

**GROW. PRAY. STUDY.**  
**First United Methodist Church- Weekly Study Guide**  
*“equipping people in becoming deeply committed Christians ”*

**Antidotes for an Out of Control Life**  
***“Slowing Down in a Hurry Up World”***

**8** *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Exodus 20: 8-11*

**30** *The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” 32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. Mark 6:30-32*

Yesterday we spent our time thinking about the chaotic pace of our lives and the need to slow down and give ourselves over to God. The way we as Christians slow down in a “hurry up world” is by keeping our priorities in order. We are called to remember we are God’s creatures and we honor it by keeping a Sabbath...a day apart....a day of rest....a day for worship. This week as you go through our daily readings think about how you can better honor and keep Sabbath in your life.

**MONDAY- Read John 10:1-11**

We’ve learned in some previous sermon series that shepherds were not highly thought of in Jesus’ day. So Jesus chose a somewhat risky description of himself when he presented himself as “the good shepherd.” His main point was simple: a good shepherd always wants what is best for his sheep. Jesus came to offer us the best possible life, life “to the full.” Jesus’ shepherd image assumes a bond of deep trust. Sheep must trust their shepherd for well-being and safety. How much of life’s hectic pace grows from efforts to be sure we and those we love are safe and can succeed? In what ways can defining safety and success in terms of “the life of the world to come” help make life now less frantic?

*Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer*

**TUESDAY- Read Luke 10:38-42**

Martha was very busy—doing good things! She wanted to be a generous host to Jesus, to offer him a good meal and, quite possibly, comfortable lodging. Especially in church settings, we often face Martha’s problem. We feel hurried and stressed, not because we’re doing bad things, but because we’re trying to do too many good things. To listen at a rabbi’s feet was for the rabbi’s main followers—an honor. Jesus did not put down Martha’s caring. He just said “Mary has chosen what is better.” As you set your 2011 priorities, how can you put “listening to Jesus” above everything else? Even mowing the lawn or increasing your 401K balance?

*Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer*

### **WEDNESDAY- Read Romans 12:1-2**

Paul called Christians to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The type of change he was referring to was not a surface change, but the kind of total change that turns a caterpillar into a butterfly. Change like that takes time. And Paul said “be transformed,” not “transform yourselves.” This only happens if we open ourselves to God, who alone can do the deep transforming work in us. Are there values or actions you learned from your culture as “the way things are” that have changed since you became a Christ-follower?

*Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer*

### **THURSDAY- Read Matthew 11:28 – 12:14**

For devout Hebrews in Jesus’ day, keeping the Sabbath was a key way to let God govern life’s pace. In today’s 24/7 world, the Bible principle of taking a day for spiritual and physical rest often feels unworkable and absurd. But at times, the spiritual point of the Sabbath got lost in a blizzard of regulations. Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, hated that. The point of Sabbath rest, he said, was not busily following “the rules,” but resting in his grace and caring. What can make the integrity and convictions of your faith a well-fitting yoke, easy and light to bear?

*Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer*

### **FRIDAY- Read Hebrews 4:9-16**

This section starts in Hebrews 3:7. The writer drew on Genesis 2 and Psalm 95 to say that living in the physical Promised Land did not fulfill what God had promised. God’s rest is inward, and transforms “the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” We find rest as we release our need to control every outcome, and trust God to rule the universe better than we could. As we trust Christ, “we...receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Hebrews said God’s word “is alive...it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” How can the Bible help you more clearly see the inner drivers that keep you trapped in a frenetic life pace?

*Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer*

**Saturday- Read Exodus 18:13-26; Luke 10:25-37**

Today you will be reading the passage we will use in worship tomorrow. Pray that God will open your heart and prepare you for a powerful worship experience as we come together tomorrow as the body of Christ.

***I invite you to pray the following prayer:***

*Dear God,*

*As I read this passage today help me do so with an open heart, sincerely listening for your voice in my life. Use this passage to prepare me for worship tomorrow. As I read it help me to set aside my own agenda and my own desires so that I may come to worship tomorrow prepared to be molded by you as I continue my journey to becoming a deeply committed disciple of yours. In Christ's name I pray, AMEN*

Here at FUMC we believe part of becoming a Deeply Committed Christians is praying daily. If you find yourself struggling with what to say, we suggest you try praying Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

***A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition***

I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven. AMEN