

LOVERS

IN A DANGEROUS TIME

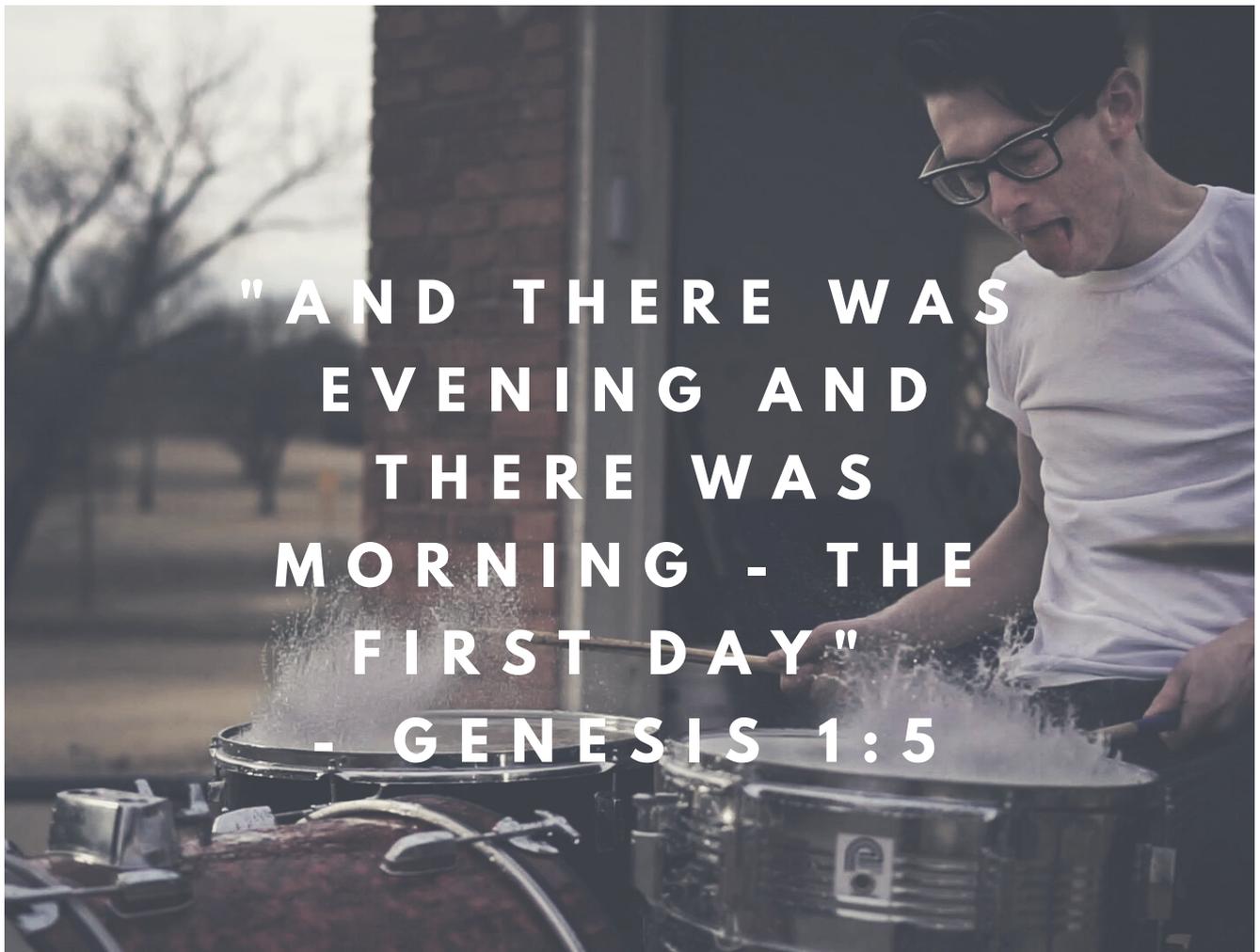


EVERYDAY
HABITS
FOR
FAITH
FORMATION

SUMMIT DRIVE CHURCH

JANUARY // FEBRUARY 2021

PART TWO: ON TIME



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Finding Rhythm

I'm sure you can picture the drummer counting in the song, sticks clicking while belting out: "One. Two. One-two-three-four." The tempo and time signature are now set for the rest of the band to join their instruments or voices to the song.

What if our lives were designed to be "in time" with the rhythm God has set? Last week we noticed how Jesus' practice of solitude was about taking time to be with his Father. This was about being undistracted so he could pay attention to God the Father. And we now follow that pattern of life. We're going to look more closely at the element of "time" in this session.

For how we live in time deeply depends on which story we are living by - whose song we are playing to.

One feature resulting from the French Revolution was the adopting of the French Republican Calendar in 1793. This calendar altered the names of the days and months, and functioned on a decimal system - or "ten day week" - as a project of "rationalization and dechristianization" to cite Ed Simon (JSTOR Daily, May 23, 2018).

The calendar intentionally disrupted "church-attending practices, since it presented both practical and cognitive difficulties in keeping up with the traditional, sacred seven-day cycle." Obviously the calendar system didn't last, but the question remains: has our sense of the sacredness of time been drained of its significance even for Christians in our age? And, more important: can we recover it?



REFLECT

01 READ AND DISCUSS

Many Christians today suffer from a "collective arrhythmia" as Markene Myer put it. Barry Jones notes: "We have so prized freedom and spontaneity that we have lost the rich formative significance of rhythm and ritual." In part, he notes, this is due to a disconnect between the ritual and its meaning - we might not have been taught 'why' God's rhythm matters.

When you think of following a daily, weekly, and yearly pattern - like the ancient Israelites, Jesus and his disciples, the early church, and most Christians throughout history - what thoughts or feelings does this raise for you?

Why do you think that is? Does the critique offered by Jones connect with, or challenge you? How so?

02 READ MATTHEW 12:1-14

In this text we read of how Jesus allows his disciples to pick heads of grain to meet their daily needs. How does he address the concerns of "Sabbath breaking" raised by the Pharisees (vv.3-8)?

Again, Jesus performs an act of healing on the Sabbath. When challenged by the religious leaders, what is his reasoning? (v.12).

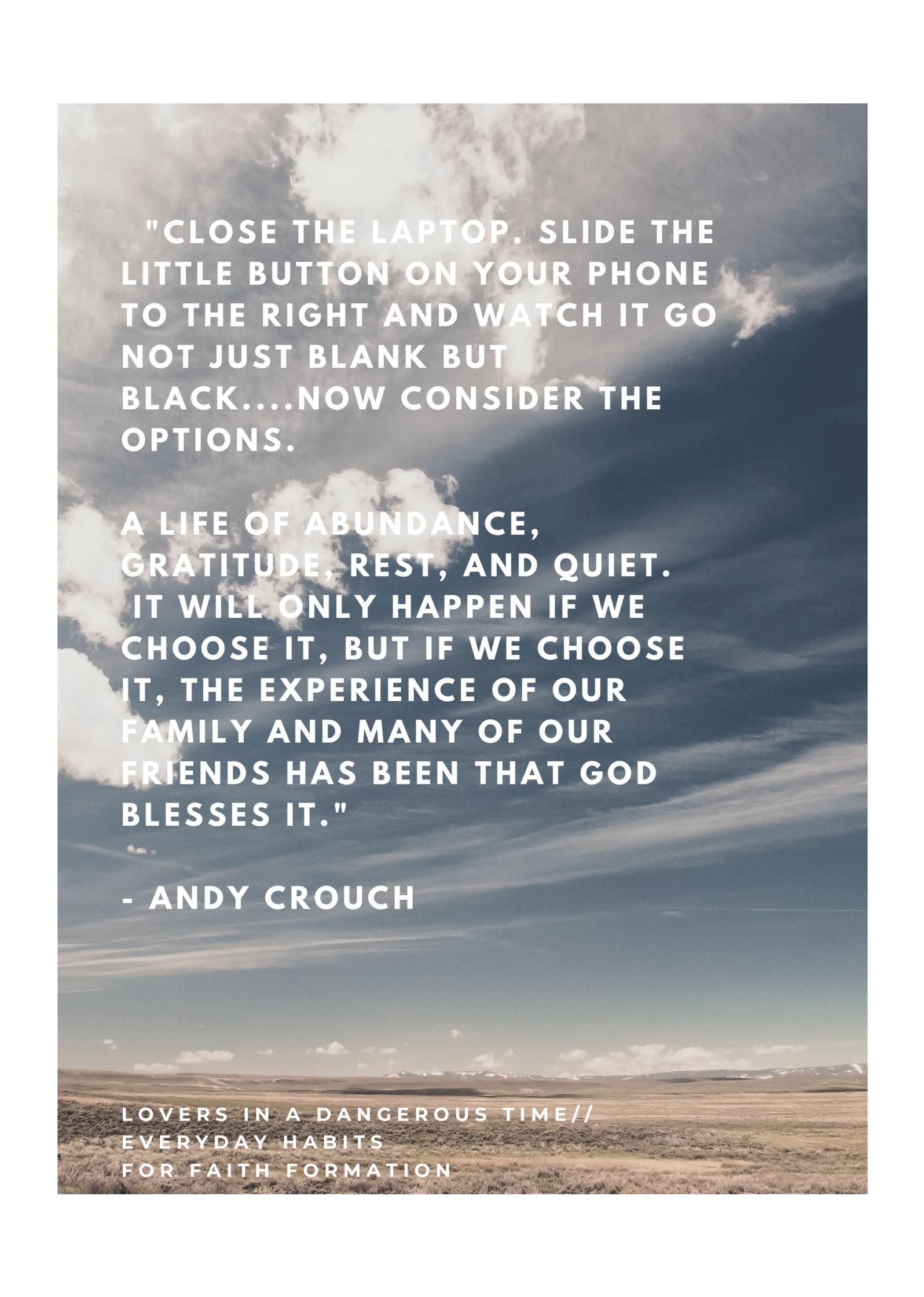
How ought Jesus' words about himself - "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" - and his teaching about the Sabbath inform how we think about, and practice this weekly habit?

03 PRAYER FOCUS

Take a few quiet moments now to consider what we just looked at. Ask God to give you a willing heart to order your days, weeks and years according to his rhythm.

Pray this prayer of St. Augustine of Hippo (4th C): "You, Lord, have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until we rest in you."

- Augustine, *Confessions*



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- ANDY CROUCH

**LOVERS IN A DANGEROUS TIME//
EVERYDAY HABITS
FOR FAITH FORMATION**

PRACTICE//SABBATH

Entering God's Life Giving Pace

Jesus affirms the Sabbath. Yet through his resurrection, he restructures elements of it too. Christians in the early church started to shift meeting for worship from the Jewish Sabbath, Saturday (the "seventh day"), to Sunday - Resurrection Day. This move signalled the belief that the New Creation really had dawned that "first day of the week" when Jesus was raised.

The command remains, however, for keeping a day to stop our work, to rest, to celebrate, and to gather with God's people where we rehearse the gospel -through bread and cup, song and scripture, baptisms and blessings.



"THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN, NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH. SO THE SON OF MAN IS LORD EVEN OF THE SABBATH" - MARK 2:27-28

2. Weekly. Set apart a day for Sabbath rest.

a. Feast: Sabbath is a time for celebrating the week; for feasting. Consider using this day to prepare a meal with family and/or friends...that is slow. Light a candle with this meal. Perhaps begin with a Psalm of thanksgiving, singing the Doxology ("Praise God from whom all blessings flow...") or taking a few minutes to share about your past week with those around the table. Consider this meal for Saturday evening.

b. Gathered Worship: Mike Cospers says it well: "Perhaps the most significant rhythm in our lives is gathering regularly with the church. It's significant because it's the most outward, Godward hour in our weeks, and because it's a time when the invisible is made visible: the scattered church comes together; the signs of the kingdom are present in bread and wine and in the waters of baptism. The gathered church is a foretaste of the new heaven and the new earth." Make this a priority.

Practicing a God-Oriented Rhythm of Life

1. Yearly. Attend to the seasons of Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter. These yearly times help us mark time within the frame of God's redemptive work through Jesus his Son.

a. Retreats: We try and plan at least two or three times away where we unplug from TV or internet, and we can walk, and talk and pray, and read, and simply "be" with God and each other. We look at our calendar each year and have looked for ways to write in breaks, especially after very busy times. Make a plan to retreat.

b. Family Vacation: Schedule at least one week a year for holiday - without any work, turning off emails, and unplugging from social media.

c. Rest (Undistracted): Sabbath is about inhabiting time differently than our regular pace. This would be a good day to unplug from media as a family or to use it only in community building ways; maybe watching a movie together or sharing a slideshow with friends. Read a book that you enjoy. Sit in the sunshine. Walk. Play with your kids. Be unproductive.

3. Daily: Solitude in your daily rhythm

a. Prayer breaks. Following the Jewish custom of daily prayer times, early Christians were instructed in the *Didache* - an early Christian document guiding practices of believers - to pray the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father") three times a day. This is a great daily rhythm to help us refocus throughout the day.

b. Eating together. We try and eat at least 5 meals together at the table each week (even when there are regular events). This is a time without distraction where we can connect with our family. We sometimes use the questions: "Best, Worst, Weirdest"; which is fun, funny and an offering of thanks to God.