

Conflict, confusion, misunderstanding, false belief, openness, comprehension, and redirection. These terms help explain my personal experience and the feelings that surfaced during the Sabbath Retreat. It was not until after Candy explained her typical Sabbath that my understanding began to clear and take on a sharpened focus. As Candy spoke, questions fluttered like a plane carried advertisement across my mind. Why is she talking about family time? What do games and meal preparation have to do with Sabbath? Except for the description of her Sunday morning "rituals" surrounding church attendance, she made no direct reference to worship in/on her Sabbath. Then another airborne banner crossed my thinking: Sabbath is God's love gift to man. Though the phrase was used several times in several different forms during the retreat, it was at that moment that misunderstanding and false belief collided with truth. I began to understand. I pondered, mulled over, and pondered even more the ideas of Sabbath, rest, gift, and play. What did they mean as taught in the retreat sessions, and what did they mean to me personally?...

After the retreat, as I mulled and pondered the conflict and confusion were displaced. I really understood that Sabbath is God's gift. Sabbath is God's love. Sabbath is for man. Mark2:27, 28 rose to compliment the Exodus and Deuteronomy command:

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Here it says Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus as Lord gave Sabbath to me as a gift to enjoy-- to enjoy everything He created not just use it to accomplish something. Both ceasing my work activities (which still is the primarily the caregiving of Dan, working alongside him in ministry to the Church Ministries team

and staff, the District Leadership Wives, and, within the proper boundaries, children and grandchildren) and the prioritizing of my own relaxation, refreshing, resting and playing are Sabbath Rest: a break, a cessation, a freedom, the specific gift of God's love and lordship to me.

With this new comprehension came (and still is coming) a redirection in my Sabbath journey. I have freedom from people pleasing, people pressures, and the sense that I am responsible. I am free to **learn** what I enjoy, **learn** what play to me is and **learn** how these too reflect Jesus' lordship. I feel a greater freedom to be me. My work and opinions are not bound to my false value of performance, but rather to my identity in Christ and His purpose for me (Ephesians 2:10).

Because I am one He enjoys and has given the gift of Sabbath rest I am free to "indulge my likes" So now I can read a book for no purpose but pleasure or for the pleasure of learning; put puzzles together; sit on my deck with an extra cup of coffee and look for hot air balloons breathing deep and reveling in the quietness; I can enjoy the view from the car or airplane as we travel and know that I am reflecting Jesus Lordship by enjoying His gift of Sabbath.

As I look to the future in my Sabbath journey, I see two specific challenges. First, I need to begin the regular practice of Sabbath. One day of rest from work to enjoy God's love gift thereby reflecting Jesus Lordship. Secondly, to reflect more deeply on what both Dallas Willard and Mark Buchanan say about Sabbath being an attitude as well as a day/ an action (The Rest of God pages 3, 4).

--Iris Wetzel, COS 2015-17 Cohort