“IT IS AN IRONIC HABIT of human beings to run faster when they have lost their way.” This quotation, attributed to existentialist philosopher Rollo May, is an astute observation on the human condition. The god of our culture is speed, and we kneel at the altars of newer, faster, and more.

Our American economy is measured by productivity. In the marketplace, multitasking is a valued and employable skill. Everyone’s looking for a superhuman who can effortlessly spin 36 plates in the air and get by on four hours of sleep. “Time is money,” they say. “You can sleep when you’re dead.”

This “do more” philosophy has extended beyond the workplace to the heart of religious culture. After all, it’s easier to measure spiritual devotion by the number of church committees you serve on than by God’s standard — looking at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7).

God gave Moses just 10 commandments (Ex. 20), and taking time for Sabbath rest was number four, right there near the top of the list. And yet, this is the commandment we find easiest to dismiss. Remembering the Sabbath means acknowledging that God alone sustains the universe, not our ceaseless striving. Sabbath means developing an intentional rhythm of work and rest where we speak to God in the quiet and hear His voice. This is sacred time He wants us to keep holy.

In today’s 24/7 world, thousands of years after Mount Sinai, remembering the Sabbath is countercultural. Our bodies and souls were designed for regular intervals of rest, yet we fill our lives with chaos, noise, and distraction. When we ignore God’s commandment, we pay the price in our physical health, emotional well-being, and spiritual vitality.

This edition of Torch explores the topic of biblical, Sabbath rest — why we need it, how we can reclaim it, and how we best reflect Christ when we intentionally leave room for God to interrupt our schedules with His plans.

God values and loves us because He made us and redeemed us, not because of anything we produce or achieve. God is honored when our work is marked by diligence, excellence, and integrity. We also honor Him, the Giver of every good gift, when we rest in His love.

William E. Brown, Ph.D.
President of Cedarville University
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Sabbath Rest

by William E. Brown, Ph.D.

Jesus reversed the Sabbath law back to a Sabbath blessing, and He still offers rest to all who simply come.

Among the prohibitions in the first and most famous top-10 list, God said, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex. 20:8). God’s rest after Creation is the model He gave for the command. If God rests — and we know how busy He is — then certainly we must. Keeping the Sabbath holy meant setting aside a day with no work and enjoying the rest as a blessing.

Enter the theologians who spent centuries defining and refining what constituted “work.” They developed a series of rules to regulate the day including how many steps a man could walk or how much he could carry on the Sabbath. By the time of Jesus, Jewish leaders were spying on and confronting anyone they found not following acceptable Sabbath behavior. Leave it to religious people to transform a blessing into onerous law!

When Christ came, everything changed. He fulfilled the law, rendering the commandments non-binding. Keeping the Sabbath was no longer a command for the Church — as far as the day and the legal requirements were concerned. Jesus said, “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). The heart of the Sabbath was central to His teaching.

Come to Me

Jesus transformed the Sabbath from an impersonal series of legal regulations into a person — Himself. True rest was granted by coming to the only One who could give it.

For more than 40 years, Pat Summerall was one of the most recognized broadcasters in professional football. He broadcasted 16 Super Bowls and made a legendary name for himself. But he was also an alcoholic. As his life unraveled, he sought treatment at the Betty Ford Center. The rest and therapy he received...
there helped him deal with his alcohol addiction, but he still had no peace.

It was not until Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry and others introduced him to Christ that Summerall’s spiritual emptiness was filled. “I had that feeling,” he said. “I had a feeling of peace.”

I Will Give You Rest

Do we really want rest? When I meet people during my travels, they often ask, “What do you do?” It is a silly question in abstract — I am always tempted to answer, “What do I do about what?” We ask because we are interested in a person’s occupation. Surnames such as Baker, Potter, Tanner, and Smith remind us that, historically, a person’s very identity was tied to his or her work.

Jesus seemed uninterested in the occupations of people he met. He was, however, intensely interested in who they were. That’s why He interacted so easily with prostitutes, lepers, priests, fishermen, women, and children. He dignified and respected them. Those who truly understood His message found rest from the challenges of their circumstances.

Although we may not be tempted to identify ourselves by what we do, that does not keep us from filling our days with work. We fear missing out on something, being thought of as lazy, or not keeping up with the competition. In our tech-dominated world, we have extended our reach but diminished our depth.

The truth is, we do not know how to disconnect, quiet our hearts, and allow our souls to breathe.

Rest for Your Soul

In a 1967 episode from The Andy Griffith Show, city clerk Howard Sprague leaves his job and moves to the Caribbean to lie in a hammock all day. Ah, the life! But it does not take long for boredom and lethargy to set in. He fears becoming a mindless beach bum and soon returns to his old life in Mayberry.

The good life is not a life of leisure, and the biblical concept of rest does not call us to inactivity. Jesus promises rest not once, but twice in this passage: “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matt. 11:29–30).

Taking His yoke means submitting to His guidance and orienting our lives to the great purposes of God. Learning from Him is to be refreshed by Him — His gentleness, His humility. He was never in a hurry. He spent long hours alone. He communed with His Father.

Restless No More

The Sabbath rest God promises for the people of God reminds us that nothing in this life can satisfy our deepest longings (Heb. 4:9).

Young film star Shia LaBeouf has made millions in the past few years. He is just 25 years old, yet he has achieved the American dream. He has everything — except peace. “Sometimes I feel like I’m living a meaningless life, and I get frightened,” he said in a 2009 PARADE Magazine interview. “I have no idea where this insecurity comes from, but it’s a God-sized hole. If I knew, I’d fill it, and I’d be on my way.”

It seems a simple answer that a “God-sized hole” can only be filled by God. Come to Him. He is our greatest joy, our greatest hope, and our greatest message to a restless world.

Dr. William E. Brown has served as president of Cedarville University since 2003. He received his B.A. in mathematics from the University of South Florida and his Th.M. in theology and Ph.D. in biblical studies from Dallas Theological Seminary. As a nationally recognized worldview expert, he is the author of Making Sense of Your Faith, Where Have All the Dreamers Gone?, and Making Sense of Your World.

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Living Inside the Margin

by Richard Swenson, M.D.

We are a better advertisement for the things of God when we are doing less, not more.

Dr. Richard Swenson was the featured speaker at the 2001 Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar Lecture Program at Cedarville University. The following is taken from his lecture series, titled “An Infinite Creator and His Finite Creation.” Listen to the full series at cedarville.edu/torch/resources.
The average office worker is interrupted 202 times a day. The average desk worker has 36 hours of work piled on his or her desk and spends three hours a week shuffling piles trying to find the right project to work on next. We spend one year of our lives searching through the clutter looking for misplaced objects. The average misplaced object travels 10 inches. More than 60 million Americans have sleep disorder problems — 27 percent of Americans fell asleep while driving last year. One-third of Americans say they are “rushed” all the time.

In the 1960s, the futurists said by now you would have one wage earner in the family working 20 hours a week because progress and technology would lead to increased productivity. They predicted productivity would increase, wages would increase, and we’d all be bored. That is not what happened. Instead, the average husband and wife unit is working 90 hours, not 20. The prediction only missed by 350 percent.

This is largely the result of progress. Progress is the notion that life automatically improves. We should work to make life better. But progress works largely by differentiation and always leads to more of everything — faster and faster. Progress cannot lead to less and slower. This is what the futurists forgot to factor in.

Crossing the Line
I like more. That’s the definition of American happiness: more than I have now. There’s no real problem with progress, differentiation, or more. My problem is that I have only a 24-hour day. Progress has to continue differentiating. It cannot afford to care that I have limits. If it stopped, our economy would fall apart. Meanwhile, progress is propelling me right into my limits.

The fact that I have limits is not a threat to God. He does a good job running the universe without my help. That line for human limits is drawn differently for each person — some people are 10 times more productive than I am — but once you cross that line, bad things predictably happen to your life, including your spiritual life.

Someone asked author Henry Blackaby how he accomplished all he did in his life. He said, “I spent my life hurrying God. I was running around doing all these things, and somehow God had to fit into it all. And then God said, ‘Henry, you’re not going to hurry Me anymore. You are going to have to fit into My schedule.’” Blackaby said it changed everything.

We’re all running, but God’s not running after us. He knows that speed does not yield devotion. The presence of God is in inverse proportion to the pace of our lives — meditation, wisdom, and worship are slow, mellow, and deep.

If your theology is to do all you can for God, although that sounds praiseworthy, you will always fail. Wherever you end the day is arbitrary. There is always something more you could do. Even if it’s 3 a.m., you could pray a little more. You could write a letter of encouragement to somebody. You and I could probably go downtown to a bar; there’s probably some despairing soul sitting there we could witness to. If we feel we have to pay God back, we will fail in our own theology every single day. Fortunately for us, God breaks into our work and says, “OK, good job. Now it’s time to sleep. Don’t worry, I’ll keep an eye on the universe.”

Finding the Limit
Short-term overload is not the enemy. It happens to everyone at some point — tax time or final exams. Chronic overload drains your spiritual reserves. It is an enemy of prayer, worship, meditation, loving one another, and service. We either stop doing those things or, worse, we simply go through the motions. Consider these three scenarios:
Life at 80 percent: Your colleague approaches you and says, “Can you take my shift this weekend? We’ve got a family crisis. My sister is having surgery; I think it’s cancer.” You say, “Sure, I can take your shift. I’ve got some margin in my life. I like you, and I hope your sister’s OK.”

Then the town soccer league calls: “The fourth-grade coach has broken her leg. Could you coach the kids for two or three months?” You say, “Great, thanks for asking me. I need some exercise. I like the kids, and I’m glad to help.”

Your spouse, if you happen to be married, says, “Let’s take the neighbors out to dinner Friday night. They’ve lived next to us for two years, and we don’t even know what they look like.” You say, “Let’s do it.”

Life at 100 percent: Your colleague says, “Can you take my shift this weekend?” You say, “Well, I’d like to, but I don’t know if I can. I’ll let you know tomorrow … Well, I’ll tell you what, I don’t know how I’ll do it, but I’ll do it. But just this once, OK?” You walk away thinking, “What’s happening to me? I always wanted to help people, but I don’t even care about this person anymore.”

And they call from the soccer league. “Could you coach the fourth-grade team?” You say, “I’d love to, but I can’t right now. Call me down the road, when life gets better.”

Your spouse says, “How about taking the neighbors out to dinner on Friday night?” You say, “Let’s do it in July. Maybe we can fit it in then. We can’t do it this week.”

Life at 120 percent: Your colleague asks, “Can you take my shift this weekend?” You say, “Stop right there. I quit. I’m sick and tired of everyone dumping their load and expecting me to bail them out at the last minute. I’ve had it. I’m out of here.”

They call from the soccer league. “Could you coach the fourth-grade kids?” You say, “I hate kids! And you’re an idiot! Who gave you my number, anyway? Don’t ever call me again.”

And your spouse says, “How about taking the neighbors out to dinner on Friday night?” You say, “You do whatever you want. I’ll tell you what I’m doing. I’m coming home at 5:30 p.m. and closing the door. And locking it. With a deadbolt. I’m turning off the light and closing the curtains. I’m pushing the refrigerator and television next to the bed, and I’m not coming out until Monday morning.”

What changed in these scenarios? What was being asked of you was precisely the same. In which scenario were you a better advertisement for the things of God?

Creating Space
Can you see the practical implications for a life of service, connection with God, or any
kind of devotional response of the heart? We need some margin, the space between our load and our limits. Margin is our reserves, the place where we rest, recharge our batteries, recover our passion, renew our relationships — where we are still and know that He is God.

The focus of Christ’s ministry was always the person standing in front of Him. The person standing in front of me is an obstacle I’m trying to get over, under, around, or through because I’m late for whatever is down the road. Jesus did not cure every case of leprosy in Israel. If you could just look at it or touch it and heal it, wouldn’t you hold clinic until 3 a.m. every morning? Wouldn’t you give the disciples only an hour of sleep and keep running from village to village? He didn’t do that; He knew there would be more leprosy tomorrow. How completely contrary that is to my whole mentality.

In the spiritual life, discipline means that somewhere in your life you are not occupied, or preoccupied. It means creating space in which something can happen that you hadn’t planned or counted on. God asks us to walk the second mile, carry another’s burden, witness to the truth at any opportunity, and teach our children as we sit, walk, lie down, and stand — these responses presuppose that we have margin to make available for His purposes.

Are we really willing to let God control our agendas? Let’s make our plans and arrange our schedules humbly, lightly — realizing that God Almighty has the right to redirect us at a moment’s notice.

Dr. Richard Swenson is a physician-futurist, author, and educator. He received his B.S. in physics from Denison University and his M.D. from the University of Illinois School of Medicine. His best-selling books include Margin, The Overload Syndrome, and In Search of Balance. Learn more at RichardSwenson.com.

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Alone Together

by J. Wesley Baker, Ph.D.

Although we live in a technology-rich culture, we are losing touch with our loved ones and ourselves.
Who has not seen this family at a restaurant: Dad is watching the game on TV, Mom is talking on her cell phone, and the children are absorbed in texting friends or playing handheld video games. This scene is what Professor Kenneth J. Gergen of Swarthmore College calls “absent presence.”

In a recent article in The New York Times Magazine, Virginia Heffernan probes the sense of loss our “digital social life” seems to produce. As she notes, the process of turning continuous sound and light waves into discrete points of data requires throwing some of the original information away. She wonders if this vague awareness that something is lost in the
process helps explain why the digital world brings a feeling of dysphoria — a mild feeling of depression that is, she says, one of the digital world’s “most controversial side effects.”

For all of the connectedness the merger of computers, telecommunications, and the media provides, there is also a sense of disconnectedness. While there is much we may gain, there is also much we may lose. This concept of loss provides us with some insights on the ways in which our dominant media environment affects the way we experience leisure and rest.

Loss of Presence
Although these media channels have the benefit of connecting us with events and people from almost anywhere in the world, they also allow us to withdraw from those with whom we are physically present. This is nothing new, of course. The caricature of the husband at the breakfast table who isolates himself from his wife by hiding behind a newspaper has long been with us. But there is no doubt that the movement of a personal communication device, the telephone, into public space has changed the social dynamic.

Our lives are dominated by three screens: television, computer, and handheld, which includes cell phones and other mobile devices. Although these screens share similarities (and are increasingly converging), they are used differently. Media researchers have categorized these as “lean back” and “lean forward” media. Television is a “lean back” medium, one we tend to use passively. The computer and handheld devices are “lean forward” media, requiring attention and engagement.

Let’s take another look at the family in the restaurant. The dad watching TV is engaged in a “lean back” activity, while the mom on her phone and children with their games are involved in “lean forward” activities. But whether the involvement is passive or active, the effect these screens have in a social setting is the same: we withdraw from active engagement with our companions, essentially defining them as secondary as we shift our attention away from them.

Now that wireless broadband connections can stream high-resolution movies, videos, and TV programs on our media-enabled phones, we have even more potential to disconnect from those around us. One cell phone provider’s commercials promote the idea that when you’re caught waiting in a crowd, the solution is to watch a movie on your cell phone rather than talk to the person beside you.

Loss of Meaning
With our three screens providing constant access to unlimited information, it seems ironic to suggest that we are in what author Bill McKibben calls “the age of missing information.” He wrote, “We believe we live in the ‘age of information,’ that there has been an information ‘explosion.’ While in a certain narrow sense this is the case, in many important ways just the opposite is true. We also live at a moment of deep ignorance, when vital knowledge that humans have always possessed about who we are and where we live seems beyond our reach. An Unenlightenment.”

McKibben notes that “vital knowledge” is still available; it simply has been overwhelmed by the constant flow of nonessential information. An example from his book The Age of Missing Information helps make his point: “On Good Morning America, they’re interviewing Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem, who is saying a few interesting things about a recent visit from Václav Havel. But as soon as he’s finished, or maybe slightly before, the host is saying, ‘Mr. Mayor — always outspoken, always feisty, always good to see you. How to prepare for a record invasion of gypsy moths that may be coming when Good Morning America continues.’ If the only TV you heard all day was this five-minute talk with Teddy Kollek, it might linger in your mind — you could mull it over. But it’s instantly replaced by a man who’s talking about egg masses and how a female gypsy moth resembles a 747.”
The problem is not that the individual segments are too short — you can say a lot in a few minutes. It’s that each line of thought is instantly replaced by another.

McKibben’s experience reflects an observation Jacques Ellul made in his 1965 book Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes. Ellul’s notion of “propaganda” was broad, not limited to its typical meaning, but encompassing all of modern mass media. “To the extent that propaganda is based on current news, it cannot permit time for thought or reflection,” Ellul wrote. “A man caught up in the news must remain on the surface of the event; he is carried along in the current and can at no time take a respite to judge and appreciate; he can never stop to reflect. There is never any awareness — of himself, of his condition, of his society — for the man who lives by current events.”

As we think about this loss, we begin to understand why some Christians are seeking a haven of solitude in order to experience rest and contemplation.

Loss of a Biblical Sense of Rest
In his 1947 essay, “Leisure, the Basis of Culture,” German philosopher Josef Pieper argues that the “ultimate justification” of leisure is derived “from its roots in divine worship” and in the biblical notion of a “day of rest.” He wrote, “In divine worship, a certain definite space of time is set aside from working hours and days … and is not used, but is withdrawn from all merely utilitarian ends.”

In today’s secularized culture, the divinely ordained basis for a day of rest has been replaced by scientific evidence. In his book Calendar, David Ewing Duncan reports chronobiologists have found “that certain biorhythms in the human body work on seven-day cycles, including variations in heartbeat, blood pressure, and response to infection.” Writing more than 60 years ago, Pieper foresaw the consequences of changing this rhythm. “The vacancy left by absence of worship is filled by mere killing of time and by boredom,” he wrote, “which is directly related to inability to enjoy leisure; for one can only
be bored if the spiritual power to be leisurely has been lost.”

Almost two decades later, as television became a way of filling that vacancy, Ellul charged it was an empty substitute. His critique sounds much like the current discussion of social media: “TV, for example, creates feelings of friendship, a new intimacy, and thus fully satisfies those needs. But such satisfactions are purely illusory and fallacious because there is no true friendship of any kind between the TV personality and the viewer who feels that personality to be his friend.”

Increasing calls to “unplug” from the media implicitly recognize the need for intentional rest, contemplation, and worship. Recently, a Cedarville University chapel speaker suggested a “technology fast,” and separate stories in a local newspaper and TV station both suggested taking breaks from social media such as Facebook and Twitter (though not from newspapers or television).

Dalton Conley, a sociobiologist, wrote an article in *Time* in February about the effect that being “constantly wired” has on the development of children’s brains, including that of his own 11-year-old son. “There’s no downtime, no alone time for him to develop his own sense of self,” he wrote. “So what’s a good dad to do? I’ve set some rules that are designed to aid his social and cognitive development: no Facebook during school, and no electronic devices after 9:30 p.m.”

All of this suggests more than just a need for balance in the way we spend our time. There is a fundamental need for a timeout to regain a connection to things likely to be lost in the constant flow of information in our new media environment. What we stand most to lose in all of the words, sounds, and images is silence. This would be a devastating loss, since it is only in silence that we can hear the “still, small voice” that urges us, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10).
Thinking About Technology

- Practice “present presence” by giving your full attention to the people you are with. Honor them and the gift of their presence by turning off the cell phone and sitting so you’re not facing the TV. By minimizing those distractions, you can make best use of the “divine appointment” that has brought you together.
- When using “lean back” media such as TV, be careful to break out of the passivity it can produce. Think about the messages it is sending, and take time to evaluate and reflect on their implications.
- When using “lean forward” media, such as computers and cell phones, seek time away from the constant stream of messages and consider what information is being marginalized.
- Leisure, rest, and contemplation are necessary for worship. Time, space, and quiet attune us to the “still, small voice” of God.

Dr. J. Wesley Baker is a distinguished professor of communication arts at Cedarville University. With more than 40 years of experience in the broadcasting industry, Dr. Baker has a specific interest in social responsibility of the media and the role of technology in teaching and learning. He received his M.A. in journalism from the University of South Carolina and his Ph.D. in communication from The Ohio State University.
Gary has been working 10-hour days in a demanding job. His busy schedule doesn’t allow much time for exercise, and he’s relied on caffeine to maintain his productivity at work. Although he has sensed an overall energy decline the last few years and has found it increasingly difficult to get a good night’s sleep, he didn’t think it was anything serious. Chronic cold symptoms finally prompted him to see his doctor, who discovered Gary’s blood pressure, heart rate, and cholesterol were significantly elevated. He had gained 25 pounds and was showing early signs of type 2 diabetes. Gary’s doctor warned him that if he didn’t promptly change his lifestyle, heart disease could shorten his life.

We live in a world that is moving at a pace far beyond what our ancestors could have imagined, and we are finding that the price of success and prosperity can be hazardous to our health. According to a 2010 American Psychological Association survey, 44 percent of Americans reported that their stress levels had increased over the past five years, especially in the areas of money, work, and the economy.

British economist E.F. Schumacher noted that the modern world is “tumbling from crisis
to crisis.” The pace has become so demanding and frenzied that physician Richard Swenson noted that people simply “don’t have time to heal.” Indeed, the proportion of stress-related disorders has increased exponentially with modernization in the 21st century, including heart attack, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, sleep disorders, chronic back pain, migraine/tension headache, as well as depressive and anxiety disorders, to name a few.

Mind-Body Connection
To buffer the potentially destructive effects of the velocity of modern life, it is necessary to address the mind, body, and spirit in an integrated fashion. The ancient Greek philosopher Plato (427–347 B.C.) advocated a holistic view of man where mind and body are connected. He wrote, “As you ought not to attempt to cure the head without the body, then neither ought you to attempt to cure the body without the soul … for the part will never be well unless the whole is well.”

This view gave way to a mind-body split in the 17th century. Scientific advances in anatomy and the cardiovascular system introduced the idea that mechanisms of the body could be studied and understood apart from the mind (or soul). Rene Descartes (1596–1650), often called the father of modern philosophy, is credited with popularizing mind-body dualism. Many of his ideas have since been proven inaccurate, but “Cartesian Dualism” dominated the practice of medicine for the next 400 years.

Fortunately, the last 50 years have brought a gradual shift back to a more holistic, integrative approach to health. Perhaps the best example of how modern science is re-embracing the mind-body connection is in the area of chronic pain. Descartes’ simplistic, reductionist theory was overturned in 1965 when Ron Melzack and Patrick Wall demonstrated that pain can occur without a clear stimulus, evidenced by phantom limb pain experienced by many amputees. As Melzack famously said, “You don’t need a body to feel pain.” If physical pain results from a dialogue of sorts between the mind and body, effective prevention and treatment must include both mind and body interventions.

Consequences of Our Choices
Psalm 139 says we are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” but our unhealthy lifestyle choices can leave us vulnerable to a host of physical and mental problems. James Bray, former president of the American Psychological Association, has said, “Genetics loads the gun, and environment pulls the trigger.” While we cannot control our genetic endowment, we have considerable control over the environments to which we expose ourselves and the lifestyle habits we practice.

Habits are by definition repetitive and automatic, and they can be either health enhancing or health compromising. Unhealthy habits, such as lack of exercise or not getting enough sleep, take a toll on our bodies as well as our minds. We are especially vulnerable when we do not sense immediate consequences — we then wrongly perceive that our choices have no bearing on health outcomes. At that point we may perpetuate unhealthy habits, like overeating or consuming too much caffeine, as a way to cope with the stress, anxiety, and depression that often follow.

Rest for the Mind
Psychologist Kenneth Pelletier wrote in his classic 1977 work *Mind As Healer, Mind As Slayer* that those who manage their lives well consistently practice two distinct behaviors: choosing optimism and accepting responsibility for their actions. Optimism is more complex than merely thinking “happy thoughts.” This is better understood as realistic thinking, which involves an accurate assessment of reality and choosing to view a life event from an upbeat perspective. When we choose optimism, we are submitting to God’s authority in our lives, and this has a soothing, healing effect on our bodies and
minds. We are, in effect, acknowledging that He, in His sovereignty, is orchestrating events, and my responsibility is to have a submissive, grateful spirit (1 Thess. 5:18).

Even if one’s reality is difficult, it is possible to train the mind to recognize truth in life without becoming preoccupied with it. Learning to accept an unpleasant aspect of one’s reality is healthier than obsessing about it and becoming captive to its power. Paul demonstrated this well in Romans 7, where he acknowledged his own depravity but ended the chapter with resounding optimism as he noted our redemption in Christ.

This is an aspect of what it means to quiet the mind and find rest from the clamor of scripts the mind is constantly rehearsing — like the 36 things you should be doing right now and the 12 places you need to be. Proverbs 23:7 reminds us that our thoughts are very important, but we are, of course, more than just our thoughts. Our thoughts can range from the ridiculous to the sublime, but if our thoughts are anxious and unfocused, we are apt to be anxious and unfocused. Philippians 4:6–8 urges us to dwell or think on “excellent things.”

**Rest for the Body**

Likewise we are to be good stewards of our bodies. In Romans 12:1 Paul exhorts us to “present our bodies … holy and acceptable.” This has particular relevance in modern society where 65 percent of the population is overweight and 30 percent is obese. This is clearly not acceptable and is literally propelling us toward an epidemic of obesity-related problems such as heart disease, stroke, sleep apnea, type 2 diabetes, and in many cases premature death. Similarly, the number of people suffering from depressive and anxiety disorders continues to escalate, robbing people of their quality of life.

Many of these physical and emotional conditions could be significantly reduced if we would simply learn how to relax. Our autonomic nervous system is designed to cue our bodies for two distinct responses. The sympathetic nervous system, which triggers the “fight or flight” emergency response, invokes a cascade of physiological processes that prepare us to deal with a threat, real or imagined. Instantly, the heart begins beating faster, blood pressure increases, muscle tension escalates, and breathing becomes more rapid and shallow. In short, the body is on heightened alert.

However, what took seconds to launch can take hours to recover from. Our modern culture urges us to respond to everything quickly, as if each new stimulus is a major crisis. When sustained, this wreaks havoc on our bodies and ultimately can lead to heart disease, gastrointestinal issues, weakened immune systems, and premature aging/death.

Conversely, the parasympathetic nervous system restores the body and facilitates recovery. This system promotes healing so we can do battle another day. The body was not created to live in a sustained crisis mode, and when we do, sooner or later breakdown becomes imminent. It is good stewardship to train the mind and body to distinguish between an actual crisis and a pseudo-crisis. Psalm 46:10 admonishes us to “cease [unproductive] striving” and learn to “be still.” Take time to rest and be quiet. This is a learned skill, and it is essential for physical healing and recovery.
Rest for the Soul

The ancient Greeks connected the mind and the body, but the prophet Jeremiah wrote about a third dimension. “This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls’” (Jer. 6:16).

Just like the mind and body need quiet and rest to recover, so does the soul. Isaiah 30:15 points us to the source of soulful rest: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.” It is interesting to note that both verses were directed to God’s people, and both verses tell us that the people refused the rest that He offered: “But you would have none of it” (Isa. 30:15).

Choosing quiet over chaos, rest over rat race, is fundamentally a spiritual discipline. Psalm 1 directs us to seek godly counsel and immerse ourselves in God’s Word. In doing so, we will be “like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither” (Ps. 1:3).

Galatians 6:7 reminds us that God is not mocked; we will reap what we sow. From a psychological perspective, the encouraging news is that anything that can be learned can potentially be unlearned and modified. Our ways of thinking, doing, and being in the world do not have to be “conformed to the pattern of this world” (Rom. 12:2) but rather transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Pursuing mental, physical, and spiritual rest is not only critical to our health but an act of submission to the Creator who made us, loves us, and knows exactly what we need.

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Redeeming the Time
by John Gredy, Ed.D.

Today was a long day. It began with a 7 a.m. regional leadership team meeting for my church at Bob Evans and finished with a house church small group meeting in my home from 6–9 p.m. After a quick cleanup and some needed downtime with my wife, it was time for bed so I could be rested for my 7 a.m. breakfast meeting the next morning.

Ever had a day like this? There are times when I think I am nearing “the edge” because there is so much going on in my work, family, and church. The more I think about the relationship between work and rest, the more I realize there will never be fewer things to do in life. I feel the tension between my desire to give 100 percent in whatever I do while preserving a rhythm of work and rest. I have learned that managing my time and focusing my priorities help me maintain that balance.

Work Is a Gift
Work is not the antithesis of rest — it, too, can be enjoyable and fulfilling. But we can be consumed by our work, giving it a more central place in our lives than God desires. When we are intentional in our approach, work can actually create more time for rest and balance in all facets of our lives.
To be effective in our vocational calling, we must understand that God directs our work. God does call us to a vocation, and He desires that we walk worthy of our calling. Our career is a gift that He wants us to enjoy (Ecc. 2:24, 3:13). This realization can be motivating, daunting, and humbling because it causes us to rely on Him and seek to please Him in all we do (Eph. 5:10).

Managing Time
Creating margin, or quiet space in our lives, begins when we learn to use time effectively. As a provost, my days are often filled with meetings and events to attend on and off campus. The pace can be stretching at times, but in the midst of my busy schedule, I have learned to give my time to what is most meaningful and productive in my work life as well as my life outside the University.

I have learned to incorporate these practical principles in order to manage my time at work:

- Arrive early to check e-mail before others arrive so I can give my full attention to people as the day begins.
- Prepare in advance for meetings and always have an agenda.
- Begin projects immediately rather than waiting until later to save time in the long run.

If we are effective and intentional in our approach to work, it can actually lead to balance and satisfaction in all of life. I know I am creating proper space in my professional and personal life when I am taking time for prayer, meeting faculty and staff over coffee, playing basketball with colleagues at noon, and taking time to carry out my passion for the church as a house church leader and elder.

We have a stewardship responsibility to manage our approach to life. Often the difference between success and failure is learning how to make the most of our time.

Focused Priorities
We can always find things to fill our schedules, but we must train ourselves to do those things that will produce the greatest results. It takes exceptional focus to structure your work so you can be most effective. Focus also helps us find the natural break where we can walk away from a project for the evening and come back to it again tomorrow. None of us can do everything well. We should instead focus on a few things in which we can make a difference.

Organizations today need leaders who see beyond the clutter and communicate priorities. When everyone in the organization is focused on common goals, they will experience a sense of teamwork, get excited about overall direction, and realize that what they are doing is making a lasting contribution.

Over time, I have learned to distinguish which priorities should rise to the top of my focus list. Projects that have had my full attention often produce the greatest results. As I take time to think about the future and identify the greatest need, I continually sharpen and revise my list.

When we realize our time is God’s, we will value it more and utilize it more effectively. If we can discipline ourselves to use time wisely and focus on the right priorities, we will not only create more balance, but we will also find our work more energizing and rewarding. The satisfaction we take from our work will make the rest sweeter, and the rest we enjoy will energize us to give our best at work.

Dr. John Gredy has served as provost of Cedarville University since 2008. He received his M.S. in counseling and guidance and Ed.D. in higher education from Indiana University. He has been at Cedarville since 2005.
God Alone

by Kim Ahlgrimm and Debby Stephens

If you had to spend four days in silence — without any noise, without checking your phone, without talking to anyone — could you do it?
Silence Spoken Here
We arrived at the Abbey behind schedule, deterred by a traffic jam (of all things). What better way to prepare for a weekend retreat?

Built in 1848, the Abbey held a commanding presence in the Kentucky hills. We were greeted by a friendly dog and a wizened monk, whose somber smile made a lasting impression.

We laughed nervously as we toted all the earthly possessions we deemed essential for a monastic experience to the third floor. Our retreat rooms were small and stark — just a single bed, desk, nightstand, and lamp. When you are used to filling your personal space with noise, it’s quite an adjustment to go without a television, radio, and other electronic devices.

At meal times, the only sound was the soft clinking of silverware. Even the food was austere, meant to be nothing more than nutritious. Breakfast was a simple serving of oatmeal, stewed prunes, and grapefruit slices. Lunches and dinners were mostly vegetarian casseroles or tuna. There was nothing ostentatious about the presentation.

Through a series of doors, landings, and stairwells was the chapel where we gathered each day for prayer. Designed by a monk who had studied with Frank Lloyd Wright, the chapel was brilliantly simple with geometric stained glass and exposed beams. The sign on the wall read, “Silence spoken here.”

We spent our days in silent prayer, meditating on Scripture, wandering through acres of manicured grounds, listening for the gentle voice of the Spirit, and responding in our journals. Perhaps the most inspiring part of the Abbey’s estate was a grand gate that led to a spectacular garden strewn with blooms and green pathways. Its massive cement archway revealed these words etched in stone: “God Alone.”

We could not have known the anchor those two small words would become in our lives.

Silence to Singing
We gradually transitioned from quiet solitude to verbally processing the experience together on our drive home. We were surprised to learn that God had given us both questions to ponder: “Do you need Me? What clutter in your heart prevents you from hearing My voice?” and “Do you trust Me? I am your strength and your song.”

The clamor of the fast food restaurant where we stopped for lunch was a jarring contrast to our time spent in silence. We were acutely aware of the visual and verbal noise all around us, competing for our attention. Not that we would choose to eliminate all noise from our daily environments — television, cell phones, texting, computers, and advertisements serve a purpose — but for the first time we realized how much we voluntarily subject ourselves to it. We have allowed God’s still, small voice to become like background music in our lives — something easy to tune out, something we will only hear when we are paying attention.

Brennan Manning wrote in The Rabbi’s Heartbeat, “Silence is not simply the absence of noise or the shutdown of communication with the outside world, but rather the process of coming to stillness.” That first night in our rooms, we were unnerved by the intense quiet. We both had moments where we would have preferred to run away from what the silence evoked in us rather than face it.

The Psalmist wrote, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). In order to know...
Him, we must be still. Allowing the clutter to dissipate allows the Holy Spirit to move. Jan Winebrenner wrote in her book *Intimate Faith*, “stillness is not a luxury; it’s an essential ingredient to the life of faith. Without it, I stagger and limp along a path that should be filled with dancing.”

The retreat was a profound turning point in our lives. We left with a deep sense that we must pursue a regular practice of stillness before God. We asked, “What will I lose if I don’t continue this? What can I cut out, or what can I simplify to keep this a central part of my life?”

We soon found this practice to be essential for our very survival. Within a few weeks and months following the retreat, we both suffered devastating losses of dear friends and family members. As we were brought to our knees, God brought us back to the questions He had placed in our hearts at the Abbey: *Do you need me? Do you trust me?* Only then did we understand the message on that old garden gate: “God Alone” would carry us through.

When we walk through valleys of hard times, we cry with those who are closest to us. We lean on our most intimate relationships for comfort and support. If we have cultivated an intimate relationship with God, we will run to Him. The time we had spent in stillness before God had fortified our souls. We could echo the lyrics from the band Jars of Clay: “I will sing of Your mercy that leads me through valleys of sorrow to rivers of joy.” Just as God had promised, in those valleys, He was our strength and our song.

**Silence in Practice**

Author Dallas Willard wrote, “It was an important day in my life when at last I understood that if Jesus needed 40 days in the wilderness at one point, I very likely could use three or four.” While taking time away in a structured retreat center can be a powerful
experience, we recognize this may not be a practical option for many people. We can still recapture elements of that experience right in our homes, with coffee on the porch swing or the peaceful view from the patio. You may be able to identify a quiet place in or near your home — a local park or a favorite coffee shop — where you can be alone with your thoughts, meditating on God’s Word.

At the Abbey, we learned the ancient discipline of lectio divina. This deliberate approach to Scripture reading involves interacting with the text on four levels:

- **Reading (lectio):** What does the text say?
- **Meditation (meditatio):** What does the text say to me?
- **Prayer (oratio):** What does God say to me through the text, and what is my response to Him?
- **Living (actio):** How will the text change the way I live?

We have found this practice causes us to slow down when we read Scripture. More than eyes moving across the page taking in words, we take the time to consider what these words mean today in our lives, and we listen for how God would have us live out the truth of His Word.

Along with meditating on Scripture, speaking God’s Word is essential for the monks at the Abbey. Every two weeks, they recite the entire book of Psalms. If we developed a fraction of their discipline, imagine the impact we could have for Christ with His Word in our hearts and on our lips.

Since the retreat, we have continued keeping journals. Intentional journaling reveals and clarifies thoughts and emotions that are sometimes too difficult to verbalize. Capturing our thoughts in the moment allows us to go back over time and see where God has taken us on our spiritual journeys.

Our time spent with the Savior should be reflected in our lives. Michael Phillips wrote in his book *Make Me Like Jesus*, “The prayer of Christlikeness truly represents the ultimate road less traveled. It is a pilgrimage that, if undertaken seriously and reaffirmed daily, will change everything.”

**Silence Is Strength**

Coming to stillness is like capturing pond water in a jar. Once the noise settles, you will find clarity you never knew was there. Isaiah 30:15 says, “in quietness and confidence is your strength.” Satan would love for us to keep shaking the jar to drown out the voice of the One who loves us.

We had entered into the silent retreat unaware, even naïve to its benefits. We both had Christian upbringings and strong relationships with God, but this experience transformed us on a deeper level. As we walked through the monastery door back into our lives, our nervous laughter was replaced with gratitude and inner strength. The lasting effects of the retreat have amplified as we have continued walking through life’s trials, and our souls continually crave times of silence with our Heavenly Father.

Make silence part of your daily rhythm of conversation with God, and you will grow in faith with “God Alone.”

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Debby Stephens is a speaker and aspiring life coach. She has developed lifejourneys.org, a site where visitors may post stories about how God has worked in their lives to encourage others. She received her B.A. in psychology from Cedarville University and has served on the board of trustees since 2001.
literally meaning “support,” sustainability is a term used in an ever-widening spectrum of economic and environmental conversations. Sustainability carries the idea of persistence, such that human, social, natural, and financial capital is maintained or increased for future generations. Though it has become an increasingly popular word, the concept of sustainability is rooted in Scripture, for it was “in the beginning” that God commanded fish, birds, other creatures, and humans — created in His image — to flourish. The creative “work week” closed as God declared all that He made was good. However, this was not His final act of the week. The day after God tasked Adam with job instructions, He established a pattern of rest from that work. This seventh day of the Creation week became the precedent for the fourth commandment (Ex. 20:8–11).
Keeping the Sabbath means honoring God by resting. It is also the first commandment to address relationships among humankind and with creation.

In Exodus 23, the command for Sabbath rest is extended from being one day in seven (Shabbat) to one year in seven (Shmita). While the practice of Shabbat was established for the people of Israel, Shmita was for the land. This sabbatical year has theological, historical, and socio-ecological implications, and it is important to understand and consider its significance today.

**Promised Land Rest**
The intention of the sabbatical year, or Shmita, was to reflect the principles of rest implied with Shabbat. Leviticus 25:5 says, “It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.” The command comes with the vital promise that “the Sabbath of the land” will still produce enough food for its steward, the poor (slaves, servants, and sojourners), livestock, and wild animals. The Creator established Shmita for the implied purpose of sustaining the land, the poor, and biodiversity.

From a scientific perspective, we know that giving land regular rest has long-term benefits. There is no technological alternative for the ecological services God’s creation provides — plants producing oxygen, the ozone layer protecting us from ultraviolet rays, wetlands purifying water, atmospheric climate regulation, food production, water supply, nutrient recycling, and soil formation, to name a few. We give very little thought to the numerous ways creation sustains human life independent of human action.

The sabbatical year is also necessary as a balance for Shabbat because rested people (and rested domestic animals) could feasibly maintain crop production indefinitely. In His foreknowledge, God established clear guidelines for stewarding the Promised Land.
Throughout history, these rules have been regularly broken and the consequences felt by many nations. Jared Diamond’s book *Collapse* outlines how the combination of poor land management and technological advances led to disastrous consequences first for the land and then disruption of entire cultures, including the Mayan, Anasazi, Rapanui, Rwandan, and Haitian societies. The U.S. narrowly avoided similar landscape disaster in the 1930s during the Dust Bowl period. In *The Natural History of the Bible*, Daniel Hillel outlines 3,000 years of dramatic landscape change in Israel. Keeping God’s commandment to give the land rest required the Israelites to rely on God alone as sustainer. That level of faith and trust was as difficult to achieve then as it is today.

**The Cost of Overwork**

Israel’s history shows the grave consequences the people incurred when they ignored the command to allow the land to rest. In 587 B.C., the Kingdom of Judah was conquered by the Babylonians and taken into exile for 70 years. This period ends when the temple was rebuilt between 520–515 B.C. and the final exiles returned to Israel. We often attribute the exile to the general godless ways of Judah, but 2 Chronicles 36:21 offers an explicit reason for the captivity: “The land enjoyed its Sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.” Given the lack of any mention in the Old Testament, we may safely conclude that Israel never observed Shmita between David’s rule and the rebuilding of the temple. Not only had they neglected God’s command to care for the land He had given as a blessing, but they also had not trusted God to be their sustainer. Their wandering hearts and 420 years of shortsightedness cost them 70 years in exile.

Though we’ve reviewed historical, biblical, and ecological arguments for the importance of Sabbath rest for the land, we still face the challenge of understanding how to integrate this knowledge into our daily lives. Are we who are living in the age of the Church and...
under grace expected to provide rest for the land? If so, how do we implement this?

**Releasing the Pressure**

To begin, it is important to consider the purpose of Shmita. It was meant to release the land from work and, by so doing, allow for its regeneration. This instruction was given to a particular people of a specific region, and understanding the command’s context is critically important with regard to its intention and application. Observing the sabbatical year would have enabled the long-term sustainability of Israel’s land. Regularly releasing land from production pressures maintains ecosystem services on which we rely, provides habitats for plants and wildlife, and supports biodiversity — ecological issues with social justice implications.

We live in a new context of grace and truth that come through Jesus Christ, no longer under the Law given by Moses. Therefore, it is important to consider the implicit intentions of the sabbatical year as they apply to our lives. In the original week, we see God demonstrating times of work and rest — these are complementary avenues that allow us to both glorify God and let creation flourish. Good stewardship implies the active pursuit of Christlikeness within all aspects of life.

Most of us consume goods that are produced at the other end of a long supply chain. In his book *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold writes, “There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace.” Every consumer choice we make has a consequence on creation. Regeneration is only possible if release and rest are in balance with extraction and work. A careful accounting of our consumption reveals the pressure each of us exerts on the land. Try calculating your own consumption rates by completing an energy audit or environmental footprint quiz, such as the one available at cedarville.edu/energyaudit.

As caretakers of creation, we must perpetually ask ourselves, “How could I be a more effective steward of what God has provided?” Make a point of practicing rest one day a week. Spend time communing with God, others, and creation while recognizing Him as our sustainer. And perhaps consider how you might reduce your annual consumption of energy, water, food, goods, and waste production by one-seventh, or 14.3 percent. By so doing, we can release the land from production pressure, provide it with rest, and regenerate its capacity to provide ecosystem services. We can then re-invest that sacrifice to care for our local and global neighbors, extending the love of Christ to them in a new way.

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Find out how much energy you use at cedarville.edu/energyaudit, or scan this QR code.

Download a free QR code scanner at cedarville.edu/QR.
The premise: Cedarville alumni were invited to participate in a two-week technology fast and journal about the experience.

The volunteers: Danielle Wood and her husband, Justin, live in Maryland with their two young children, Olivia (4) and Duncan (1).

Last November, she wrote, “Our TV is on for the greater portion of the day. The kids watch several shows before school and after, sometimes during dinner (OK, always), and Justin and I tend to relax watching it in the evening. We have tightened our financial belt in various ways but refuse to touch the cable. We could accomplish so much more if...
the TV stayed off, but we have yet to commit to any change. This two-week fast may be exactly what we need to jump-start a healthier family life.”

The following is from Danielle's journal as she recorded the family's technology fast.

**Day 1: December 27**

Boy, are we cranky. The kids seem extra loud, and my usual go-to plan is unplugged. I am regretting our decision already as I watch Olivia (“Liv,” as we call her), still in her coat, sitting and staring at the dark screen with tears in her eyes. “No more shows? Why?”

The eight-hour drive home from family Christmas celebrations would have provided ample opportunity to warn her about our decision, but I guess we just didn't want to be in that close of proximity while her 4-year-old mind came to terms. Duncan, being only 1 year old, does not care … yet.

Justin cancelled the cable service while we were visiting family. Now that we are home, there can be no wavering. A TV with access is too much temptation.

We realized our TV viewing was a problem when we “couldn't find the time” to do other things we enjoyed. Bible study reading was postponed until the last minute; my favorite hobby gathered dust; and time with the kids seemed forced. Something had to change.

Liv was also having TV issues. One night when I told her we were going out to dinner, she complained she would miss her show and couldn't go. That was the last time I ever wanted to hear that. On school days, we do pretty well curbing the TV, but in the summer and on weekends, the TV usually comes on at 8 a.m. and goes off at 7 p.m. (But it’s mostly PBS, I promise.)

This began when I was pregnant with Duncan. I was tired and needed something for Liv to do. Then it was because I had a newborn and was tired. Then it was summer, and the days were long. Now … it's just habit. She only watches a few minutes of it here and there, but it is always in the background and seems to distract from real play.

We made the decision to cut the cable for a little while to gain some balance. (In all honesty, it wasn't entirely by choice. Our cable bill doubled after an introductory price ended.)

Now we are home, the kids are in bed, and the unpacking is finished. Justin and I sit down to relax and stare at the dark screen. The house seems too quiet.

**Day 2: December 28**

Liv has asked for the TV on several occasions, but when I say, “No,” she finds something else to do. Duncan still doesn't care. I seem to be the only one slightly perturbed that my background noise is gone. There's other noise in the house; I just miss the happy kiddie music attached to the shows. Then I remember … before DVDs, we used to have these things called CDs that play music! We try it out. It’s a hit!

**Day 3: December 29**

I had no idea how many quiet opportunities the TV afforded me as a mom. I know I have wrongly used it as a babysitter, and every parenting book I’ve ever read has warned me against it. But without it, I don’t eat. I guess this fast is twofold.

I have had to engage the kids more to keep them busy, which is great. But it is exhausting. I put in a DVD for Liv today. Both kiddos were mesmerized. Liv asked for another. I obliged. I'm getting so much done!

Dinnertime stinks. We have always eaten at the dining room table in sight of the living room TV. Liv typically takes a bite, watches her show while she chews, and takes another. We sporadically toss in a school-day question which she may or may not answer, and dinner plugs along. Without the TV, Liv takes a bite, gets out of her seat to do random things, and is repeatedly told to get back up in her seat. This goes on until I’m too tired to care, and she is too cranky to finish. I miss the TV.
during dinner. Zombie child was easier to feed. We have to figure out something else.

**Day 4: December 30**
I need to find a way to spend some of our time during these long vacation days. I have decided to take the kids to the play room in the basement and keep them there and entertained for as long as possible. I assume this will go well and time will fly because it now contains new toys from Christmas.

It does not. After chasing Duncan up the stairs for the eighth time, I quit (and make a mental note to place a gate here). We hit the mall.

**Day 5: December 31**
It isn’t as freezing as it has been, so we go outside for a walk. We have a blast until Liv trips over my giant UGG boot, skins her hands, and cries all the way home. Once I clean her up and set her on the couch, she holds her bandaged hands up to me and asks for a “Livi show.” I cave and turn on the DVD again. I had no idea TV had become so soothing for us over the years. But this time, when it’s over, Olivia reminds me to turn it off and doesn’t ask for another. Progress!

We spend some time at a friend’s house for dinner and watch one minute of the New Year’s Eve ball drop.

**Day 6: January 1**
The nights are so much easier than I expected. I thought I would miss my favorite shows, but I can’t remember what’s on.

I have been working on starting my own photography business for the past few months, and the evenings have been a great opportunity to make progress. It feels so good to use my brain like this!

Justin and I sat down and made our New Year’s resolutions. We have decided to keep up the “no TV” thing for a while since we are finally getting to our to-do list, and we don’t want to stop yet. We haven’t told Liv.

**Day 7: January 2**
We are having more fun with the kids in the evening. Between dinner and bedtime, everyone is playing, talking, and laughing. It feels good in my soul.

**Day 8: January 3**
We cheat and watch *The Last of the Mohicans* on DVD. It feels justified — it was recommended to complement a chapter in a new Bible study Justin and I decided to begin with our free evenings. Justin is doing amazingly well with all of this. I’m impressed and encouraged by his lead.

**Day 9: January 4**
Liv fills her afternoon time with paper and crayons. I have a stack of drawings about seven inches high on the counter. We haven’t had this problem before. I’m trying to figure out which ones to save and which ones to mail to Grammy.

**Day 10: January 5**
Today is the first day we are truly missing specific TV programs. Facebook made us very aware that we missed a great Sugar Bowl. We are feeling left out since we can’t small-talk about anything referencing TV. Olivia has asked if she will ever see *The*...
Backyardigans again. “Maybe a little TV here and there isn’t so bad,” I say to myself as I look up The Backyardigans on Blockbuster’s website.

I am fighting the urge to look up shows on the computer tonight. I thought this would get easier, not harder! But I am still excited about all the things I can do instead. Photoshop class, here I come.

Day 11: January 6
I’ve signed us up for Blockbuster. If we are going to continue this “no TV” thing, I’ve got to have some movies! I can definitely do without reality shows, decorating shows, and poorly written sitcoms, but I appreciate and enjoy the art of creative prose, lighting, and acting in a well-done piece of cinematography. That must be why I have been drawn to a photography business.

Day 12: January 7
I’m learning so much about the things that really matter to me. I have been taking online classes, going through my cookbooks, continuing our new studies, etc. I’m not saying I can’t enjoy relaxing with a good show, because I can. And I can’t negate what I’ve learned from TV (like how to sear an octopus tentacle, where sharks live, and what groups still admire Hitler), but as for applicable knowledge, the TV-less days win.

Day 13: January 8
My days are still not long enough. I think I imagined mountains of productivity but, alas, I am only human, and the two or three hours I have gained each day cannot work miracles. Even so, I know I have accomplished more in these past weeks than I would have otherwise.

Day 14: January 9
This experiment was quite a roller coaster, but our family needed it. We are going to stick to our new plan of DVD-only viewing for a while longer. It will help us regulate both the content and the length of our viewing, not to mention how it will help our budget.

Liv will be disappointed her beloved cable man isn’t returning. Maybe she would like to send him some of her drawings!

Danielle Wood, a 2003 graduate of Cedarville University, lives with her husband, Justin, and their two children in Gaithersburg, Maryland. She blogs at justindanielle.blogspot.com.
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Digging Deeper

Books

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<td>Balance That Works</td>
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<td>Celebrating the Sabbath</td>
<td>Bruce Ray</td>
<td>P&amp;R, 2000</td>
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<td>Center of Quiet</td>
<td>David Runcorn</td>
<td>InterVarsity, 1990</td>
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<td>Day Apart</td>
<td>Christopher Ringwald</td>
<td>Oxford, 2007</td>
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<td>Finding Rest When the Work Is Never Done</td>
<td>Patrick Klingaman</td>
<td>Victor, 2000</td>
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<td>He Speaks to Me</td>
<td>Priscilla Shirer</td>
<td>Moody, 2006</td>
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<td>How Did I Get So Busy?</td>
<td>Valorie Burton</td>
<td>Waterbrook, 2007</td>
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<td>In Praise of Slowness</td>
<td>Carl Honore</td>
<td>Harper Collins, 2004</td>
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<td>In Search of Balance</td>
<td>Richard Swenson</td>
<td>NavPress, 2010</td>
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<td>Invitation to Solitude and Silence</td>
<td>R. Ruth Barton</td>
<td>InterVarsity, 2004</td>
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<td>Living the Sabbath</td>
<td>Norman Wirzba</td>
<td>Brazos, 2006</td>
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<td>Manage Your Time to Reduce Your Stress</td>
<td>Rita Emmett</td>
<td>Walker, 2009</td>
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<td>Peculiar Life of Sundays</td>
<td>Stephen Miller</td>
<td>Harvard, 2008</td>
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<td>Rest</td>
<td>Keri Kent</td>
<td>Zondervan, 2009</td>
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<td>The Rest of God</td>
<td>Patrick Buchanan</td>
<td>Thomas Nelson, 2006</td>
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<td>Sabbath</td>
<td>Dan Allender</td>
<td>Thomas Nelson, 2009</td>
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<td>Sabbath Keeping</td>
<td>Lynne Baab</td>
<td>InterVarsity, 2005</td>
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<td>Sabbath World</td>
<td>Judith Shulevitz</td>
<td>Random House, 2010</td>
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<td>Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains</td>
<td>Nicholas Carr</td>
<td>Norton, 2010</td>
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<td>Time of Your Life</td>
<td>Susie Davis</td>
<td>Crossway, 2006</td>
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<td>Too Busy?</td>
<td>Alice Fryling</td>
<td>InterVarsity, 2002</td>
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<td>Virtual Integrity</td>
<td>Daniel Lohrmann</td>
<td>Brazos, 2008</td>
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Online Resources

Read additional resources covering this issue’s theme at cedarville.edu/torch/resources.

Did You Know?

The Centennial Library has launched CULib2Go, an array of applications for mobile devices that allow users to search the library catalog and access research databases, electronic journals and books, and other library information using their iPhones or iPads.

This resource list is brought to you by the staff of the Cedarville University Centennial Library. The Centennial Library serves the University community by providing print, media, and digital resources, as well as a wide range of information and instructional services. To learn more, visit cedarville.edu/library or e-mail library@cedarville.edu.
HeartSong Reframes Teams

For Cedarville students on HeartSong teams, summer means hitting the road. Four teams are traveling for 10 weeks visiting camps and churches across the country. Like the Swordbearers and Abundant Life teams of the past, HeartSong teams are made up of musically talented students who have a heart for worship. But there’s a twist — they’ve left the matching outfits at home.

More than a vocal ensemble, HeartSong is a complete worship band with students who play keyboard, guitars, and drums as well as sing. Teams blend musical styles, Scripture, and personal stories to engage diverse generations. Although their sound has adapted through the years, their message is distinctly Cedarville and wholly Christ.

Alumni may be surprised to know that Cedarville’s traveling ministry teams have changed over the years — just as alumni have changed and their churches have changed — to present a relevant message of timeless truth. “They may have an idea of what a college team looks and sounds like, but HeartSong is not your average college team,” said Jim Cato, executive director of HeartSong Ministries. “We’ve worked hard to cultivate a more professional look and sound that communicates the livable reality of the Gospel through genuine worship.”

While HeartSong teams still visit churches, their ministry focus has shifted. “Many churches no longer hold Sunday evening or mid-week services,” said Cato. “Where we used to see a few hundred high school students in youth groups all summer, we now see more than 10,000 at camps and youth events.” HeartSong teams have become a significant resource for recruiting prospective students in areas of the country where Cedarville is less well-known.

Ron and Pam Smith toured with a Swordbearers team in the mid 1980s. Today, their daughter Joellyn continues in their footsteps as a member of HeartSong. After seeing a recent performance in Cedarville’s chapel, Pam wrote, “I expected I would enjoy the students’ presentation, but I had not expected to be so ministered to. The group of young adults on the stage showed their love for their Savior and shared it with the audience. That’s the only way I want our God and Cedarville University represented.”

Visit HeartSong’s website to schedule a team visit or buy the latest CD, Generation. cedarville.edu/heartsong
608 Graduate in Spring Commencement

Rear Admiral Dr. Barry C. Black (Ret.), 62nd Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, challenged the 608 graduates at Cedarville University’s 115th commencement ceremony on May 7, 2011, to be open about their faith through the hope found in a risen Savior.

“Be proud of who you are in Christ,” Black said. “You are salt and light. Salt brings flavor: your environment should be more palatable because you are there. Salt preserves: your intercession should make the world safer. Light illuminates without making a sound: let your life be a sermon.”

Cedarville President Dr. Bill Brown conveyed to the class a message on rising above the norm. “When everyone around you is looking for an easy path,” he said, “your commitment to excellence and quality should stand above the rest.”

Three graduates were honored with the University’s most prestigious student award. The President’s Trophy, the highest honor for a graduating senior, recognizes leadership, ministry, community and campus involvement, athletic performance, and academic achievement. The 2011 recipients were Andrew Barfell, biology premed major, from North Royalton, Ohio; Emily Chiu, early childhood education major, from Vestal, New York; and Emily Shanahan, communication studies major, from West Carrollton, Ohio.

Brown also presented the Faculty Scholarship Award to four students who maintained perfect 4.0 grade point averages throughout their college careers.

A Biblical Response to Immigration

Authors Matthew Soerens and Jenny Hwang headlined the spring 2011 Critical Concern Series on March 29–30. Their book, Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion and Truth in the Immigration Debate, framed the two-day event sponsored by Cedarville’s student life division.

Also participating were four Cedarville faculty who presented papers on the history, politics, economics, and ethics of immigration in the United States. Students and faculty participated in discussions seeking to clarify and articulate a biblical response to immigration. As a result, a new student organization is forming to raise awareness on campus about key immigration issues.

Planning is underway for a second key outcome of the series. This fall, Cedarville will host G92: Equipping the Next Generation for an Effective Biblical Response to Immigration (October 20–22). This event will bring together leading thinkers and writers on this topic.

“Our desire is to provide sound biblical instruction and inspiration on how the Church can best address immigration in a Christ-honoring way — ministering to ‘the stranger’ and furthering God’s kingdom while doing what is good for our nation,” said Jon Purple, dean of student life programs.

The Critical Concern Series is a biannual forum designed to help current and future Christian leaders evaluate issues that impact our culture. It is marked by careful biblical analysis and critical thinking.

cedarville.edu/criticalconcern
In the Next Issue

Doesn’t it seem like we’re inundated daily with bad news? If it’s not a global health crisis, it’s a natural disaster, terrorism threat, energy shortage, economic meltdown, or impending “2012 apocalypse.” How should Christians respond to our fearful culture? Jesus reminded His followers that worrying about the future would not “add a single hour to your life” (Matt. 6:27). How do we discern between real threats to our security and so much hype? Join us in the next issue of Torch (fall-winter) as we explore this topic from a biblical perspective.

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You may also contact us at:

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251 N. Main St.
Cedarville, OH 45314

torch@cedarville.edu
1-800-766-1115

UPCOMING EVENTS

Here’s a sampling of what’s happening at Cedarville during the next few months.

June
20–24 Academic Camps: Art and Design, Criminal Justice, Nursing, Theatre
27–July 1 Academic Camps: Engineering, Pharmacy

July
1–4 Midwest Chinese Christian Association Summer Retreat
11–15 Student Life Camp
14–29 MK Transition Seminar
18–22 LIFT Camp
24–28 Camp Electric

August
19–21 Getting Started Weekend
22–25 Fall Bible Conference

September
15–17 Bioethics Conference
23 Women for Scholarship: Fashion Show and Auction
30–Oct. 1 Homecoming

For additional campus events, visit cedarville.edu/events.

To find Cedarville events in your area, visit cedarville.edu/reps.

(All dates are subject to change.)
Online College Courses for High School Students

Cedarville University’s dual enrollment courses offer biblical perspective, challenging academics, and engaging interaction with top professors and students using the latest online learning technologies ... all at a cost families can afford.

Apply Today for fall 2011
cedarville.edu/dualenrollment
Two Conferences.
One Weekend.
One Passion for Life.

**BIOETHICS CONFERENCE 2011**
Equipping for end-of-life ministry
Thursday and Friday, September 15–16, 2011

**Joni and Friends Through the Roof**
Embracing the disability community
Friday and Saturday, September 16–17, 2011

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

**Joni Eareckson Tada** – Founder and CEO, Joni and Friends International Disability Center

**C. Ben Mitchell, Ph.D.** – Graves Professor of Moral Philosophy, Union University; Editor, *Ethics & Medicine: An International Journal of Bioethics*

**Christopher Hook, M.D.** – Associate Professor of Medicine, Mayo Clinic

**REGISTER TODAY!**
cedarville.edu/bioethics2011