

A Wonderful Sabbath Activity — Embracing the Creation!

There are many Sabbath activities we can imagine and likely practice ourselves: fellowship with brethren, of course, but also Bible study, meditation upon God’s wonderful ways, and interaction with our children using spiritually-orientated games and quizzes.

Besides these very worthwhile and joyful activities, I want to emphasize an approach to the holy Sabbath that has been extremely productive for my wife, our children, and myself: *immerse yourself with the natural created world*. This is not always possible in urban settings, but it is well worth the effort to do so when you can. The Eternal reveals Himself through the trees, fragrant flowers, whispering wind, bubbling streams, and marching clouds overhead against an azure sky. Even our unconverted friends cannot avoid viewing God’s handiwork and character within His natural world.

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

This statement by Paul indicates that the created world of plants, animals, the sky, minerals, mountains, seas, streams, and lakes reveals the very character of our great Creator God who made all of these things for our benefit. *Does it not make sense, then, that by surrounding ourselves with these created things we will imbibe more of the very nature of our great Creator, whose stamp of character is built into these things?*

When our kids — six in all — were growing up we would take them on backpack trips into the Rocky



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Communing with the created world in a direct way on the Sabbath is a very effective way to not only enjoy the day better, but to internalize the Scriptures more effectively.

Mountains, in particular north of Dubois, Wyoming. We would troop along Frontier Creek and set up our tents near the rushing stream, and hunt for beautiful agatized wood between the spruce and pine-covered banks. All around us was beauty and design, order that only the great Designer could make. Then, on the Sabbath, the kids would sit on logs and listen to their dad expound on the scriptures, with the backdrop of a cloud studded deep-blue sky, beautiful trees all around us, robins and warblers serenading in the distance, and perhaps a quick view of a deer fleeing into the brush. The scene was idyllic and memorable to add to the beauty of God's word as we discussed it.

Paul and his associates met one Sabbath Day at Philippi with some women — by a river:

“And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made, and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there” (Acts 16:13).

These women understood the value of fellowshiping and praying within a natural environment; it drew them close to the Creator. Recall that Jesus Himself spent much time in *wilderness* areas [*eremos*, “solitary, desert”] where he communed with the Father amongst the natural flora and fauna. In fact, He journeyed into a wilderness area to meet with Satan (Matthew 4:1). John the Baptist baptized and preached in a wilderness location, close to the natural world (Matthew 3:1-4).

It is Satan the Devil who wishes to segregate mankind from the creation by moving them into cities, like Cain did after the expulsion from Eden when he built the city of Enoch (Genesis 4:17). It is likely that civilization before the great flood was largely urbanized, and certainly after the flood society soon became compressed into cities. Nimrod built nine cities, as listed in Genesis 10:10-12; by keeping people segregated from the creation and squeezing them into concrete jungles it is much easier to control them into a mindset akin to the Devil's likening. This effort by the Adversary had continued through the millennia to the present day.

Has science shown that being within a natural environment is healthy and preferable to a sterile, lifeless city environment? Indeed it has! Some researchers and philosophers have coined the term “forest bathing” to summarize the exuberant effects of dwelling amongst trees and natural things. As stated in *Your Brain On Nature* (E. Selhub and A. Logan, Harper-Collins Publishers, 2012, page 18):

“The notion that forests have a special place in the realm of public health, including as ability to refresh the weary, is not a new one. Medical doctors, including Franklin B. Hough, reported in early U.S. medical journals that forests have a ‘cheerful and tranquilizing influence which they exert upon the mind, more especially when worn down by mental labor.’ Individuals report that forests are the perfect landscape to cultivate what are called transcendent experiences — these are unforgettable moments of extreme happiness, of attunement to that outside the self, and moments that are ultimately perceived as very important to the individual.”

Truly, the Creator placed within the mind, body, and spirit of man the need for immersion within the natural created world of green plants, blue sky, bubbling brooks, florid flowers, and pleasant, pure air. “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed” (Genesis 2:8), wherein were trees that were “Pleasant to the sight and good for food” (verse 9). It was the perfect environment for mankind, one that produces abundant health, even leading a person to choose healthier, whole foods, while generating less stress, and leading to longer life (Can spending time in nature improve your diet?, J. Mercola, May 20, 2026, www.mercola.com). Granted, this idyllic environment is a bit difficult to embrace in the dead of winter in northern climates, but the beauty of a glistening snowy outdoors can be inspiring — even from the perspective of a toasty indoors.

Isn't it interesting that most of us have on the walls of our homes pictures of beautiful lakes, forests, animals, and various outdoor scenes, and indoor plants that figuratively bring the florid outdoors into our



homes? This should tell us something about our unconscious, God-implanted craving to rest within the bosom of our loving creator God!

I firmly believe that the weekly Sabbath Day is a “rehearsal,” as it were, for the millennial life mankind will be experiencing in the next age: the seventh day of the week parallels the seventh 1,000 years of the 7,000 years of this era — each day picturing 1,000 years (II Peter 3:8). Does it not make sense, then, that we seek an environment on the Sabbath Day, as much as we can, that is closer to that wonderful Eden where God placed Adam and Eve? I believe so, and the fruit that results from our being amongst the greenery, awesome flowers, and bucolic serenity of the natural creation will pay wonderful dividends during our walk with the Creator here on this earth.

It will pay mighty dividends to journey to a natural area — a park, a preserve, or a forest — for at least part of the Sabbath Day. Having fellowship there is well worth the effort. You will draw closer to your Creator as you find yourself immersed amongst the sights, sounds, and fragrances that surely pervade the very heavens of God’s abode, bringing us closer to Him: “... on earth as it is in heaven.”