

Female Testimony:

For as long as I can remember, I have associated my worth with my achievements and accomplishments. In college, that was no different. I graduated early with two majors and served in leadership positions for every organization I was in, including the executive board of my sorority. On paper, I was incredibly successful; but I personally felt unfulfilled and empty. Upon graduation, my biggest regret was not giving more time to my faith and friendships. I started praying daily and attending daily Mass, and it was unbelievable how much my time was multiplied and how joyful I felt. After graduation, I learned that success wasn't about accolades, but rather, it was about living a well-balanced life with Jesus Christ at the very center. I don't regret a single minute that I gave to the Lord, and I wish I had learned that earlier on.

11. What is one thing you want to commit to this week to reorient your understanding of success?

Response: Let the group discuss. Feel free to have your group write down a commitment or choose one you can do together. Consider closing this study by praying the Litany of Humility as a group.

(Note to leader: If time remains, consider walking your group through the [Litany of Humility](#) or praying it together. You could invite your group to pray it throughout the week as their action step.)

¹ Edward Sri, "Called to Greatness: The Virtue of Magnanimity." *Lay Witness* (November/December 2009), <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/religion-and-philosophy/philosophy/called-to-greatness-the-virtue-of-magnanimity.html>



Chapter VI

Rest

CHAPTER 6

REST

Goal: Awakening an Awareness to Holy Rest

Leader's Guide:

You have reached the final chapter of this study! We began our study at the moment of creation with Adam and Eve, and we are going to end our study circling back to creation and what that has to teach us about rest. You have been leading your participants through conversations on many relevant and potentially challenging topics, and we hope this chapter will draw your conversations to a close in a hopeful and encouraging way.

Last week, we discussed the ideas of success and excellence and how they particularly affect Greek students. Indeed, time is one of the most precious resources that any of us get, this side of heaven. Time is a gift that God has given us to spend in ways that fulfill us and bring him glory.

As chapter members, Greeks are constantly bombarded with a full calendar and schedule of events – chapter meetings, social functions, study hall hours and more. And, while Greeks are invited to excellence in these areas, it can be tempting for the activities on our plate to overwhelm our identity and to crowd out any time we may have left for what is most important: our time with the Lord.

During this study, you as the leader will have the opportunity help your group reflect on what is revealed through the six days of work and the seventh day of rest during the creation story. The structure of this narrative teaches us an important truth: we are invited into labor by God, but we are ultimately created for rest and worship. We are created for the sabbath.

Please note: FOCUS Greek is preparing to write part two of “Fully Alive”! The next edition of this study will dive into topics that are more suited for participants who are deeper in their journey of faith. These topics will build upon the foundation laid in this study.

Intro: Rest and Identity

(Please read aloud.)

We've reached the final chapter of our study! We've talked about a number of ways that our worldview has been shaped by the tides of the world, and hopefully we've been practicing new habits to reorient our understanding and root our identities more deeply in the Lord. Let's start off by reflecting back on our study so far.

1. What has been a top takeaway or “aha” moment for you so far in this study? How has what you put your identity in shifted or changed?

Response: Let the group discuss.

In this chapter, we're going to dive even deeper in orienting our lives toward the Lord. Last week we talked about success and excellence – topics that no chapter member is a stranger to. Greeks are constantly

bombarded with a full calendar and schedule of events – chapter meetings, social functions, study hall hours and more. And while Greeks are invited to excellence in these areas, it can be tempting for the activities on our plate to overwhelm our identity and to crowd out any time we may have left for what is most important: our time with the Lord.

We are going to look at what God has to say about time, and more specifically, how we are invited to use our time as he has designed, specifically in the areas of rest and worship. We started our study in Genesis, in the Garden of Eden, and we're going to return there for our final chapter.

In Genesis 1, the writer outlines the first six days of creation. Many of you may be familiar with the story. God creates the day and night, earth and sea, land and sky. Then he creates the sun and the moon, the living creatures that populate the earth, and finally, human beings. Let's turn to Genesis 2 to see the importance of the seventh day, the final day of creation.

(Read Genesis 2: 1 – 3.)

2. On the seventh day, God rested. Why do you think God rested on this day? Did he need it, or did he choose it? Why do you think so?

Response: Let the group discuss. For the second question, God did not need to rest – he is all-powerful. However, he rested as a model and as a promise for us: he first made the sabbath a sign of the covenant with his people (CCC 2170) and a model for us to “be refreshed” from “the servitude of work and the worship of money” (CCC 2172).

3. If we are made in God's image and likeness, as we talked about way back in chapter one, what does the fact that God rested say about us?

Response: God desires us to rest as he did – he knew that we would need a day of rest to free ourselves from the bondage of the world to remember our purpose in life, which is to know, love and serve God.

God's Vision for Rest and Worship

(Note to leader: Please read aloud.)

Just as God's rest on the seventh day in the creation narrative signals the importance of a day of rest and worship of God, this importance was elevated by Jesus' death and resurrection. Sunday is not only a fulfillment of the Jewish sabbath but also a celebration of the Resurrection and the salvation won for us by Christ! It is so important that we find it in the Third Commandment given to Moses in the Old Testament.

(Read Exodus 20: 8 – 11.)

4. Why do you think God went so far as to make observing the sabbath day a commandment (along with commandments like “You shall not steal” and “You shall not kill”)?

Response: Remaining in right relationship with God is just as important, and even more important, than remaining in right relationship with others. For him, nothing could be more important than our covenantal, abiding relationship with him. But he knew our hearts and that we would be tempted to make other things more

important. It is from our relationship with him that we will have the grace to live out the other commandments in our lives.

5. Though we can be tempted to think of commandments as strict rules that confine our freedom, how is this commandment an example of the ways that God's commandments for us are for our good and reveal his love for us?

Response: God does not desire us to be slaves to the world or to our own selfish desires. This commandment ensures that we will have time set aside to enter into our true purpose and to remain in communion with him, which is our only true path to happiness. Sabbath worship is required by God not because he's a vain dictator that needs our worship to feel good about himself; rather, he desires us to worship him and keep his day holy because it's for our good, not his.

(Note to leader: Please read aloud.)

A central way we enter into the sabbath as God designed it, and thereby live in accord with this commandment, in our lives today is through worship, particularly through the celebration of the Eucharist at Mass:

"The celebration of Sunday... render[s] to God an outward, visible, public and regular worship 'as a sign of his universal beneficence to all.' ... The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life." (CCC 2176-77)

"The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason...on Sundays and other

holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass." (CCC 2181, 2180)

6. Why is an "outward, visible, public and regular" act of worship on Sunday an important part of keeping holy the sabbath? Why are rest and personal worship not enough to fully embrace God's command to keep the sabbath?

Response: The very reason for the sabbath is worship – God gave us a day of rest so that our work would not get in the way of us coming together to worship God in the ways he asked us to! Without attending Mass, the sabbath would be just an opportunity for us to pursue rest selfishly. Ordering this day around worshipping God ensures that the day is oriented toward him first.

(Note to leader: Please read aloud.)

As we discussed in Chapter 1 on image, if we forget to rest and keep holy the Sabbath, we eventually forget who God is; and if we forget who God is, we eventually forget who WE are. We allow our identities to become shaped by our activities, our work, our successes, our failures and our achievements, instead of letting them be shaped by God. What's in our schedule reveals to us what's most important to us; and if time with God isn't present, it reveals what's really in our hearts.

7. Are there any ways that you currently enter into the sabbath intentionally with rest and worship? If so, why did you choose those things? If not, why not?

Response: Let the group discuss. Examples include: cooking with roommates, hiking / walking around town, leisurely shopping for fun items, playing sports with friends or strangers.

8. What prevents you from living the sabbath in accord with the vision in this chapter? How might the motivations we've been discussing (approval, comfort, control and power) influence how you live the sabbath? Which motivation do you wrestle with the most?

Response: Let the group discuss. Possible answers include:

Approval and Appreciation: "I can't say no to anyone who asks me to do something because I don't want to let them down" or "I need to keep checking Facebook to see how many likes or comments I got."

Emotional and Physical Comfort: "I don't want to go to Mass on Sunday because it's my only day to sleep in" or "I prefer to worship my own way, so I don't go to a Sunday service or Mass."

Security and Control: "I can't stop working on Sunday, or I might fall behind and lose opportunities to get ahead" or "If I have time on Sunday, I'll make time for rest or worship; but if I'm too busy, then those things are more important."

Influence and Power: "I have to fill my schedule in order to get more knowledge, money, friends or prestige on campus" or "I don't want to have to tell my friends, coworkers or classmates that I can't meet on Sunday because I don't want to look weak."

9. What are some ways you could more intentionally live out God's vision for the sabbath on a weekly basis?

Response: Let the group discuss. Possible answers include: making Sunday Mass a priority every single week; finishing all homework prior to Sunday; making extra time for prayer on Sundays; avoiding unnecessary work or tasks on Sundays; if required to work on Sundays, setting aside other time throughout the week for intentional rest and relationship with God, etc.

Rest and Relationship with God: Greek Life Testimonies

(Note to leader: Feel free to read aloud or print these testimonies for your group to read and reflect upon, either during your study or outside of your study time.)

Male Testimony:

My fraternity always expected the best of me and my brothers, usually pushing us to be as involved as possible, not only within our own organization but also in all the high-profile organizations on campus. While I was also expected to excel at all of my schoolwork, we were expected to excel in all the leadership positions across campus; and it was something that consumed me for the majority of my time in college. When a missionary helped me finally to realize that prayer and my relationship with God had to be the priority, it took a lot of stretching to let go of some of the things that I had done for so long. But when I finally did, I found that I had a greater zeal and energy to go above and beyond in the things that I actually was deeply invested in, all as a result of the grace that God gave me through prayer.

Female Testimony:

When I joined my sorority my freshman year, I was immediately bombarded with many responsibilities and commitments in addition to my normal schoolwork. These commitments, both freshman year and throughout the rest of college, easily consumed many of my sisters' lives. When I decided I wanted to prioritize daily prayer, Mass, Bible study, and faith-based friendships, I had to actively and intentionally choose to honor these priorities. I wanted to keep eternal life and holiness as my ultimate goal and purpose in life, and thus I strove to live each day in accordance with that. Time is the most precious gift God gives us and must be used wisely and for his glory.

FOCUS Equip

'FOCUS Equip' is based on Ephesians 4:12 "for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

These materials seek to equip you for lifelong Catholic mission.

We would love to hear your feedback at: focusequip@focus.org

FULLY ALIVE

