

Terra family,

As mentioned this past Sunday and last fall, I will be taking a sabbatical this summer from May 1st through August 31st. This is something built in as a strongly encouraged option for pastors that are a part of every Terra Nova Church— that once every 7 years (or so), pastors (and their families) would take a set apart time to rest, recharge, and recalibrate their hearts and minds so that they can return stronger to lead and shepherd the church. May 6th will mark my 10th year in pastoral ministry, and we targeted and began planning for this sabbatical over two years ago.

I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity. As many have no idea what a sabbatical is, let me share in brief: A sabbatical is just an extended expression of the Biblical principle of sabbath rest. Rest may not be what you think; while it may involve swinging in a hammock on occasion (reaching for a common stereotype!), more true to the heart of Biblical rest is working to position ourselves to renew our strength in Jesus...

Every pastor's sabbatical probably looks a bit different, as they seek to hear from the Lord what it looks like to accomplish the above. For me, I'm looking to fan into flame my first love: reconnecting with the heart of Jesus, in particular through his word. The times in my life I've been the most clear-eyed and passionate for Jesus are seasons where I've steeped in God's word without any strings attached. A.W. Tozer captured this idea in something he wrote about his preaching: "I don't go to the Bible to get words for a sermon. I go to the Bible to see God—and I get words for a sermon." The reality is, after a while, with the grind of life and responsibility, it's easy for me to make time with God a means to the end of serving our church family. In this sabbatical, I'm looking forward to the opportunity to hit a "reset" button on that, and to make time with God in His word a means to *seeing Him*, and falling in love with Him all over again.

Providentially (just a fancy word that means something I believe that God is behind), I've encountered a ministry over the past couple of years called [SeeJesus.net](#). Some of you may have heard of Paul Miller (founder of the ministry), who has written several helpful books on Spiritual Formation, including [A Praying Life](#), among others. My initial exposure to the ministry came through the [SeeingJesus podcast](#)— which I highly recommend. What captivated me about the ministry was the refreshing way in which they go beyond reading the Bible to establish proper theology to reading the Bible to see the person of Jesus, as a 3-D, living, breathing *person* who we can know and have an intimate relationship with.

I bring all that up because throughout my sabbatical I will be using their "[Person of Jesus](#)" study, along with the guidance of a mentor from their ministry, to go back to the Bible to see, and meet with, and learn from Jesus with fresh eyes— and I can't wait!

I and my family have other goals and plans for using the sabbatical to rest in Jesus and build into each other, but I at least wanted to share with you this piece of it.

If you have any questions about the sabbatical in general, please feel free to [reach out to me](#) any time before May 1st— I'd be happy to talk with you more about it! Otherwise, my family and I would deeply appreciate your prayer for God to use that time to refresh us in Him.

In His love,
Daniel