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Restoring Our Bodies

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First Episcopal District Bible Study

The Year of **RESTORATION**

Key Verse:

Come to me all who are heavy laden and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

[Matthew 11:28]

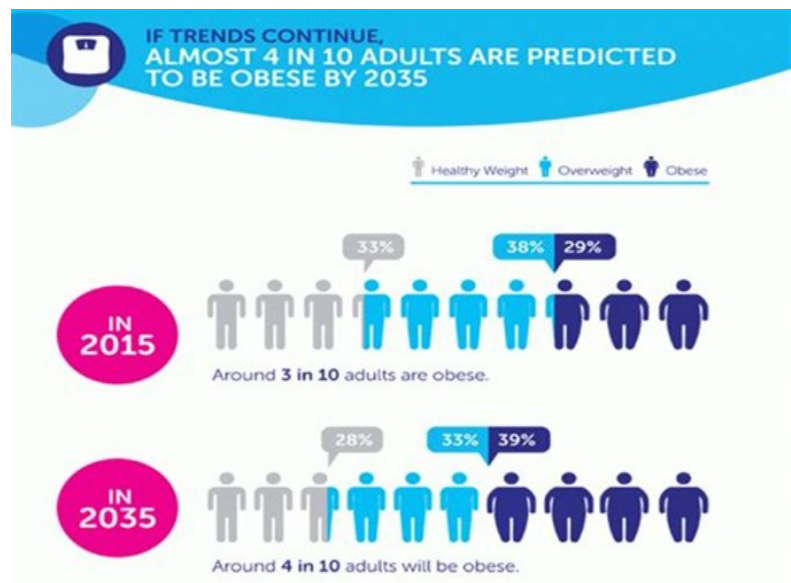
Study Passage:

Exodus 31:1-18



THE RECKONING

One of the greatest struggles, we as God's people encounter is the challenge to live healthy, restorative lives. We struggle to maintain optimal body weight through diet, exercise, and relaxation. As of 2015-2016, 93.3 million of US adults are obese. According to Healthy People 2020, approximately 1 in 3 adults (34.0%) and 1 in 6 children and adolescents (16.2%) are obese.



Obesity-related conditions include heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes, which are among the leading causes of death. In addition to grave health consequences, overweight and obesity significantly increase medical costs and pose a staggering burden on the U.S. medical care delivery system.¹

THE RECKONING *(continued)*

77% of illnesses are preventable and stress accounts for 60% of all human illness and disease. 44% of Americans feel more stress today than they did five years ago. One out of four Americans state they have experienced “extreme stress.” Three out of four doctor visits per year are for stress related ailments. Stress has increased the risk of heart disease by 40%, increase the risk of heart attacks by 25%, and increased the risk of stroke by 50%. Stress causes 44% of Americans to lose sleep each night. Stress causes the grey matter area of the brain to decrease in size; thereby, affecting the areas of the brain which controls our emotional and psychological states. 40% of our eating habits and overeating is contributed to stress. Stress related ailments cost the nation \$300 billion each year.² In African and Latino populations, the percentages of disease are significantly increased compared to the national average. The burden of disease has created an epidemic of supersized, sedentary, stressed out, and sick people.

Sources:

Healthy People 2020 <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/lhi-topics/obesity/data>

The American Institute of Stress <https://www.stress.org/stress-is-killing-you>



RECLAMATION

There is rest offered to us
by God in which our
bodies, burdens, and busy
lives can be restored.



RECOVERY

In Chapter 31 of Exodus, Moses receives his final instructions from God about those he has chosen (Bezalel, Oholiab, the skillful) to complete the work of the Tabernacle. After God has listed the responsibilities of his chosen ones, God informs Moses about the Sabbath rest. The Sabbath rest is a commandment, to be observed by the Israelite people. The Sabbath is to be a complete rest, holy to the Lord. The Sabbath rest is a covenantal promise, and agreement between God and His people. It is to be observed throughout the ages. Disobedience to the observance of the Sabbath rest will result in death. As recorded in the JPS Torah Commentary, *“The Tabernacle enshrines the concept of the holiness of space; the Sabbath embodies the concept of the holiness of time. The latter takes precedence over the former, and the work of the Tabernacle must yield each week to the Sabbath rest.”* God will divinely choose us to do His work but doing His work does not justify ignoring the Sabbath rest, especially when not observing the Sabbath will have its consequences in our lives and in our bodies.

Exodus 31:1-18 (NRSV)

¹The LORD spoke to Moses: ²See, I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: ³and I have filled him with divine spirit,^[a] with ability, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft, ⁴to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, ⁵in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, in every kind of craft. ⁶Moreover, I have appointed with him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have given skill to all the skillful, so that they may make all that I have commanded you: ⁷the tent of meeting, and the ark of the covenant,^[b] and the mercy seat^[c] that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent, ⁸the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, ⁹and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin with its stand, ¹⁰and the finely worked vestments, the holy vestments for the priest Aaron and the vestments of his sons, for their service as priests, ¹¹and the anointing oil

and the fragrant incense for the holy place. They shall do just as I have commanded you.

¹²The LORD said to Moses: ¹³You yourself are to speak to the Israelites: “You shall keep my sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, given in order that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. ¹⁴You shall keep the sabbath, because it is holy for you; everyone who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it shall be cut off from among the people. ¹⁵Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶Therefore the Israelites shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.”



RECONSTRUCTION

OF THE SABBATH REST

In our key verse and study passage, God emphasized the need for rest. Let us examine how divine work is structured.

1. In vv. 1-2, who called Bezalel to ministry? How was he equipped to do the work?
2. What was Bezalel specifically chosen to do in the building of the Tabernacle?
3. In verse 6, who was appointed to work alongside Bezalel? Did these men receive specific assignments?
4. Was their workload greater, equal to, or less than that assigned to Bezalel? Why?
5. Why was the Sabbath rest text placed immediately following their assignments?
6. How is the Sabbath rest described? What are the benefits if observed? What is/are the consequence(s) if it is not observed?

RENEWAL

In order for restoration to begin, that which has been broken, damaged, burned out, stressed out, or diseased, must first rest. Resting entails stopping completely and interrupting our weekly routines to take a Sabbath rest. The Sabbath rest allows us to practice Self Care. On the following page you will find a Self-Care Assessment which helps us to identify the areas of our lives we need to stop and renew in order to eliminate stress and ultimately, dis-ease in our lives. This assessment tool provides an overview of effective strategies to maintain self-care. After completing the full assessment, choose one item from each area that you will actively work to improve.

Self-Care Assessment Worksheet

Use the following scale to rate the areas listed below in terms of frequency:

5 = Frequently 4 = Occasionally 3 = Rarely 2 = Never 1 = It never occurred to me

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- Eat healthy
- Exercise
- Get regular (annual) medical care for prevention
- Get medical care when first needed
- Get massages
- Dance, swim, walk, run, sport, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun
- Get enough sleep (8 hrs.)
- Wear clothes you like as opposed to what fits
- Take vacations (yearly)
- Take day trips or stay-cations
- Make time away from telephone
- Time away from social media

PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-CARE

- Make time for self-reflection
- Have your own psychotherapy (encourage yourself)
- Write in a journal
- Read literature that is unrelated to work
- Do something at which you are not expert or in charge
- Let others know different aspects of you
- Notice your inner experience; listen to your thoughts, judgements, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings
- Engage your intelligence in a new area (e.g. art museums, history exhibits, sporting event, auction, theater performance, etc.)
- Practice receiving from others (gifts, compliments...)
- Be curious; have a new experience
- Say "no" to extra responsibilities sometimes

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

- Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in your life
- Give yourself affirmation; praise yourself

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE (continued)

- Love yourself
- Re-read favorite books; re-view favorite movies
- Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out
- Allow yourself to cry
- Find things that make you laugh
- Express your outrage in social action, letters and donations, marches, protests
- Play with children

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

- Make time for reflection
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish your optimism and hope
- Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life
- Practice disciplines of prayer, fasting, mediation
- Be open to not knowing

WORKPLACE / PROFESSIONAL SELF-CARE

- Take a break during the workday (e.g. lunch)
- Take time to chat with co-workers
- Make quiet time to complete tasks
- Set limits with your clients and colleagues
- Balance your caseload so that no one day or part of the day is “too much”
- Arrange your work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- Negotiate for your needs (benefits, pay raises)

BALANCE

- Strive for balance within your work-life and workday
- Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play, and rest

Source:

Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization. Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996)



REVIVAL

The Sabbath rest allows us to practice Self Care. We must be intentional to stop and renew ourselves weekly and fulfill our covenantal promise with God to come to Him and rest.

Review your Self Care Assessment and set S.M.A.R.T. goals for the area (s) you have identified.

S.M.A.R.T. IS AN ACRONYM for:

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Achievable/Attainable

R = Realistic

T = Time Specific

For example: “I will lose 5 pounds in two weeks.” Or, “When anxious, I will write my thoughts in my journal for 3 minutes.”