

What would you do if you had to spend one day without television, cell phones, music devices, or internet? Perhaps the cartoon character Linus without his blanket comes to mind. Your hands start to shake. Anxiety sets in. A cold sweat creeps over you as you wander around in a dazed condition, zombie-like, from one point to the next. While this may be a slight exaggeration, internet addiction is real. In a recent study done from twelve campuses across the globe, researchers discovered that students who were asked to give up their digital media for 24 hours exhibited physical and mental distress ranging from anxiety to depression, while many failed to last the full day, admitting they were addicted to technology.

In response to this epidemic, Reboot, a non-profit organization promoting Jewish values, has initiated the National Day of Unplugging, starting from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. During this time, they call people to fast from their electronic devices for one complete twenty-four hour cycle. They plastered their website with people holding up signs that said, "I unplug to," and the person holding the picture filled in their own answer, such as, "rock climb," "swim," "cook," "ski," "travel," and so on. While this idea to unplug for a 24 hour period may sound foreign to us, it's really not a new idea at all. In fact, it is as ancient as time itself. The Bible calls it Sabbath.

In the beginning, God created all things in six days and "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested" (Gen. 2:2, 3). God did not rest because He was tired, but as an example for us. God knows we need rest one day a week. While physical rest is needed, this is not the primary rest God is calling us to. God is calling us to spiritual rest. We need this rest to stay connected, or plugged in, to our Creator. You see, God is calling us to unplug from the world and plug into His power. Because time is perhaps the most important element in maintaining our relationships, God is asking for us to give Him one day each week; to

spend time with Him so we can receive a special blessing.

So many of us live our lives anxious, stressed, and depressed. We are bombarded with guilt and all kinds of dangerous emotions. We get so caught up in the "cares, riches, and pleasures of life" that we forget to spend time on the things that are really important in life, like faith, friends, and family (Luke 8:14). God just tells us to change our priorities for one day each week and focus on what really matters in life. If we listen to Him and try things His way, we will receive His blessing. His promise is, if you call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth" (Isa. 58:13, 14). God wants us to live "the good life," but He has given us a prescription. It's called the Sabbath.

God knows that if we do not set aside the Sabbath, we will eventually burn out. Our lives will accumulate stress, anxiety, depression, and other problems. That's why God does not merely suggest that we set aside the Sabbath, but He commands us to. In the heart of the Ten Commandments, God says, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work" (Ex. 20:8-10). God does not command us to set aside the Sabbath because He is a killjoy, but to benefit us. Obeying God's laws are "for our good" (Deut. 6:24). In the same way digital media can lose its connection, we at times get so caught up in our lives that we get spiritually disconnected from God. That is why Sabbath is so important. God has commanded us to set aside a day of rest to spend with Him and focus on the important things in life.

Of course, in spite of popular opinion, God's blessing is not offered on any day, but on the day He set aside. According to the Bible, God set aside "the seventh day," or Saturday, as a memorial of creation. While some claim the

Sabbath was ended at the cross, this simply isn't true. Laws regarding Jewish feast days ended at the cross, but these had nothing to do with the Ten Commandments. This is addressed in the writings of Paul who said, "One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5). Paul was saying, if one wanted to keep the feast days, it was not a sin, but it was also not essential after the cross. He makes no reference to the Ten Commandments or the Sabbath.

While the death of Christ brought an end to all the old Jewish feasts, which were also referred to as Sabbaths and revolved around the new moon cycle, consisting of food and drink offerings (Col. 2:14-17), the apostles continued to keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment far into the new covenant era. All through the New Testament we repeatedly see Paul and the apostles keeping the Sabbath. We are told that that "reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4; See also See Acts 13:42-44; 16:13; 17:2). In spite of this, many pastors today make light of the law and the Sabbath, as if they were merely suggestions, even claiming that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday in honor of the resurrection and yet this illusive change is found nowhere in Scripture. Think about it. If Jesus was going to change one of the Ten Commandments, wouldn't He make it clear? And yet many nice, well-meaning pastors twist a few obscure verses to claim we don't have to observe the commandment that has the greatest impact on our connection with Christ.

Tragically, the one command that connects us with God more than any other has been doubly disabled. First, some say the Sabbath isn't important. Second, people say it doesn't matter what day we worship on, but God's word does matter. Pretend a father asks his child to meet in the park on a specific day each week, but the child goes on a different day. That's what we do when we choose to worship God on our own day. It's like trying to plug into an outlet that has no power. As a result, we do not get the real power

and blessing. The disconnect of the Sabbath has resulted in a loss of spiritual power among God's people across the globe, and the responsibility lies at the door of the church. Many church leaders have promoted the claim that Jesus did away with the Sabbath, changing the day of worship to Sunday in honor of the resurrection, but while there was a change, it was not done by Jesus. Antiquity tells us, "We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church in the Council of Laodicea transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday" (Rev. Peter Geierman, The Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, pg. 50). The Council of Laodicea did not take place until the year 336 A.D., which explains why the apostles continued to keep the Sabbath all through the book of Acts.

You see, the Sabbath is the key to that spiritual power which will give us power in every other area of our lives. If we will obey the command to disconnect from the world and plug into God every Saturday, in obedience to His command, He promises to take care of us, providing us with the peace and power we need to get us through the week. If you ever feel tired or drained by life; if you feel void of peace, or lacking spiritual power to defeat the demons in your life, stop worshipping your way on your day, and try God's way. God promises that if you turn away "from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord... I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth" (Isa. 58:13, 14). So this Sabbath try unplugging from the world and tap into God's power from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. Turn off your computer and television, find a church with Christian fellowship, and spend time with your heavenly Father. You'll be amazed at the power this simple change will bring into your life.

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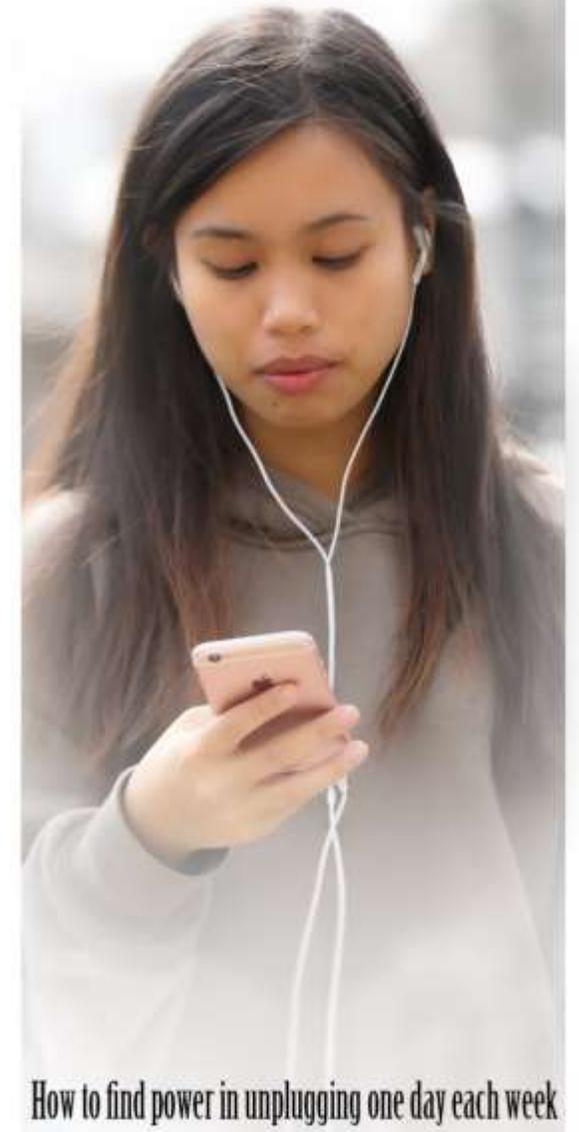
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How to find power in unplugging one day each week