

WHEN A CHRISTIAN TAKES A VACATION

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INTRODUCTION:

A. We're in the middle of the time of year we refer to as Summer:

1. It's a time of year that all children look forward to because they're out of school! It's a time of warmer weather! It's a time for outdoor activities! It's also a time for vacations!
2. This seems to be especially true for this church. Over the past two weeks we've had many gone on vacations or trips to visit with family! Vacations & trips are wonderful things aren't they!

B. As Americans in the 21st Century our ability to take vacations has increased – This is a great blessing from God. Let's look at some Biblical principles to consider when taking a vacation.

I. VACATIONING, REST AND RELAXATION, IS AN IMPORTANT AND BIBLICAL CONCEPT:

A. While hard work is a Biblical concept, wearing yourself out to the point of complete exhaustion is not!

1. We understand the importance of working hard & being diligent... A godly person will certainly be a good hard worker! (**Prov 6:6-11; Prov 20:4; Ecc 9:10; Col 3:23; 2 Thess 3:10**)
2. But some Christians carry working hard to an extreme and this is bad as well!
 - a. We talk about sins of addiction and how one reason why they're wrong is how they control our lives & mind and what they do to our life... Overworking can be an addiction too!
 - b. Joel Slemlord, from the University of Michigan's school of business, says, "Workaholism has been linked to a variety of health problems, including exhaustion, stress and high blood pressure, and can take an emotional and mental toll on a worker's family.
 - c. There's a difference between people who just work very hard & those who seem to never punch out! They're on the clock 24/7 physically, mentally, & emotionally working
 - d. The Japanese coined a word for this – "Karoshi" which literally means "death by overwork"
3. Some people get the idea that total exhaustion is next to godliness! Some think that you aren't really serving the Lord unless you consistently push yourself to the point of fatigue. Like the old saying, "Better to burn out than to rust out" – Either way, you're still out! (*Swindoll*)
4. There is a "Workaholics Anonymous" group – They have meetings and follow the same twelve steps which Alcoholics Anonymous are known for → Some don't know how to take a break!

B. God saw the importance of resting and that can be observed in the Sabbath day:

1. After God created the universe in six days, He dedicated the seventh day to resting! (**Gen 2:1-3**)
 - a. Question: Did God need a break? Did creating the universe, speaking it into existence from nothingness, wear God out? Why did God choose to rest on the seventh day?
 - b. For thousands of years, from Adam to Moses, nothing else is said of the Sabbath. When God gives commands concerning it, He points back to this moment, so it may have been done in God's foreknowledge so He could give His people a reference point
 - c. Without any instructions for a religious observance, it seems to show the need for rest!
2. Later, God did give more instructions on keeping the Sabbath day holy as a religious observance, but God still retained that day as a day of rest! (**Exodus 20:10-11, 31:13-17**)
 - a. The Sabbath day pointed back to the 7th day at the creation – There was to be absolutely no work done by the children of Israel, their animals, or any visitors in their city
 - b. God was serious about this day – Breaking the Sabbath day carried the penalty of death!
 - c. The Sabbath was a holy day with religious significance - It was a reminder of their covenant

- with God, but this religious day was kept by taking a day to rest, refresh, & worship!
3. Now when God designed this day, He did it for man's benefit! This was a day given to men, with at least part of its purpose being to command man to rest! (**Ex 16:29-30; Mark 2:27**)

C. Even Jesus, when He was fulfilling His ministry on earth, saw the importance of rest and relaxation:

1. We often see Jesus as an example of one who was constantly working, packing a supernatural amount of work into three short years, and one who never took a break – This isn't true!
2. As we read through the gospel accounts we find Jesus resting, trying to find a place for some solitude, and taking breaks (**Mt 13:1-2, 8:24, 15:29; Mk 1:34-35, 6:30-32; Lk 4:42, 5:15-16**)
3. Even when we do look at just how busy Jesus stayed and how much He accomplished, we must remember that He was packing a great spiritual work into three short years. And that our secular jobs, which we spend almost a lifetime at, cannot be compared to His ministry.

II. AS YOU TAKE A VACATION, THERE ARE SOME PRINCIPLES YOU SHOULD CONSIDER:

A. As you take a vacation from your work, don't take a vacation from your faith!

1. Vacations can be an excellent opportunity for physical relaxation and renewal, but they also can be excellent opportunities to build your faith: (**Psalm 33:4-9; 65:5-13***)
 - a. Our vacations often lead us to the peaceful tranquility of God's creation → Here are a person is surrounded by the clear manifestation of the power and glory of God!
 - b. **Illustration:** Pictures of popular places people go on vacation – What do you see?
 - c. But sometimes when people take vacations they are too busy jumping from entertainment to entertainment and they just don't have time to soak it all in! It's no wonder that when some return from vacation they are more stressed than when they left!
2. When some go on vacation, they fail to spend any time privately with God: (**Philippians 3:14-21**)
 - a. We tend to view our vacations as "my time" – It's my time to do what I want when I want to do it! It's sad how for some vacationing means a break from spiritual activity too!
 - b. Another hindrance is when we pack our vacations so full of activities we don't have any time left for God! When we do stop, we're so tired we have to go straight to bed!
 - c. Vacations allow us to pray, meditate, & read God's word with a clear mind! So often in our normal schedules we may do these, but our minds are full of so many concerns!
 - d. When you pack your suitcase and plan your schedules for your vacation – Is God there?
3. For some taking a vacation means taking a break from worshipping God with fellow saints:
 - a. Is collective worship an obligation or an opportunity? (**Heb 10:23-25; Acts 20:6-7, 11**)
 - b. Is this a hassle – You have to find a good church and then find when they meet & then fix your schedule so you can be there... One may feel this keeps them from enjoying ALL of their vacation or keeps them from certain activities (**Illustration: Disney trip**)
 - c. Some would attend with other Christians but they are haphazard about it – "If we find a church..." they think. You know you can plan this out! (**Illustration: Bowl Game Trip**)
 - d. You don't only miss out on worshipping God but you miss out on meeting brethren you'd have never known! You miss out on the encouragement you provide them as well!
4. Am I being a legalist about this? No, this is simply revealing an issue of the heart! (**Luke 10:27**)

B. As you go on vacation, remember who you are, and so live like a Christian!

1. A Christian is a Christian, and should live like one, regardless of where they go! (**Matt 5:13-16**)
 - a. You aren't just the salt of the earth & the light of the world when you're in the Birmingham

- metropolitan area – You are the salt and the light regardless of where you go!
- b. Wherever the disciples went in the 1st Century, they went preaching the word! **(Acts 8:3-4)**
 - c. **Illust:** Last week we had Christians from this church stretched from NY to San Fransico!
 - d. God is not a regional God, so our morals are not regional morals! No matter where we go or the circumstances around us ... We still can and must live like a child of God!
 - e. Principles that keep us from participating in drinking, gambling, ungodly language, lustful behavior, greed, etc – They apply whether we are in Trussville or New York City!
2. When you go on vacation, consider whether or not where you are going and what you will be doing conflicts with any Biblical principles: **(Gen 13:10-13)**
 - a. Going to the beach isn't wrong, but what about a young person going to P.C. for Senior Week? The city of Las Vegas isn't inherently wrong, but what are you going to do?
 - b. Some try to justify it saying they will go but won't participate in sinful things? **(I Cor 10:12)**
 - c. Lot was able to maintain his righteousness in Sodom – But he lost his wife and his two daughters became immoral as well! Is a vacation really worth the faith of your family? Is it really worth putting yourself in a situation where you might sin?
 3. When you take a vacation, don't forget the need to practice modesty: **(I Tim 2:9-10; I Pet 3:2-4)**
 - a. It's amazing how some Christians when in certain circumstances will throw modesty out the window – This happens often with weddings, sports, & going to the beach
 - b. Some women will go to the beach & wear swimsuits that, in all honesty, do not cover any more of their body then their typical underwear! Guys will also run around with their bodies on parade – Why? I'm at the beach & that's what you do at the beach!
 - c. Will you look a little strange when you dress modestly at the beach? Will making sure your sports uniform is modest make you not fit in as well? Sure, but since when has it been a major concern of Christians to be like the world and to always fit in with it?
 - d. **Illustration:** Beach trip with a ton of young people – We were all modest & we all had fun!
 4. Remember, regardless of where you go, you are part of God's royal priesthood! **(I Pet 2:9, 11)**

CONCLUSION: Vacations are good and really help us to relax and get renewed. But there's a greater get-away, a permanent rest, awaiting us. This is the rest that truly matters & that we must be preparing for! **(Heb 4:1-2, 9-11)**