and performance.

Dustin Moody: Absolutely.

Brian Gray: Yeah. Because it ought to be. Right? In its roots, it ought to be human. Before it was ever Hebrew law, it ought to be human before it's ever Christian. We command these things of people, but certainly we try to honor the humanity of those we work with and creating limits even in their work.

Joanna Meyer: Yeah.

Brian Gray: That's brilliant.

Dustin Moody: So we're approaching another one of the topics that we explored in the survey and that's not just the why of the Sabbath, but the what of Sabbath practices. So let's talk a little bit about that. According to our survey, more than half the people who responded include at least one of these items as part of their Sabbath practices, whether it's worship as part of a corporate body, prayer, a time of deliberate quiet, social time with family, friends and community. So I want to talk about the what of Sabbath practices, but I want to start with a bit of a caveat because I'm thinking of corporate worship for a lot of people is not restful.

Joanna Meyer: Yeah.

Dustin Moody: Thinking of either church staff, musicians, nursery workers. You guys know I've been in a season for the last couple of years working with the church plan and until we had a space recently, Sunday mornings were not restful. It was 6:30 am loading and unloading in a school. And I just want to ... For those of you that are in a church planning context that find yourself in that season right now, you are doing great work, but I know that you do not feel restful on Sunday afternoons.

Joanna Meyer: Yep.

Dustin Moody: So let's talk about the ways that we can approach Sabbath. Even if corporate worship does or doesn't fit into that rubric, what could Sabbath look like to get back to some of those why motivations?

- Joanna Meyer: Yeah. I appreciate what you said, Dustin. Even before we hit record, you said, "I kind of stink at doing the Sabbath."
- Dustin Moody: I do.
- Joanna Meyer: It takes intentionality, and I don't want to put down any kind of laws about what Sabbath should look like. I think that defeats the spirit of Sabbath, but it starts with intentionality of saying, "I'm going to aside some time every week that looks different than the rest of the week."
- Dustin Moody: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Joanna Meyer: And I'll admit, there are some weekends where I don't do a great job honoring Sabbath. It gets away from me. But what's crazy is I had missed a couple of weekends of having an intentional time, and by the end of my second weekend of no Sabbath, I was ready to chew somebody's head off.
- Dustin Moody: You felt it.
- Joanna Meyer: Yeah, I really, really felt it. So there's that sense of like, "No, I'm going to make sure this happens." And what's hard is that it has to be intentional.
- Brian Gray: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Joanna Meyer: Modern life is so busy and packed and always on that if you aren't intentional, it's not going to happen. So mine's easy, I think because of a single person. I'd love, Brian, to know how in the world do you actually do Sabbath when you have elementary school age or younger kids?
- Brian Gray: So the context that you brought up in terms of the ways we practice Sabbath, I'd say it's really important. Maybe let's come back to that corporate worship concept in a second, but there are some just traditional means. Again, we're not looking for the commanded ways that Sabbath works in the New Testament, because you can't find those. So let's own that and just say that that's the case. But in terms of the tradition of the church, there have been a few practices that have wise, mature followers of Christ have consistently, over time, incorporated.
- Brian Gray: So the first one is some aspect of corporate worship. Christianity emerged out of a sect of Judaism in the early ... In the first century. And Jewish Sabbath was on a Saturday, and so early, honoring the resurrection, Christians would be in gathering corporately on Sundays, just even as a differentiator.
- Brian Gray: So since then, I'd say some aspect of corporate worship ... Now, let's not be legalistic. I'm probably in church three out of four weekends because I ... You know, I, right now, live in Colorado. I have mountains. We don't want to be

legalistic about this, but considering that to be a rhythm. Specific aspects of, I'd say practices around maybe unique, devotional practices that the rest of the hurried week doesn't allow for you.

Brian Gray: So for me, that would be sometimes of an extended centering prayer, which is really difficult for me because I have a squirrel on a treadmill in my brain. But some silence and centering prayer. I give myself a lot more time to read. If I've got a great book that I'm reading or working on, that's an important practice for me in that first part of the morning. But again, this is kind of all in this larger category. We start from corporate worship, which kind of individual, personal devotional practices have been really a tradition; and then looking for specific time to give yourself to relationships. I feel like some people, probably their work throughout the week is heavily and highly relational. They might want to be considering practices of solitude; intentionally looking for spaces for quiet and reflection. But for other people who find themselves moving inside of numbers and working inside of ideas and concepts and their work isn't as relational, giving themselves really to some specific relational connectivity with the larger community of their church or their friendships in the neighborhood.

Brian Gray: I think that's really important and these are, for what it's worth, these are actually some of the practices that folks in our survey responded with.

Dustin Moody: Yeah.

Brian Gray: What, 69% said corporate worship?

Dustin Moody: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brian Gray: 60% mentioned prayer as a practice from the Sabbath. Time for deliberate quiet was 55%. Social time for family, friends was 52%. So I think we're ... It's not the risk of naming the no, duh things that other people are already doing, but I think it's this intentionality to maintain them over time so they become rhythm.

Brian Gray: And to pull back to the corporate worship piece, I'd say for those who work in churches specifically, I know most people who are in church staff have some kind of combination of a Saturday and then often either a Monday or a Friday.

Dustin Moody: Yeah.

Brian Gray: As a day off from work at the office. And so maybe more like Joanna, they're looking to create a period of Sabbath that's away from that time, [crosstalk 00:20:35].

Dustin Moody: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brian Gray: I was a pastor for 13 years.

- Dustin Moody: Right.
- Brian Gray: I mean, Sunday or whatever time our corporate worship was, that wasn't on the clock, eight hour day.
- Joanna Meyer: Yeah.
- Brian Gray: For sure. Or sometimes longer. I think for those of us who want to continue giving and volunteering and serving inside the church, it's intense in that church plant setting. So my encouragement to you or someone is, you might want to be thinking about, I'm going to end Saturday evening, I'm going to create some intentional slowing. It's kind of taking a 24-hour day and saying I'm going to give myself to intentional practices of rest on Sunday after church and through the evening, and maybe Saturday nights. I mean, I'm going to slow down. I'm going to stop at a certain point. My paper's not gonna go that long. It's looking for the places of limitedness and spirit, even if that full, concentrated 24-hour day couldn't be there.
- Dustin Moody: That's helpful.
- Joanna Meyer: Okay. What do you do about kids?
- Brian Gray: Oh, sure.
- Joanna Meyer: Because you have lovely, active daughters at your house, Brian.
- Brian Gray: Yeah, active is an understatement.
- Joanna Meyer: And two dogs. You have two dogs.
- Brian Gray: Yeah. My home isn't quiet at all.
- Dustin Moody: Well, let's broaden it a little bit, if we can.
- Brian Gray: Yeah.
- Dustin Moody: Because kids were part of what we heard from the survey feedback.
- Brian Gray: Sure.
- Dustin Moody: ... of things that prevent Sabbath practices. But that also includes work demands, family obligations. People are distracted by social media and technology. About 20% of people talked about a lack of accountability. So in addition to kids, there are a lot of things that people are struggling with to get out of the way to focus on Sabbath. So I'm curious how we can break that down and kind of ... Let's be really practical at this point, and come up with some

strategies for both our survey participants and the people who are listening to the podcast.

Brian Gray: Yeah.

Joanna Meyer: Okay, one thing I would say ... Can I say something, Brian, before you jump in? It was, it kind of makes my skin crawl when we think about having accountability for doing Sabbath. I get it, you want someone to help you make sure it happens, but I go, Sabbath should be a joyful thing. I don't want somebody else to bust my butt because I'm not having enough joy, and I think that's part of how can we shift our attitude towards Sabbath to the point where it might be something that we crave, not something that we have to do? Anyway, that's my two cents.

Dustin Moody: Sure.

Joanna Meyer: So back to Brian.

Brian Gray: Let's be frank. I love being a father. My family's important to me, and life with my children is also one of the potential barriers that our respondents pointed to that make practice of Sabbath difficult. So I would say for those, it was far ... Like Joanna mentioned, when I was single or even married before kids, the practice of Sabbath was a lot easier. I could be much more individualistic about it. And I don't mean that in a negative sense or to be derogatory towards that. I could just focus more on my own needs.

Brian Gray: So we look for ways at our best, we look for ways to, I would say intentionally incorporate time with the kids and family doing something that's restorative for all of us together into a Sabbath. So that has ... Sometimes it's watching a movie. I've just taken my girls over the park. I'll try and find ways to play. Oftentimes where, if we're away for a weekend, we kind of have a whole weekend together as a family, so that's almost incorporated into that.

Brian Gray: But we have ebbs and flows, my wife and I, with this. But I think parents need to consider really significantly giving to each other maybe a two hour break, a two hour block of time away on their day of Sabbath to go and say, "Hey, I want you to go take two hours, grab coffee, read, do what you want to do." And then vice versa, we switch, and then I might go take some time away. Again, that long run is pretty quiet and pretty solitude. Pretty much solitude. So I'm looking for ways to kind of practice individual rest, but also looking for ways to do that within the family. I think trading time is important, and looking for shared family time.

Brian Gray: So that's a way, both to incorporate and practice and also to attend to one of the realistic barriers. Children are work.

Dustin Moody: Yeah.

- Brian Gray: We might not be being paid. It's not a W-2 job, but taking care of children is work. There's still meals and et cetera. So I think we have to incorporate the spirit of that and see ways that we can not let it be a barrier to restorative activity for us.
- Joanna Meyer: I'm sitting here with the dilemma of the children's birthday party. Not having kids of my own, I've watched my nieces, and how many birthday parties they go to.
- Dustin Moody: Yeah.
- Joanna Meyer: It's a regular part of family social life when you have elementary school age kids. And so I'm wondering what do you do when you want to have a quiet Sabbath and we're having some fun time together through your family and all of a sudden one of your kids' friends invites them to a birthday party and suddenly your Saturday is shot. What do you do when stuff like that crops up that can really disrupt, in totally understandable ways, the spirit of Sabbath? Brian, any thoughts on how you guys handle that?
- Brian Gray: Well, Sunday's a Sabbath for us. So even culturally, it's odd that the sports have encroached into Sundays.
- Dustin Moody: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Brian Gray: There still seems to be ... There's a little bit of a Chick-fil-A mentality in people. Somehow, a lot of things still close on Sundays. Right? Which by the way, I always crave a Chick-fil-A sandwich on Sundays. It bothers me immensely to not Sabbath with the original chicken sandwich.
- Joanna Meyer: It's a great marketing strategy.
- Brian Gray: So I think that there's still a rhythm that Sundays are easier. But in general, I think the two things is that we can take, if Sunday is going to be a day of work for whatever reason it's going to be, we can find other time when we say we're going to carve out a period of time that's going to be a Sabbath rest for us.
- Brian Gray: Or the other thing is, the kids don't need to go to the birthday party. This is family practice, if it's for the whole household.
- Dustin Moody: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Joanna Meyer: Yeah.
- Brian Gray: You get to a certain age and you get to do drop off birthday parties. I know you're just bringing up kind of one example, but the point is Sabbath is about limits. I don't have to say yes to everything. Our response to the survey noted

one of the major barriers for them was work demands. And I don't want to be insensitive to that, because we have the ability, maybe in the work culture I'm apart of, to limit our work to 45 hours as a part of our expectation for our employees. So if you find yourself in a job that doesn't honor those limits, I don't want to be disrespectful, but you don't have to work that job. Many people have the opportunity to work for another company within an industry. If maybe there are seasons where one company is, "Hey we are electricians and we're doing a project and we're going to be on a two month run up seven days a week."

- Brian Gray: Well, in the longterm, is there another company that doesn't do seven day a week projects in two months blocks that you would work for? I think that there's a choice within that to say no. And the other thing is that people paying you, you should have really clear expectations from your employer if they expect ... Do you expect me to work seven days a week? And you should know that going into it.
- Joanna Meyer: Yeah, yeah.
- Dustin Moody: Yeah.
- Brian Gray: And you should know that ongoingly if that's starting to become a practice, because if that's an expectation, it's really great for you to know so you can begin looking for something else. If work demands prevent you from taking a Sabbath, how much of a priority are you? I think you're a bigger deal than being enslaved to that type of over demanding work. You don't have to make as much. You don't have to work for that company. You don't have to climb in your career. These are choices that people make if they have those opportunities afforded to them. They're not requirements.
- Joanna Meyer: And I know in my own life there have been occasional seasons where job overtakes me and I'm working on a Sunday.
- Dustin Moody: Yeah.
- Joanna Meyer: And so it's helpful to remember, is this a distinct season, a defined period of time that I know will end? Or, is this an ongoing undefined expectation? So I wouldn't say don't bail on a job if it's just at that season, but I think Brian's raising a legitimate concern. Something else that stood out to me is that you may have to manage other people's expectations in order to have a Sabbath, and that could be managing an employer's expectations.
- Brian Gray: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Joanna Meyer: And that takes a lot of courage to graciously say that you won't be available. You also may have to manage the expectations of your extended family.

- Brian Gray: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Joanna Meyer: And that's sticky. And yet, if you're going to have some boundaries and health and your life, you may have to just draw some lines of just saying, "Hey, these are the type of things we may not be available for on a Sunday or on a Saturday."
- Dustin Moody: I think that speaks to your earlier point, Joanna, about accountability. And I appreciate what you said. I wonder if there's a positive way we could rename that concept.
- Joanna Meyer: Totally.
- Dustin Moody: Because I think what I'm reading from the survey feedback is not accountability, like an accountability partner that's going to bust your chops for missing the Sabbath.
- Joanna Meyer: Totally.
- Dustin Moody: But it's more so setting those expectations so they feel the freedom not to respond to the text message right away, or not to respond to the email right away. You mentioned our HR policy here at the Denver Institute. We have the expectation of taking one day as a Sabbath. We also have the organizational expectation to communicate that to our coworkers. So I think that could be a good step for whether we call it accountability, whether we call it setting expectations, but inviting others into the process so it becomes more of a part of joyfulness for you.
- Joanna Meyer: Yeah.
- Brian Gray: You got to train people on that. I think it's become pretty routine. I've got, I think a few friends who, at this point, know they're going to get the text message from me maybe later in the evening on Sunday when the day is done. "Hey, sorry. I stay off my phone on Sundays."
- Joanna Meyer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Brian Gray: So I mean, they kind of know that for the most part. You know? Unless I'm texting for fun with a bunch of buddies because I'm watching a soccer game that we're all watching from different parts of the country, there's ... Obviously, I'm not legalistic. But people, I train them, they know in time you can't reach me on Sunday. You can come to my house and have a conversation. You can sit on my back deck. We could go get our kids in your backyard. We can have a relationship, but it's not going to be digital. So you have to train people to that expectation.

Brian Gray: But the other thing is, that's a barrier here. It's not just the expectation of other people, it's our own. I think that people ... It would serve people really well to do some intentional reflection around two questions. What will they say no to? What are the things they need to limit? Electronic media, work; certain types of things they'd want to be saying no to. The second question is what do they need to be saying yes to? What are those things that are intentionally restorative to them? What types of practices during the week would they love to give themselves to, to connect with God, but they don't feel like they have the time? That's the Sabbath. That's what it's there for. Sabbath was made for man on hand for the Sabbath, so we have the opportunity to have really clear, I said expectation, but maybe some really clear awareness of what are the things we went on limit and what are the things that we want to say yes to, and then begin slowly over time, not legalistically, just building those types of rhythms into our life.

Brian Gray: Even I mentioned earlier, a long run on the weekend. When I was in athletics, when I was younger or in college, a long run was work. So I took six days a week. I was actually, again, pretty legalistic about the Sabbath in college because I was an athlete and a double major. I would just ... And I'm a workaholic, so I kind of ... I almost have to be or I'm just always giving myself to this idolatry. So there was a day a week I wasn't in the gym, I wasn't on the court and I wasn't running or doing anything. Interesting that the same activity now, 25 some odd years later, is really deeply restorative to me. The activity of running isn't right or wrong for the Sabbath. It was the timing of it. It was work for me then, it's restful for me now.

Brian Gray: And so I think we have to have some ... I think we can go through and do some real great reflection on this for some people. I've got a friend, he went and built himself a table on the Sabbath.

Joanna Meyer: Love it.

Brian Gray: For the carpenter, that's work. For people in the trades, that might be considered extension of work.

Dustin Moody: Right.

Brian Gray: But for other people for whom their work is really intellectual or thought based or information based or technology based who don't have that physicality, that type of aspect of a Sabbath could be deeply restorative. So we have to say, what are we saying no to and yes to?

Joanna Meyer: Yeah, you might put your phone away in a drawer and not look at it for the entire day as a way of giving yourself freedom from technology. Or you might say, "I'm going to bake a loaf of bread," because it's a really slow process and it's a gift to myself of doing something slow and unmeasured by time.

- Dustin Moody: And creating.
- Joanna Meyer: Yeah, and creating. It brings you great joy, it restores the soul.
- Dustin Moody: So I appreciate the suggestions. As we're closing out here, I'm curious. You both have offered great ideas. What's one takeaway you'd ask our listeners to consider or to put into practice as we consider the Sabbath rest?
- Joanna Meyer: I would say give yourself the grace that Sabbath is not a matter of legalism. Don't create your own legalisms and try and have a perfect Sabbath, but ease into it. You know, if you've never practiced the Sabbath, spend a little bit of time thinking about which day of the weekend is going to be a day that would allow you to do that. What types of changes would you need to make to honor the Sabbath? What do you need to stay away from? What do you need to move towards? Just spend some time thinking about it and then experiment. It's going to take some learning for this to become a way of life for people, but have fun in the process.
- Brian Gray: One thing I'd love for people to consider is a month of days of Sabbath. It takes think about the culture of hurry and busyness we're in and how long it's taken us to build up the addiction to being on the go and demand. So we should anticipate that it'll take some bit of time to break that addiction. You know, the alcoholic can't be around other people who are drinking for a while, but later on when that safer, they can probably be around that. Right?
- Dustin Moody: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Brian Gray: And so I think the idea of taking a month of 24 hour days, so I might disagree with Joanne a little bit on this one. I think building and solely types of practices, but maybe just experiment. Take a month of 24 hour days and really commit to it to say like, what's coming up inside of you? What are you learning about yourself?
- Joanna Meyer: Yeah.
- Brian Gray: Use those as the time to reflect on what are you going to say no to and what are you going to say yes to. Learn to start experimenting with some of these practices. "Oh, it turns out I hate baking bread. Turns out I hate going for a run. It turns out I love seeing friends. I love watching the movie." So I would say yes, ramp into it through experimenting, but I'd actually commit to it and give it a run and be really reflective about what's happening inside of you, what's working, what's not working.
- Joanna Meyer: That's where you can invite friends in, like when we talk about accountability. You know, if you have a small group at church or something, make it the great



Sabbath experiment, where over a month you try it and talk about what you're learning.

Dustin Moody: Well, I appreciate you both. I think you've offered some great ideas. I think this is a helpful followup to our survey. And if you're interested in learning more about the Sabbath rest, check out our new course at scatter.org called Embracing Sabbath Rest. It's a collection of videos and lessons to help you pray about and prepare for the Sabbath. And as with all of our online courses at Scatter, it's free. So we'll link to the course from our show notes page, but you can find this course and several others at scatter.org.

Joanna Meyer: Awesome. Thanks, guys.

Dustin Moody: Thanks. Thanks for your time today.

Brian Gray: You bet.