



LEISURE ISN'T OPTIONAL

These words speak to all of us. It hardly needs to be said that we all need reprieve, breaks, and rest. Our bodies need daily rest, but so do our minds and even our souls. Life's crosses come in different shapes and sizes, but they come for all of us. None of us can "do it all," because none of us is invincible. We can't simply keep giving; we also need to be fed and filled. Leisure—true rest and reprieve from life's burdens—isn't optional; it is necessary for our well-being.

Yet this goes a step further. On a deeper level, leisure isn't merely necessary for our flourishing, like sleep, water, or oxygen; it is good. After all—as the quip goes—we are human beings, not human doings. This means that, at the most foundational level, our intrinsic value lies in who we are, not in what we do, earn, prove, build, or accomplish. As we read in the second chapter of Genesis "On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation" (Genesis 2:2-3).

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light"

Matthew 11:28-30

On the seventh day, even God rested—not because He "needed to," as we humans need rest, but because it is good to rest. It is good to behold and to see that it is good. "God looked at everything He had made, and found it very good" (Genesis 1:31). On the seventh day, not only are the things beheld good, but the act of beholding itself is good. Leisure is necessary, and it is good. All of us need leisure, and we should never apologize for that.



**Prioritize Family and values.
Delay Social Media.**

**Delay Smartphones.
Phone Free School Day.**



FAKE LEISURE



As we know all too well, there is often a “gap” between what we actually need and what we think we need. We humans are often pretty bad at knowing what is good for us. Candy, for instance, may seem “good to eat” in the short term, but adults know it won’t ultimately nourish or satisfy a child. Yet when it comes to leisure, a lot of us are reaching for the candy, over and over, wondering why we don’t feel truly rejuvenated and why our souls still feel restless.

In his famous 1985 book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman noted that America wasn’t quite living in the apocalyptic 1984 Orwell warned of, with police-state surveillance putting humanity into a kind of slavery. Yet Postman noticed that we were increasingly numbing ourselves with more and more entertainment—“amusing ourselves to death.” It was Huxley’s prediction in *Brave New World*, rather than Orwell’s in 1984, that had come true. Ours is a world not of forced servitude but one in which we have willingly allowed ourselves to be numbed by a barrage of entertainment. We live in a world of candy, wondering why we feel sick and malnourished.

What, then, exactly, is the difference between the “candy” and the real food—between what we often settle for and what actually allows our souls to rest? When it comes to leisure, the dividing line can be drawn between escape and engagement, between “numbing out” and “drinking life in.” We know the difference, and we know the culprits. Immersive video games, binge-watching, bottomless social-media scrolling, internet “surfing,” and even compulsive texting can all become ways to “forget about life for a while,” as Billy Joel put it. These may serve as a brief “pause” button on the burdens of life, but they do not fill us up and ultimately leave us feeling more restless.

We know the temptation of reaching for the phone or opening a website: “I just want a break.” But we also know the feeling after scrolling for too long: we are not rested. No one on their deathbed has regretted not spending more time online, more time on streaming services, or completing another video game. What practical steps can we take, then, to ensure we receive the leisure we need and avoid settling for counterfeits that do not satisfy?



THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

God knows that leisure is good and nonnegotiable. This is why Christians are literally commanded to rest once a week. The weekly Sabbath gives our lives a rhythm, and practice makes perfect. Taking this commandment to heart means practicing true leisure so that our souls may be restored. What can we practice on Sundays to help our whole lives become more authentically human?

1. Worship

We should attend Mass, worship our good and loving Father, and pray to Him. Sunday is the day to remember that we are not gods but creatures and to thank God for all the blessings in our lives that we can overlook in the rush of life.

2. Look Up and Appreciate

Sunday is a day to spend time with family, friends, and those we love—to nurture our relationships with people, not things. It is a day to look up from our phones, laptops, TVs, and whatever else pulls us into escapism and to attend to the goodness of the world in front of us. What people appreciate and regret at the end of life can clarify what actually matters and what doesn't.

3. “Be Still and Know That I Am God” (Psalm 46)

Finally, Sunday is the day to practice true leisure: simply to be. It allows us to be defined by who we are, not just by what we do. Sunday is the day to do what brings us fully to life—what helps us feel closer to reality and to ourselves—and to avoid whatever distances us from life or numbs us to it. A good conversation with friends lifts our spirits; finally closing our laptop after bingeing on the news does not.

We are forgetful, like Peter, who stepped onto the water in faith but soon doubted and sank: “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:31). We need rhythms that return us to what matters. Email and digital escape can wait. True leisure leads us back to God, loved ones, and real life.

LET US PRAY

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and **lead us not into temptation**, but deliver us from evil. **Amen.**



Smart Families is partnered with your church and/or school to educate, encourage and empower your community about the importance of delaying smartphones.
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