

**Sabbath Rest in a 24/7 City**  
**Month 4: Your Pain**



**Practices**

Each month of the Sabbath Rest journey will feature weekly practices that you can incorporate into your daily rhythms. We have intentionally made these practices simple and focused, hoping you will take time with each one during the course of the month. Note that these exercises can be done alone, but work well with a partner or group.

**Week One**

Read the article, "[Your Struggles: From Coping to Freedom.](#)" Then reflect on these questions:

- What specifically resonated with you in this article? Why do you think that is?
- Can you identify any coping mechanisms you find yourself using to cover up your struggles, to cover up facing yourself and God? Do you find yourself getting lost in video games? The internet? Your work or ministry?
- Try this prayer exercise, adapted from Psalm 37:7. Author Don Postema instructs, "Allow this text to lead you gradually into a quiet, relaxed space before God....savoring each line before going on to the next."<sup>1</sup>

*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.*  
*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently...*  
*Be still before the Lord and wait...*  
*Be still before the Lord...*  
*Be still...*  
*Be...*  
 —Psalm 37:7

**Week Two**

**Do you know what resources are available to you?** A recent study asked urban youth workers what emotional/relational, physical, and spiritual resources they used in the past 12 months.<sup>2</sup> Of these services, Physical Health resources were used the most: General physician=52%, Dentist=36%, and OB/GYN=26%. Spiritual Health Support resources were utilized the next most: Personal Spiritual Mentor/Director=22%, Clergy=18%, and Teammate/Coworker=13%.

Unfortunately, Emotional/Relational Support resources were utilized the least: Individual counseling/psychotherapy=13%, Clergy=8%, and Lay Counselor/Spiritual Director=8%. Take some time this week to gather information about the resources that are available to you, and consider when you may need to access some of these resources for yourself.

The study also found that the top three barriers to utilizing services were lack of time, affordability, and self-addressing the problem. What are some of the barriers that may keep you from you from utilizing the resources available to you?

<sup>1</sup> Don Postema, *Catch Your Breath: God's Invitation to Sabbath Rest* (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 1997), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Cynthia Eriksson et al, Fuller Youth Institute, "Risk and Resilience in Urban Youth Ministry: Stress, Spirituality, and Support," full report available online at [http://www.fulleryouthinstitute.org/pdfs/risk\\_and\\_resilience\\_report\\_2007.pdf](http://www.fulleryouthinstitute.org/pdfs/risk_and_resilience_report_2007.pdf).

### ☐ **Week Three**

Take some time to listen to the [podcast](#) with Dr. Mark Laaser for this month. Laaser notes that one of the key features of addiction is being disconnected from God, others, and ourselves. So one of the first steps in healing is getting connected. Find one safe person in the next week and begin to share your own story of struggle.

### ☐ **Week Four**

This month's article talks about being committed to addressing our struggles. This can be overwhelming to think about at times. Those in 12-step groups are familiar with the language of "one day at a time." How is it that we can continue to make choices towards healing? N.T. Wright, a respected New Testament Theologian, gave a recent talk in Pasadena, CA. When discussing the topic of virtue and living out the lives that we were created to live, he describes making a thousand small choices, so that when we have to make the choice that really counts it will be like second nature. What is one small choice you can focus on making this week that will draw you closer to facing yourself and facing God?

If you're interested in listening to or watching N.T. Wright's talk, entitled "A Evening with N.T. Wright" you can download it for free from iTunes U. For help with this follow this link:

<http://www.fuller.edu/about-fuller/news-and-events/fuller-on-itunesu.aspx>

### **BONUS: Going Deeper:**

**Check yourself.** To some degree we all struggle with coping mechanisms and wounds from our past. At what point do we need to talk through these things with a trusted friend, and at what point do we need some professional help? Check out some of the assessments below to get a current pulse on your own levels of need:

For Alcoholism:

<http://www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=71>

For Sex Addiction:

<http://www.sexhelp.com/sast.cfm>

(If you're looking for a counselor in this area check out this resource:

[http://www.aasect.org/directory\\_usa.asp](http://www.aasect.org/directory_usa.asp))

For an Eating Disorder:

<http://psychcentral.com/eatingquiz.htm>

For Workaholism

<http://www.workaholics-anonymous.org/page.php?page=knowing>

For Co-Dependency

<http://www.codependents.org/foundation-docs-patterns.php>

<http://www.mental-health-today.com/articles/codepen.htm>

For Depression

<http://health.usnews.com/usnews/health/articles/070711/11depression.test.htm>

For Video Game Addiction:

<http://www.videogameaddiction.net/video-game-addiction-symptoms.php>

For Internet Addiction:

<http://counsellingresource.com/quizzes/internet-addiction/index.html>

For a Pornography Addiction:

<http://www.no-porn.com/test.html>

(Check out this resource: <http://xxxchurch.com/gethelp/>)