



Leadership Regrets: Not Observing the Sabbath

Mark Carter & Rick Egbert

Welcome to BLP. Today, Pastor Carter interviews Rick Egbert, a mental health counselor, and former pastor, on staff for fifteen years at The Chapel, a local multi-site church. Rick is a wise coach and encourager and was integral in Carter's planting of his church.

In this episode, Carter and Rick discuss what all Christian leaders should learn early on: to appreciate and observe the Sabbath.

- **The demands are great.** // It's a given that as a leader, you'll feel both motivation and pressure to do and accomplish more. The truth is, you can only go full-force for so long. Some signs of having pushed too hard include: being short with others, grumpy, intolerant, and unfairly judging others' effort levels compared to yours. Be proactive and don't wait until your exhaustion is obvious. If the people in your life notice, you've already started to come apart at the seams.
- **Ministry is not about drive.** // While you're doing God's work, good work (awesome work), this does not excuse operating at a nonstop pace. Going all out often leads to excellent results for a time, and the high of the adrenaline rush will feel super, but the bottom line is... it's an addictive mindset. "The more, the better" is not what God wants for you or anyone else. Examine your motives. Even though your work is important Kingdom work, it is still work and will take a toll nonetheless.
- **Pace yourself.** // Starting out is exciting and you'll want to push yourself, of course! Like anyone, you can expect times of busy-ness and stress starting something new. However, keep centered on the truth that your value does not come from what you do, you need not ever prove your worth. You possess immeasurable inherent worth, you are a Child of God.
- **Heed wisdom.** // There's great value in the wisdom of people closest to you, more experienced leaders, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Trust when they say you're pushing too hard. It's easy to be hypnotized by the pace, but it will only lead to burnout. Busy is not a season when you're always busy, in that case, it's a lifestyle.
- **The Sabbath is a command.** // Simple, obey God. The Sabbath is the fourth commandment, it is also the longest because God is making a clear point, it's important. Do you disregard other commandments? Then why this one? Basking in the love of God is a command, let yourself experience this, regularly. You cannot give what you do not have, it may sound cliché, but listen to the Spirit, it's true.
- **God will do more.** // God will accomplish more through you in 6 days with Him than you can in 7 days on your own. The enemy will lie and keep you always going, keeping you from the rest of God. Identify the lies and replace them with truth. Ask yourself, how do I abide versus trying to get more done? The latter means you are relying on your own strength. The work you do



comes from the rest, not the other way around. You'll get more done and the fruit will come from abiding, not striving. John 15:5 (NIV) *I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me, and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

- **Be practical and make it happen.** // Newsflash, your Sabbath will not happen on its own. The day must be identified, scheduled, and protected. Rest both your body and mind. Slow down and enjoy a long soak in the Lord's goodness. Breathe and quiet your spirit. God will bring you whatever restoration you need so you can go out. Instead of working to rest, we take a day off, then we work out of what the rest brought us. This is God's design.
- **Truly enjoy.** // Your Sabbath to-do list: have fun with family, and friends you love, sleep in, read, nap, eat good food slowly, meditate, pray, watch a movie, go for a walk, the bottom line is to do what brings you enjoyment and pleasure. Do not rush or hurry. Sabbath activities don't have to be spiritual to be sacred, rest and laughter are sacred. A good rule is that you shouldn't do what you "should do". The temptation will be to do the things you "should" be doing, instead, avoid them. This is a day of replenishment, not drain. Make your heart happy, be filled, you're allowed to avoid toxic relationships, shield your Sabbath joy.
- **Be relentless to protect your Sabbath.** // Not everyone will be happy with the boundaries around your Sabbath, and that's okay. Yes, your work is "for God", but so is the Sabbath, God wants you to be obedient to this command. A burned-out you cannot further God's kingdom, ministry is a marathon. Learn how to abide in stillness and replenishment, in order to hear what God wants you to do. Remember that the choices you make in your position are by example instructing others how to live. Those you lead are looking to you to see how they should live and how they can succeed. Live a life worthy of emulation.
- **You'll be more productive and a better leader.** // If you're under-rested, you'll be less discerning of the needs of your congregation, staff, and others. There will always be more to do, the checklist is unending. The marrow of life is in the rest. Don't wait to finish another task, there has to be a stopping point. God built rest into our schedule and wants to meet us there.
- **It's worth it.** // It may sound cliché, but Christian leaders carry a lot on their shoulders, advancing the kingdom of God. It's noble to want to bear the weight, but this attitude misrepresents the spirit that God wants us to have. In front of a watching world, be faithful. Choose rest, choose joy.