

Christian Rhythms of Life

Mark 2:18-28

SS Lesson for 05/24/2026

Devotional Scriptures: Isa 58:3-7

OUTLINE

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MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

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Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Jesus challenged people to rethink old customs in light of the new things God was doing. Some people interpreted his teachings as contentious or controversial. Our text today highlights two specific traditions: fasting and the Sabbath.

Lesson Context: Fasting

In the Old Testament, God required only one formalized day of fasting (abstaining from food) for all of Israel. He called it the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-31; 23:26-32). Yearly, everyone in Israel was to observe the Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month (in late September or early October). On this day, the high priest sacrificed collectively for all the nation's sins. His priestly act cleansed the people from impurity. The community participated through confession, prayer, and fasting. Fasting was also associated with situations of grief, anxiety, or remorse. It was used in worship and preparation to draw near to God and to seek revelation, discernment, or help in overcoming temptation. Moses fasted for 40 days when he met God on Mount Sinai and received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:28). Soldiers fasted before entering battle (Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 7:6), the nation fasted at Saul's death (31:12-13), and parents fasted in distress over the illness of a child (2 Samuel 12:16). All Israel fasted in repentance when they recommitted to God's covenant ways and heard the Mosaic Law read aloud in Jerusalem after exile (Nehemiah 9:1). We see continued evidence of fasting as a spiritual discipline in the New Testament. The prophetess Anna used fasting as a part of her perpetual worship in the temple (Luke 2:36-37). Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights when the Spirit drove him into the wilderness after his baptism (Matthew 4:2). The Pharisees were known for fasting twice weekly (Luke 18:12). Looking ahead to the practices of the early church, we see the apostles utilizing fasting in worship, for discernment, and when appointing elders (Acts 13:2; 14:23). The passages of Matthew 9:14-17 and Luke 5:33-39 are parallels to today's text on fasting.

Lesson Context: Sabbath

Sabbath observance began after Israel escaped from slavery under Pharaoh in Egypt. The Law of Moses formalized the Sabbath as a commemoration of God's rest after creation (Exodus 20:8-11). As a liberated community, Israel learned a new pattern of healthy living, rewriting their mindset after being enslaved (Deuteronomy 5:15). Unlike other cultures of their time, God required his people to balance labor and toil with rest to reflect on his sovereignty. Their weekly rhythm required abstaining from work on the seventh day of every week. Obedience indicated reliance on God's provision rather than human effort and achievement. Adherence to the imperative of Sabbath rest was a regular reminder of their dependence upon God. As with fasting, observance of the Sabbath was formalized in various ways over time by different Jewish religious sects. A Jewish document called the Mishnah reflects the Pharisees' views and traditions over centuries. It was compiled in the AD 200s and lists 39 prohibited categories of labor. As with fasting, the long-term result was a religious practice that was divorced from the attitude of one's heart. What began as a careful attempt to define "work" became a weapon used against anyone who stepped over strictly marked boundaries. Well-intentioned efforts to prevent anyone from accidentally breaking the Sabbath commandment became an exercise in legalism. Matthew 12:1-8 and Luke 6:1-5 are parallel passages to today's lesson text on the Sabbath.

Key Verse: Mark 2:27-28

27 And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Questions of Fasting (Mark 2:18-22)

18 The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

19 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.

21 No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse.

22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins."

Why Fast (18)

Fast in secret so that God will reward (Matt 6:17-18)

17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Fast to show humbleness and to be acceptable to God (Isa 58:5)

5 Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

Fast as part of repentance (Jonah 3:5-6)

5 The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. 6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust.

Fast to seek deliverance from calamities Joel 2:13-15

13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. 14 Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing — grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God. 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly.

Presence of God during fasting (19-20)

Presence that supplies gladness (Acts 2:28)

28 You have revealed the paths of life to me; You will fill me with gladness in Your presence.

Presence to receive refreshing (Acts 3:19)

19 Therefore repent and turn back, that your sins may be wiped out so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

Presence that supplies protection (Jude 1:24)

24 Now to Him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless and with great joy,

Presence where God reveals Himself (Gen 35:7)

7 Jacob built an altar there and called the place God of Bethel because it was there that God had revealed Himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother.

New versus old (21-22)

New creation and old creature is gone in Jesus (2 Cor 5:17)

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

New creation is the only thing that counts to God (Gal 6:15)

15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.

Old desires are wasting away and are renewed daily (2 Cor 4:16)

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

New self that is growing into the image of God (Col 3:10)

10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Jesus is eternal and who is, was, and is to come (Rev 1:8)

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Questions of Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28)

23 Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain.

24 And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

25 But He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him:

26 how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?"

27 And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

28 Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

Limitations regarding Sabbath (23-24)

Limited to daily needs (Exodus 16:14-20)

14 When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. 16 This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.'" 17 The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. 18 And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed. 19 Then Moses said to them, "No one is to keep any of it until morning." 20 However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.

Limited for rest (Exod 31:15)

15 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death.

Limited because of holiness (Gen 2:3)

3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Limited because it was made for man (Mark 2:27)

27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

Exceptions regarding Sabbath (25-26)

Exception for healing (Matt 12:10-12)

10 and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" 11 He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? 12 How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

Exception for saving lives (Luke 6:8-9)

8 But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." So he got up and stood there. 9 Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?"

Exception for godly work (John 5:16-17)

16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. 17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

Exception for spiritual activities (John 7:23)

23 Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath?

Jesus' authority over the Sabbath (27-28)

All authority has been given to Jesus (Matt 28:18)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Authority committed to Jesus by God (Matt 11:27)

27 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Authority that has been placed in Jesus' hand (John 3:35)

35 The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.

Authority where all things are under Jesus' power (John 13:3)

3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from William Barclay

THE JOYOUS COMPANY (Mark 2:18-20)

2:18-20 The disciples of John were in the habit of fasting, as were the Pharisees. So they came to Jesus and said, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, while your disciples do not?" "Surely," Jesus said to them, "his closest friends cannot fast while the bridegroom is still with them? So long as they have the bridegroom they do not fast. But the days will come when some day the bridegroom will be taken away from them--and then, in that day, they will fast."

With the stricter Jews fasting was a regular practice. In the Jewish religion there was only one day in all the year that was a compulsory fast, and that was the Day of Atonement. The day when the nation confessed and was forgiven its sin was The Fast, par excellence. But the stricter Jews fasted on two days every week, on Mondays and Thursdays. It is to be noted that fasting was not as serious as it sounds, for the fast lasted from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and after that normal food could be eaten.

Jesus is not against fasting as such. There are very good reasons why a man might fast. He might deny himself things he likes for the sake of discipline, to be certain that he is the master of them and not they of him, to make sure that he never grows to love them so well that he can not give them up. He might deny himself comforts and pleasant things so that, after self-denial, he might appreciate them all the more. One of the best ways to learn to value our homes is to have to stay away from home for a time; and one of the best ways to appreciate God's gifts is to do without them for a period.

These are good reasons for fasting. The trouble about the Pharisees was that in far too many cases their fasting was for self-display. It was to call the attention of men to their goodness. They actually whitened their faces and went about with dishevelled garments on their fast days so that no one could miss the fact that they were fasting and so that everyone would see and admire their devotion. It was to call the attention of God to their piety. They felt that this special act of extra piety would bring them to the notice of God. Their fasting was a ritual and a self-displaying ritual at that. To be of any value, fasting must not be the result of a ritual; it must be the expression of a feeling in the heart.

Jesus used a vivid picture to tell the Pharisees why his disciples did not fast. After a Jewish wedding the couple did not go away for a honeymoon; they stayed at home. For a week or so open house was kept and there was continual feasting and rejoicing. In a hard wrought life the wedding week was the happiest week in a man's life. To that week of happiness were invited the closest friends of the bride and the bridegroom; and they were called by the name children of the bridechamber. Jesus likened his little company to men who were children of the bridechamber, chosen guests at a wedding feast. There was actually a rabbinic ruling which said, "All in attendance on the bridegroom are relieved of all religious observances which would lessen their joy." The wedding guests were actually exempt from all fasting.

This incident tells us that the characteristic Christian attitude to life is joy. The discovery of Christ and the company of Christ is the key to happiness. There was a Japanese criminal called Tockichi Ishii. He was utterly and bestially pitiless; he had brutally and callously murdered men, women and children in his career of crime. He was captured and imprisoned. Two Canadian ladies visited the prison. He could not be induced even to speak; he only glowered at them with the face of a wild beast. When they left, they left with him a copy of the Bible in the faint hope that he might read it. He read it, and the story of the crucifixion made him a changed man. "Later when the jailer came to lead the doomed man to the scaffold, he found not the surly, hardened brute he expected, but a smiling, radiant man, for Ishii the murderer had been born again." The mark of his rebirth was a smiling radiance. The life that is lived in Christ cannot be lived other than in joy.

But the story ends with a foreboding cloud across the sky. No doubt when Jesus spoke of the day when the bridegroom would be taken away his friends did not at the moment see the meaning of it. But here, right at the beginning, Jesus saw the cross ahead. Death did not take him unawares; even now he had counted the cost and chosen the way. Here is courage; here is the picture of a man who would not be deflected from the road at whose end there loomed a cross.

THE NECESSITY OF STAYING YOUNG IN MIND (Mark 2:21-22)

2:21-22 No one sews a patch of new cloth on to an old garment. If he does the bit that was meant to fill in the hole tears it apart--the new from the old--and the tear is made worse. No one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does the wine will burst the wineskins, and the wine will be lost as well as the wineskins. New skins for new wine!

Jesus knew quite well that he was coming with a message which was startlingly new; and he also knew that his way of life was shatteringly different from that of the orthodox rabbinic teacher. He also knew how difficult it is for the minds of men to accept and to entertain new truth; and here he uses two illustrations to show how necessary it is to have an adventurous mind.

No one ever had such a gift as Jesus for the discovery and the use of homely illustrations. Over and over again he finds in the simple things pathways and pointers to God. No one was ever such an expert in getting from the "here and now" to the "there and then." For Jesus "earth was crammed with heaven." He lived so close to God that everything spoke to him of God. Someone tells how, on Saturday afternoons, he used to go for country walks with one of the most famous of Scottish preachers. They used to have long talks together. Telling of it afterwards he said, "Wherever the conversation started, he had a way of cutting straight across country to God." Wherever Jesus' eye lighted it had a way of flashing straight on to God.

(i) He speaks of the danger of sewing a new patch on an old garment. The word used means that the new cloth was still undressed; it had never been shrunk; so when the garment got wet in the rain the new patch shrank, and being much stronger than the old, it tore the old apart. There comes a time when the day of patching is over, and re-creating must begin. In the time of Luther it was not possible to patch up the abuses of the Roman Catholic church; the time for reformation had come. In the time of John Wesley, for Wesley at least, the time for patching the Church of England was done. He did not want to leave it, but in the end he had to, for only a new fellowship would suffice. It may well be that there are times when we try to patch, when what is wanted is the complete abandonment of the old and the acceptance of something new.

(ii) Wine was kept in wineskins. There was no such thing as a bottle in our sense of the term. When these skins were new they had a certain elasticity; as they grew old they became hard and unyielding. New wine is still fermenting; it gives off gases; these gases cause pressure; if the skin is new it will yield to the pressure, but if it is old and hard and dry it will explode and wine and skin alike will be lost. Jesus is pleading for a certain elasticity in our minds. It is fatally easy to become set in our ways. J. A. Findlay quotes a saying of one of his friends--"When you reach a conclusion you're dead." What he meant was that when our minds become fixed and settled in their ways, when they are quite unable to accept new truth and to contemplate new ways, we may be physically alive but we are mentally dead.

As they grow older almost everyone develops a constitutional dislike of that which is new and unfamiliar. We grow very unwilling to make any adjustments in our habits and ways of life. Lesslie Newbigin, who was involved in the discussions about the formation of the United Church of South India, tells how one of the things that most often held things up was that people kept asking, "Now, if we do that, just where are we going?" In the end someone had to say bluntly, "The Christian has no right to ask where he is going." Abraham went out not knowing whither he went. (Hebrews 11:8.) There is a great verse in that same chapter of Hebrews: "By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons; of Joseph bowing in worship over the head of his staff." (Hebrews 11:21.) With the very breath of death upon him the old traveller still had his pilgrim staff in his hand. To the end of the day, with the evening now upon him, he was still ready for the road. If we are really to rise to the height of the Christian challenge, we must retain the adventurous mind. I received a letter once which ended "Yours aged 83 and still growing"--and with the inexhaustible riches of Christ before us, why not?

PIETY, REAL AND FALSE (Mark 2:23-28)

2:23-28 One Sabbath day Jesus was going through the corn fields. His disciples began to pluck the ears of corn as they made their way along. The Pharisees began to say to him, "Look! Why are they doing what is not allowed on the Sabbath?" "Have you never read," he said, "what David did when he and his friends were in need and hungry? Have you never read how he went into the house of God, when Abiathar was High Priest, and ate the shewbread--which none is allowed to eat except the priests--and gave it to his friends as well?" "The Sabbath," he said to them, "was made for the sake of man and not man for the sake of the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is lord also of the Sabbath."

Once again Jesus cut right across the scribal rules and regulations. When he and his disciples were going through the corn fields one Sabbath day, his disciples began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat them. On any ordinary day the disciples were doing what was freely permitted (Deuteronomy 23:25). So long as the traveller did not put a sickle into the field he was free to pluck the corn. But this was done on the Sabbath and the Sabbath was hedged around with literally thousands of petty rules and regulations. AH work was forbidden. Work had been classified under thirty-nine different heads and four of these heads were reaping, winnowing, threshing and preparing a meal. By their action the disciples had technically broken all these four rules and were to be classified as law-breakers. It seems fantastic to us; but to the Jewish rabbis it was a matter of deadly sin and of life and death.

The Pharisees immediately launched their accusation and pointed out that Jesus' disciples were breaking the law. They obviously expected him to stop them on the spot. Jesus answered them in their own language. He cited the story which is told in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. David was fleeing for his life; he came to the tabernacle in Nob; he demanded food and there was none except the shewbread. Exodus 25:23-30 tells of the shewbread. It consisted of twelve loaves placed on a golden table three feet long, one and a half feet wide, and one and a half feet high. The table stood in the tabernacle in front of the Holy of Holies and the bread was a kind of offering to God. It was changed once a week; when it was changed it became the property of the priests and of the priests alone and no one else might eat it (Leviticus 24:9.) Yet in his time of need David took and ate that bread. Jesus showed that scripture itself supplies a precedent in which human need took precedence of human and even divine law.

"The Sabbath," he said, "was made for the sake of man and not man for the sake of the Sabbath." That was self-evident. Man was created before ever the elaborate Sabbath law came into existence. Man was not created to be the victim and the slave of Sabbath rules and regulations which were in the beginning created to make life fuller and better for man. Man is not to be enslaved by the Sabbath; the Sabbath exists to make his life better.

This passage confronts us with certain essential truths which we forget at our peril.

(i) Religion does not consist in rules and regulations. To take the matter in question--Sunday observance is important but there is a great deal more to religion than Sunday observance. If a man might become a Christian simply by abstaining from work and pleasure on the Sunday, and by attending church on that day, and saying his prayers and reading his Bible, being a Christian would be a very easy thing. Whenever men forget the love and the forgiveness and the service and the mercy that are at the heart of religion and replace them by the performance of rules and regulations religion is in a decline. Christianity has at all times consisted far more in doing things than in refraining from doing things.

(ii) The first claim on any man is the claim of human need. Even the catechisms and the confessions admit that works of necessity and mercy are quite legal on the Sabbath. If ever the performance of a man's religion stops him helping someone who is in need, his religion is not religion at all. People matter far more than systems. Persons are far more important than rituals. The best way to worship God is to help men.

(iii) The best way to use sacred things is to use them to help men. That, in fact, is the only way to give them to God. One of the loveliest of all stories is that of The Fourth Wise Man. His name was Artaban. He set out to follow the star and he took with him a sapphire, a ruby and a pearl beyond price as gifts for the King. He was riding hard to meet his three friends, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, at the agreed place. The time was short; they would leave if he was late. Suddenly he saw a dim figure on the ground before him. It was a traveller stricken with fever. If he stayed to help he would miss his friends. He did stay; he helped and healed the man. But now he was alone. He needed camels and bearers to help him across the desert because he had missed his friends and their caravan. He had to sell his sapphire to get them; and he was sad because the King would never have his gem.

He journeyed on and in due time came to Bethlehem, but again he was too late. Joseph and Mary and the baby had gone. Then there came the soldiers to carry out Herod's command that the children should be slain. Artaban was in a house where there was a little child. The tramp of the soldiers came to the door; the weeping of stricken mothers could be heard. Artaban stood in the doorway, tall and dark, with the ruby in his hand and bribed the captain not to enter. The child was saved; the mother was overjoyed; but the ruby was gone; and Artaban was sad because the King would never have his ruby.

For years he wandered looking in vain for the King. More than thirty years afterwards he came to Jerusalem. There was a crucifixion that day. When Artaban heard of the Jesus being crucified, he sounded wondrous like the King and Artaban hurried towards Calvary. Maybe his pearl, the loveliest in all the world, could buy the life of the King. Down the street came a girl fleeing from a band of soldiers. "My father is in debt," she cried, "and they are taking me to sell as a slave to pay the debt. Save me!" Artaban hesitated; then sadly he took out his pearl, gave it to the soldiers and bought the girl's freedom.

On a sudden the skies were dark; there was an earthquake and a flying tile hit Artaban on the head. He sank half-conscious to the ground. The girl pillowed his head on her lap. Suddenly his lips began to move. "Not so, my Lord. For when saw I thee hungered and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw I thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked and clothed thee? When saw I thee sick in prison, and came unto thee? Thirty and three years have I looked for thee; but I have never seen thy face, nor ministered to thee, my King." And then like a whisper from very far away, there came a voice. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me." And Artaban smiled in death because he knew that the King had received his gifts.

The best way to use sacred things is to use them for men. It has been known for children to be barred from a church because that church was considered too ancient and sacred for such as they. It can be that a church is more concerned with the elaboration of its services than with the help of its simple folk and the relief of its poor. But the sacred things are only truly sacred when they are used for men. The shewbread was never so sacred as when it was used to feed a starving man. The Sabbath was never so sacred as when it was used to help those who needed help. The final arbiter in the use of all things is love and not law.

(Adapted from URL:<https://www.studyilght.org/commentaries/eng/dsb/mark-2.html>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Christians around the globe hold differing viewpoints on the practices of fasting and Sabbath-keeping. Their practices reflect tradition, doctrinal convictions, and/or personal choice. Today's lesson gives a reason for this variety: Jesus, unlike the Pharisees, did not present set rules about fasting or the Sabbath. Instead, he pointed to their intent and his authority and presence. He taught new ways of living in God's kingdom, focusing on freedom and well-being rather than strict adherence to rules and regulations (compare Colossians 2:16). Jesus calls us to center our spiritual practices on him as the source of life. God designed humans to follow cycles of work, rest, feasting, and fasting. Jesus, as our Lord, invites us to trust him on this. His way offers rest from burdens, not additional weight (Matthew 11:28-30; 1 John 5:3). Life with Jesus presents opportunities for both celebration and mourning, with Scripture guiding us in what is appropriate at any given time (Romans 12:15; 1 Corinthians 5:2; 2 Corinthians 7:11). If our spiritual disciplines strengthen our dependence on Jesus, then they are beneficial, regardless of the specifics (Romans 14:22; 1 Corinthians 8:8). Ultimately, the goal is not to find the perfect formula for any rhythm of life but to thrive in our relationship with Jesus. May he be the heartbeat, center, origin, and director of all we do.