

Rachel Winchester [00:00:01]:

Carole often quotes Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn with me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." It's common in the midst of homeschooling to get burdened down with unnecessary weights or to not take the time we need to truly rest. In this episode, we are talking about restful rhythms for homeschool families.

You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast with Carole Joy Seid. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Carole has been helping families homeschool for over 32 years now. She understands what it's like to get caught up in the urgency of now. And I'm Rachel Winchester, a fellow homeschool mom of 3 who understands what it takes to hit pause and take time to rest each week.

Today, Carole and I talk about what it looks like to have restful rhythms in our home, especially as we remember the Sabbath day and seek to keep it holy. Listen in.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:05]:

Recently, we had someone write into us asking a question about a topic that is near and dear to our hearts, which is Sabbath rest. And so we've done several podcasts about this topic, but we wanted to circle back again to hit some more practical tips to really help families figure out how to apply this and really experience rhythms of rest in their everyday life. So welcome, Carole. I'm excited to talk to you about this topic.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:38]:

Yes. Me too. You couldn't talk about anything that makes me click my heels more than Sabbath.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:44]:

Yeah. So I will share the question with us so that can get us talking about what exactly this mom was asking. She said, "I am wondering if Carole would be willing to do a podcast on what Sabbath rhythms look like for some of her homeschooling moms and families. I did not see this practice growing up and often feel dismayed because the Sabbath doesn't feel like a Sabbath as a homeschooling mom. I would love to hear Carole's wisdom on this. I can't be the only homeschooling mom that struggles and desires to have a restful Sabbath."

I love that she just ends it with saying she wants to have a restful Sabbath and to have this time of quiet for her family. So maybe you could give a little idea of just what

exactly the Sabbath is so we can all be on the same page about that and where we're coming from.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:35]:

Yeah. So, you know, Jesus obviously talked about the Sabbath a lot, and his persecutors also talked about the Sabbath a lot. But one of the key messages that I feel that Jesus brought was man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man. That the Sabbath, or the rest of God is is the translation of Sabbath, is a gift. It's not a burden, certainly not a curse, but it's a gift, and it's a blessing. And it's a blessing, because the Lord created our bodies to be able to work for 6 days and to rest for the 7th. And God modeled that for us. God, obviously, doesn't get tired.

He's not fatigued, but he was modeling this idea of my work is complete, and so I enter into a form of rest. And because Christ paid it all, we can enter into that rest as well.

So Sabbath is something that in the church, in the modern day church, is not really practiced universally. In the years of the Puritans and the the early Presbyterians in America, Sabbath was a huge part of their life, and sometimes I think it was a little bit deadly. It wasn't very joyful. But we can take the beauty and the blessing of Sabbath and use it to restore and refresh us.

I've spent probably the last 20 or 30 years studying Sabbath. And I thought I'd start with recommending some books that have been highly influential.

One is a book that I believe we've talked about on the podcast before. It's by a gentleman named Mark Buchanan, and it's my very favorite on this topic. And it's called *The Rest of God*. Just a simple title, restoring your soul by restoring Sabbath. *The Rest of God*. Mark Buchanan is a pastor. He's written several books. He has 3 kids and and a sweet wife, and they live in Vancouver Island in Canada. But he writes so beautifully, so simply. This is such a readable book.

And then my second favorite book is by Justin Whitmore Earley, e a r l e y. And he wrote a book called *The Common Rule: Habits of Purpose for an Age of Distraction*. And I've read it, and now I'm listening to it on Spotify for free. And then I also listened to his other book on Spotify. So once you're hooked on him, you're just gonna take off. But he is absolutely a delight.

He is an attorney. He created something called the common rule, a program of habits which are designed to form us in the love of God and neighbor. But he's also a

mergers and acquisitions lawyer, which if you know anything about that, his head is probably exploding from the stress of it. They live in Virginia, but he was a missionary in China with his wife, and they have 4 sons. Read that chaos and confusion. 4 little boys, all, you know, just loud, messy, and adorable.

So both of these men have really shaped what I think, but I've also read a lot of books, Rachel, by rabbis and by their wives. And I've just studied Sabbath and what that means and what it can mean for us.

For the homeschool family, the family that I'm closest to and and observe well would be my son, J. J., and his wife, Kristen's family and their rhythms. And they have really gone through seasons of continual stress. And as he's a pastor also. There's a pattern here with pastors and and their young families that are homeschooling. It's a lot. But one day, he said to me, "Mom, we have not been Sabbathing, and we are starting this weekend. And we're going back to Sabbathing." And so I'm watching what they're doing, and it's a real joy to my heart to watch and see.

But, basically, the rhythm and this is very Judaic. They run around and clean their house on Friday. Being a pastor, that's a pastor's day off normally. So they get all their errands done. They get their groceries. Beautiful level of order and peace. And then Friday night, they light a candle, and that is kind of, ding, the event begins. The peace of God descends.

And in the home of the of observant Jewish people, the mother lights the candle, and she covers her head. And then she waves the light of the candle, and she invites the rest of God to enter their home. And then normally in the tradition, there's a lovely Sabbath meal. And very often, people invite friends over, but the cooking has been done or it's a potluck. It's very simple. It's not Martha Stewart performance, but it's a time of fellowship and slowing down and good food and, you know, lovely things to drink and to eat. And then normally in the morning in the Jewish home, the father would go to the synagogue. But in our culture, normally, we go to church on Sundays, not always, but normally.

And so Saturday for us as professing believers is truly a day of rest and recreation. So one rule of thumb is we do things on Saturday that we do not consider work. So if we're an artist professionally, we don't do art. If we're a professional musician or for an attorney or for a doctor, lawyer, an Indian chief, whatever it is, we don't do the things that we normally do that are considered work, but we do things that are life giving. So maybe we knit or sew or garden or play basketball with our kids in the backyard. Or very often, the tradition in the Jewish home is that the parents have a time of intimacy,

and everyone takes a nap in the afternoon. So there's different ways to work out this rhythm, but it's whatever recharges you and gives you life. And a lot of times, that's reading out loud, so that can be a huge part of Sabbath.

Eating lovely things, maybe everyone cooking together, going on a hike. Nature is a big part of sabbathing. And then when you see the first star in the sky, that's the end of Sabbath. And for this gentleman who's an attorney, Justin Early, he says he tells his law firm, I will be unavailable until Saturday evening, at which time I will be checking my email and my text, and I will be working to prepare for the week. And his wife does the same thing. So Saturday night becomes a time where they're free to catch up on work so that they're not leaving people high and drive that depend on them. But people know that they're unavailable from Friday night until, you know, the 1st star or so after dinner, let's say, on Saturday night. So that's kind of a rhythm that a lot of homeschool families, I think, aspire to.

There's also a book called *Celebrate the Feasts*. I should have grabbed that book too, but we will put that in the show notes. And that's another book that talks about all the Jewish festivals and feasts, but Sabbath is also described in that as a young for a homeschool family. And that's also a really helpful book to just put flesh on it.

It's also helpful, Rachel, to have accountability. So to have someone that's looking over your shoulder, maybe a life coach or a spiritual director or a counselor or just your prayer partners at church that maybe you can start sabbathing together. And maybe part of the Sabbath, you see that family and you go for a walk together, you play pickleball together, or you have a meal together. And that is also a beautiful part. You know, hospitality can be part of Sabbath as long as it isn't.

Rachel Winchester [00:11:02]:

Yeah. I think getting a perspective, especially since in her question, she said, I did not see this growing up and often feel dismayed. And I think a lot of times we can maybe think of, okay, Sabbath is that I don't have to do any work. You know, people still have to eat, and, you know, the people will still be living in your house during the Sabbath. And so your house might get messier. So it puts the emphasis on the preparation and stuff so that, like you said, J. J. and his family clean their house, prepare food, you know, kind of anticipating the day so that you can have that space and that time to then unplug and do what's restful for you.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:50]:

Yeah, Rachel. And in terms of food, which is always a big deal for young families with kids, The things that I really love is to do a grass fed pot roast from Walmart. They have really good grass fed meat, interestingly. And I put it in a big Dutch oven. And I might put it in, like, Friday morning, let's say, and and let it go all day. Or maybe Friday night before bed, we've already put it in the Dutch oven with a tomato and red wine and carrots and potatoes and things like that. A lot of times, what I do is I put it in the oven before I go to bed at night at maybe 200 degrees, something like that. And I let it cook all night, and it can even cook through the day some.

And then by maybe lunch on Saturday, you have a lovely meal that's prepared, and no one had to do anything for it. And for Sabbath, you might have a plan where you use paper bowls or something like that. Normally, that wouldn't be my recommendation, but on that day, maybe that's a good plan to just give mom a total day off. Or because it's a Sabbath, maybe this is when the children are have full reign for doing dishes and mom and dad do nothing because what's worked for you is play for your children. So children love to do dishes. Parents do dishes too much. And so sometimes it's just a matter of doing something that you don't normally do, and then it takes it out of the work realm into the fun realm.

**ad* Rachel Winchester [00:13:27]:*

Here's the thing. If you're not experiencing peace in homeschooling, it's time to press pause and get fresh perspective. Giving your children an amazing education doesn't have to add stress and pressure to your life. Homeschooling can be enjoyable. How do I know? Because there is research that lets us know what works in educating our children. Doctor Raymond Moore coined the term better late than early to encapsulate what the research showed. An unhurried childhood will serve your kids well. And let's be honest, it's better for the whole family. But in order to give your kids that sort of education, you're going to have to quiet the voices in popular culture and listen to the research. Listen to the stories of people who have gone before you. Learn the framework and get the tools you need to succeed. If you want to learn our literature based approach to education and get the book lists that are the key to your success, join us in 2024 at a live event. You can learn more by visiting our website at homeschoolmadesimple.net/seminars. Now back to the show.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:31]:

Another thing that's a really good meal is, again, making a pot of soup. And you can even put all the soup stuff in a big kettle and put it in the refrigerator. And then maybe Saturday morning, if you've already had the pot roast, maybe on on Friday night for the

Shabbat meal, then Saturday, you get up in the morning, you take that kettle out of the refrigerator with the water and everything that's already in it. And all you do is put it on the stove on low, bring it to a boil, and then put it on low, and let it simmer all day long, and let the house fill with that beautiful fragrance, and have that even for 2 meals possibly on Sabbath. Or you might have leftovers from Friday night Shabbat meal, and you could have those maybe for one of the meals on Saturday. So mom is not doing a lot of cooking. Also, it might be fun for dad to make breakfast. Dads love to make pancakes and waffles and things like that.

So that might be something, again, that dad doesn't normally do. But on Sabbath day, that's part of the celebratory nature of it. Maybe the kids wanna make ice cream that day as a tradition on their with their ice cream maker, and we have some great recipes in my nutrition seminar for that. And it's so easy, and the kids can do it by themselves. So things that you don't normally do are the things that you wanna do on Sabbath.

Rachel Winchester [00:15:54]:

I love that. And, yeah, I can vouch that all the recipes and Carole's pot roast is amazing. I too feel pressure of you always have to be reinventing the wheel, but that there could just be anchors of that. You have the same things week by week and that you get this steady consistency that makes it really predictable. It makes it easy for it to come together, and it doesn't have to be, I'm being creative in this realm every single week. You know?

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:25]:

That is such a good point, Rachel. Dorothy Moore used to teach us that children love structure and dependability. They need to know when they eat, and they wanna eat every day at that same time. They wanna know when they take a nap, when they go for a walk. It makes them feel safe. And traditions I've had Catherine Ruch on the program once or twice, and several of her children have been on. And their family thrives on traditions. Like, the whole week of Christmas that leading up to it, every day has a tradition and what they eat and what they do.

And and it makes children feel like they have a culture, a family culture, and that they belong and that they're part of the family. And I love that idea. I don't think children resist that. I think as adults, we think we have to come up with something new all the time, but kids actually really like that dependability and that tradition.

Rachel Winchester [00:17:21]:

Especially as seasons change, you know, you might not do soup all summer long, but then during the colder months, you have maybe 2 things that you switch on and off, or

you do the same thing through the colder months, do the same thing through the hot months, or whatever the case may be.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:36]:

That's right. Like, daddy might grill. And that, again, gives mom a total day off from her normal cooking. And so in the summer, that would be a really fun thing to do. Let the kids help grill or build a bonfire. Let them cook over the fire. Anything that you don't normally do that would be life giving. So we're not being legalistic. And what's worked for one person is recreation for the other. And so that's where the beauty of personalizing your Sabbath observances comes from.

Rachel Winchester [00:18:07]:

Yeah. I just wanna say my husband is not in ministry. He's in retail, and so he works on Saturdays. And so we really rest on Sundays, you know, because he's not going to work on that day, and so that is really our day of rest as a family. And I really love that it includes the worship service at church and, you know, fellowship meals at church every so often. And so we really get to spend time with our church family during that day, which is always really special. But then we always nap after church. That's a big part.

My husband and I, we just look forward to our Sunday naps so much because any of the kids that are napping, they get in the bed with us and we nap altogether, and it'll be just the most refreshing rest time of the whole entire week. And, you know, it'll probably be 2 hours a lot of times, and it's usually later than it normally would be on a regular weekday when we rest as a family, then then it just kind of we have a later dinner and, you know, I wanna get better about having maybe a more special meal on that day. You know, I've never mastered that yet.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:24]:

Yeah. But here's the other thing. I know families that just have popcorn for dinner on Sunday because that to them is a total rest. So don't feel like you have to do this big performance. I'm just thinking of food you can prepare ahead. Observant Jewish people will not light a fire on Sabbath. They will prepare meals and they will wrap it in, like, blankets and towels, or they'll use, like, a crock pot or something so that the meal stays warm until they need it. So it's just whatever works for you.

But if popcorn with nutritional yeast is on it and maybe maybe Sunday night is your movie night, you know, how you wanna do that. It it's just so freeing to just say we're gonna go for a bike ride, and then we're gonna have popcorn and homemade ice cream. Or like the Fryckman family, they do bowls with, like, yogurt and all sorts of different fruits. So that's their Sunday tradition or their Sabbath tradition, I think. So,

yes. And some families like the man who wrote the book, Justin Early, he said that they do Saturday night to Sunday. So see, I got that wrong. Sorry. When he says to his law firm, I won't be available, he, on Sunday night, that's what it is, prepares for his work week because his Sabbath ends.

That's right. So yes. And other people use other days. You know, different people use different days to Sabbath depending on their schedule.

Rachel Winchester [00:20:55]:

Yes. Which I think is a big part when a mom or a person is asking a question like this, and they're in the question, it just seems like she's struggling with what does a real rest look like for a mom who is still needing to take care of people, and there's still things going on.

I would usually empty the dishwasher in the morning, but on Sundays, I don't empty the dishwasher in the morning. I leave it until the end of Sunday, like the author, how he ends at after dinner. And so I'm, like, completely unplugged on Sundays. You know, I might check to make sure I didn't miss an important message or something like that, but I'm not getting online and spending my time on my phone until the evening.

Then it's like, okay. Now it's time to prepare for the week. And I get my head wrapped around the week ahead and everything, but it's because I know that I'm gonna do the Sunday night, then it just gives me so much freedom all day Sunday to then take a nap, read the newspaper, read a book I wanna read, go outside with my kids, do something like that.

Carole Joy Seid [00:22:01]:

Yeah. That's beautiful. And I think it's really important to start the evening before if you can because evening and morning, the first day, the word of God, you know, teaches us in Genesis. And the Jewish culture is that you start the next day that evening at sundown. Just that preparation. You don't just hit the ground running with it, but you ramp into it slowly and gradually. And what I love about and the Jewish homes and observant Jewish homes, the women wear their most beautiful clothes. They welcome the queen, Sabbath.

They say that the whole week leads up to the beginning of Sabbath. And then when they end Sabbath, the whole week is now aiming toward the next Sabbath. They wear their wedding pearls. The house smells wonderful. Of course, they're making challah, which is braided bread that is part of the Shabbat meal. And so they've got all the senses going on, the beautiful tablecloth. They polish the candlesticks on Friday during

the day. All of that is part of the Jewish tradition for welcoming the Sabbath into your home and making it a special so that Friday night is very, very special, and then Saturday tends to be more low key.

Rachel Winchester [00:23:17]:

And one last thought would be for people who maybe hear it and think, I could never not do the thing on one day of the week. I can't stop. I can't press pause and stuff. I think it's important to just say not always being on, like, taking time to turn off is really what then helps you charge back up to then have the full energy to go full steam ahead than keeping it on all the time. That's what leads to the burnout and overwhelmed.

Carole Joy Seid [00:23:50]:

Yes. It's like tithing for the body. So people tell me they can't afford to tithe, and I say you can't afford not to tithe. And the poorer you are, the more important it is to make God the CEO of your personal family corporation. And in the same way, people say, I can't rest. I don't have time to rest. But the truth of the matter is that God asked us to put him to the test with tithing, but I think it's the same thing. Give me one day, and I will make you more productive on the other 6 days.

And it really is the truth of the matter. And what was interesting with Justin Earley is that when he was a missionary in China, he put himself under all this pressure with speed reading and getting 4 hours of sleep a night. And he had all these things that he did, and he went to a Chinese doctor. And the doctor basically spoke beautiful words. And you have to listen to the audiobook of this. And he's done 2 books that are on Spotify, and I love them both about the common rule. But his pastor, I think, in America said to him when he told him how he was trying to slow down and create this system of rest in his life and order, the American doctor said, well, what you're doing is kinda like what the ancient monks did, like Saint Benedict. They created a rule of life.

And Justin Earley was like, I never thought about that. He just instinctively created one for himself and his family, But he met with this Chinese doctor. As I was saying, he had welt, like boils on his body, and he couldn't sleep. He was a mess. He had made himself a complete mess. And the Chinese doctor basically said, you need to let God run the universe. And it was true, and it changed his life. So that's why he's writing from scar tissue, and he still has a scar on his face from the boil that was there. And it's a reminder to him to never go back to thinking that he was holding the world together himself.

One more book I wanna talk about before we close is by John Mark Homer, and it's called *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. In the foreword by John Ortberg, he talks

about interviewing Dallas Willard, the great theologian, and he asked him for his most pertinent thoughts on being in ministry. And Dallas Willard said, "Ruthlessly, eliminate hurry from your life." And John Ortberg said, "Okay, that's good. Anything else?" And then Dallas Willard said, "Ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life." And he told him several times until John Ortberg got the point that was all he was gonna get, and it was enough.

These books are good readjustments for our souls, and we all benefit from times of Sabbath where we read books like this and rethink our lives and community. Or if we're a solitary person, maybe we live with roommates or friends. But we can do this with the help of each other, holding each other accountable. I think it's very, very important in the practice of Sabbath.

Rachel Winchester [00:27:32]:

That's great. I love it. I think families will be really encouraged and hopefully can take some good tips from this conversation. Thanks, Carole.

Carole Joy Seid [00:27:39]:

Thank you, Rachel.

Rachel Winchester [00:27:41]:

You've been listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. It's so important to take time to find rest and refreshment in our weekly routines, but also in special time away.

Carole has created a place for home school moms to get away and rest in Guthrie, Oklahoma. If you wanna learn more about Sabbath Rest, her retreat center, visit our website at homeschoolmadesimple.net/sabbathrest to learn more and plan your own retreat.

Thanks for joining us this week on the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. Remember, Jesus' commandments are not burdensome. What he calls you to do, he will enable you to do. Blessings.