

TEN: Free to Obey

A Christian Looks at the Ten Commandments

REST AND WORSHIP

Exodus 20:8-10

INTRODUCTION: The text today centers on the Sabbath. Sabbath is an old word that means “the seventh day.” Sadly, when used today, it is often in a negative context, such as

- “You go to church on the wrong day. You should go on the Sabbath.”
- “Don’t you know the Sabbath is Saturday?”
- “You ought not do that on the Sabbath! “

There is much confusion today about the Sabbath. However, it is amazing how much confusion can be cleared up by just reading a little Scripture.

Ex. 20:8-11 NKJV 8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. 11 For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

1) What does the fourth commandment reveal about God?

- **God made the universe (heavens, earth, sea and everything inside all three) in six days.**
 - And you may be saying, “Well everybody knows that!”
 - I wish that were true! I wish it were true for everybody in this room!
 - But it isn’t.
 - Many people today say, “Oh, the days of creation were hundreds of millions of years long.”
 - Well, if that is true, then God made all the plants hundreds of millions of years before God made the sun, because Genesis says God made the plants on day 3 and the sun on day 4.

- Now that's not a problem if a day is 24 hours long, but it's a big problem if a day is a hundred million years!
- And, you know, the reasoning of this commandment, really does not make sense if God is not talking about 24 hour days. God Himself is saying, "Because I did all my work in six 24 hour days and rested one day, I have set a pattern for your week which you are to follow."

And that leads to next thing the commandment reveals about God.

- **God made man to work six days a week.**
 - That does not mean you have to work at your job 48 hours a week.
 - You can and do work at home, work for your family, do His Kingdom work.
 - However, it does mean God created us to work at something and we ought to be doing that most of the time. God did not make us to lounge around and be lazy.
- **God made us to rest one day a week.**
 - This is not a concession to the union.
 - This is an instruction from the manufacturer.
 - God did not make the human metabolism to be run on fast 24/7.
 - We all need a day of rest because that is the way God designed us!
- **God desires that we should observe the pattern of six days of work and one day of rest during our weeks of life.**
- **God intends that our one day of rest should be a day of worship.**
 - God made the day of rest holy. That is what the word hallow means, to make holy.
 - God did not make the day to be a day primarily for recreation or entertainment. He meant it to be a holy day primarily for worship.

As we move past the first question, I am going to change the order. Before we even start making applications, we need to see what the New Testament says, because the New Testament treats this commandment differently than any of the other nine.

- This is the only one of the Ten Commandments that is not repeated in the New Testament.

- That is not because the New Testament does not affirm the truths we have seen the commandment reveals about God.
- It is because the specific applications of the commandment changed in the switch from Old Covenant to New. We will see how this is true when we look at the question:

2) What does the New Testament say that helps us understand this commandment better or how to live it out day to day?

There are three things for us to observe in the New Testament's teaching related to the fourth commandment.

- **The Gospels reveal that legalistic men perverted the fourth commandment in Jesus' day.**
 - These legalists (Pharisees and Sadducees) perverted the law about the Sabbath by equating their own oral traditions with the Word of God.
 - Through their oral tradition they attempted to apply the commandment to every possible situation.
 - So they developed a list of 39 types of prohibited labor. In their regulations they said, ...
 - Permanent knots were forbidden; temporary knots were OK.
 - Carrying food out of the house was taboo, but the poor can reach across threshold and receive food from you.
 - You could not carry other objects, but you could pull them behind you on a string.

If you wonder if they really lived that way, understand that orthodox Jews continue to live that way even today. When Karen and I were dating in high school, one Friday night we went to see a good friend of Karen's who was the daughter of an Orthodox Jewish Rabbi.

When we arrived, the Sabbath had already begun. When Shushanni's mother opened the door and invited us in, she said, "If you will turn on this light switch, we can sit in the living room and visit." Flipping the light switch was considered work. As a Jew still keeping the law, she could not do it. However, we were Gentiles, so it didn't matter!

Even before such conveniences were common, many of the lights and appliances in their house were on timers. The oven came on at a certain time to cook dinner, because they were not allowed to turn the knobs. It was OK to use the oven, but not to turn it off or on.

After a visit, as Shushanni was walking us out the front door, her mother came rushing up to us and said, “Oh, would you please step back in and turn off the living room light for me?” Wouldn’t want to use up those extra shekels leaving the light on for the next 21 hours!

That was the kind of culture in which Jesus lived, and why He had such conflicts with the Pharisees about the keeping of the law.

- **Jesus never broke the fourth commandment to keep the Sabbath holy.**
- **But Jesus shattered the man-made traditions that had risen up around God’s command.**

So let’s look at

- **What Jesus taught about the Sabbath**
 - **The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. (Luke 6:5)**
 - **The Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27)**
 - **It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. (Luke 5:6-10)**
- **The early church and the Sabbath**
 - **When someone tells you that the Sabbath day was Saturday, they are correct.**
 - **Sunday is not the Sabbath. Sunday is the first day of the week.**
 - **What happened on the first day of the week? The resurrection!**
 - **What else happened on Sunday, the first day of the week? Pentecost!**
 - **After the resurrection, followers of Christ immediately began to worship on Sunday, which they called “The Lord’s Day.”**
 - **Doctrinally, believer’s understood that no one day was more sacred to God than another. They all belong to Him.**

Romans 14:1, 5-6 NKJV 1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things. 5 One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe *it*. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

3) How does God want this portion of His character to show in our lives?

We should remember that each of us consists of body, soul, and spirit.

- **God refreshes our body as we withdraw from work on the Lord's Day.**
 - **God designed us so that we function best on a work/rest ratio of 6/1.**
 - Other cultures have tried from 4/1 to 10/1; but 6/1 maximizes man's efficiency.
 - This is not a legalistic requirement; it is a principle for our own good.
 - Jesus told us we could make an exception for the purpose of doing good, helping someone. He Himself did that.
 - Jesus said a man could get his ox out of the ditch.
 - But if you use the exception to justify never obeying the principle, you defeat its value for your life.
 - **D.L. Moody said, "If I had to get my ox out of the ditch every Lord's Day, I would either fill in the ditch or get a new ox."** God intends to refresh our bodies on the Lord's Day.

- **God refreshes our soul on the Lord's Day.**

The mind, emotions, and will are all a part of the soul.

- **God refreshes us mentally as we gain the mind of Christ through the study of God's Word and through the preaching of His Word.**
 - Our purpose is to be growing in our understanding of the mind of Christ as it is revealed in the Word of God.
 - It is a time of mental refreshing.
 - It is a time when we can focus on absolutes. No wonder the world thinks there are no absolutes. They are never exposed to them. They never hear the Word of God to know the mind of Christ. There are absolutes, and they are not affected by national opinion polls.
 - It is a time when confusing things can be settled. God refreshes the soul as we come to LCG and Worship on the Lord's Day.
- **God refreshes us emotionally as we fellowship with God's family on the Lord's Day.**
 - When you work or go to school all week with people who
 - Do not care about God,

- Blaspheme the Lord,
 - Take His name in vain,
 - Curse,
 - Lie,
 - Talk and act immorally,
- That environment is emotionally draining.
- As you come together with the family of God and fellowship with people who love the Lord, want to honor Him, want to obey Him, you will be refreshed emotionally. There is no more emotionally restoring place than the church and no more emotionally restoring body than the body of Christ.
- **God refreshes us volitionally, our wills, our resolve, our commitments.**
- When we first come to Christ or if we have wandered from His ways and are returning, there are many things the Lord addresses through His Word we need to commit to change in our lives.
- After we have grown for a while, the stark changes needed become less and less. There remains a need to, from time to time, strengthen our resolve, renew our commitment to what the Lord wants us to do.
- Every Sunday for someone, some Sundays for a lot of someones, is a day when the Lord is saying, "Choose you this day whom you will serve." To which invitation they have the opportunity to respond, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
- I trust some of you are seeing for the first time the importance of setting the Lord's Day apart as holy to the Lord.
 - I trust others are renewing your commitment to set the day apart.
 - I trust God is making changes in some of your lives right now to make your obedience to these principles less sporadic and haphazard and more intentional and faithful.
 - If that is happening in your heart right now, God is refreshing you volitionally; it probably would not have happened if you had not set this portion of the Lord's Day apart for Him to do this in your life.
- **God refreshes our spirit as we worship the resurrected Savior on the Lord's Day.**

- This is the most needful of all of the refreshings, and spiritual refreshing comes as we worship the Lord.
- **To worship God means to bow down before Him.** It means
- **To bow my being before His presence saying, “I am mere man; You alone are God.”**
 - **To bow my thoughts to His thoughts,** for as the heavens are higher than the earth so are God’s thoughts higher than our thoughts.
 - **To bow my ways to His ways,** for my ways are flawed and filled with sin; but His ways are righteous and true and perfect altogether.
 - **To bow and lay my possessions before Him;** acknowledging that all I have is really a gift from Him, even that which I have earned, I have earned
 - ❖ With the mind He gave me,
 - ❖ With the abilities He gave me,
 - ❖ With the strength He gives me,
 - ❖ With the health He gives me.
 - **To bow my life before Him and acknowledge that I am His by creation and I am His by redemption.** I am not my own but I am bought with the price of the blood of the Son of God.
- The way that we worship is exceedingly important.
 - **Jesus said that the Father desires us to worship in spirit and in truth.**
 - **In truth means that we are to worship the way the Word of God says we are to worship.**
 - **We are to worship God alone.**
 - **We are not to use idols and images.**
 - **We are to worship in biblical ways.**

Prayer, Singing, Testimony, Giving, Reading the Word of God, Preaching the Word, Listening to the Word
 - **In spirit means that we worship at the level of our spirit.**
 - We are to worship physically, but not just physically.

- We are to worship with our emotions, but not just with emotion.
- When we worship with our spirit we worship with genuineness and integrity.
 - ❖ When the congregation prays, we really do pray; and we mean the words we say to the Father.
 - ❖ When the congregation sings, we sing, and not merely casually by rote or ritual but because we desire to offer the sincere praise of our soul to the Almighty God.
 - ❖ When the Bible is read or preached, we listen not as to the words of man but as to the Word of God. We are sensitive to the inner speaking of the Holy Spirit of the Living God as He makes particular applications of the Scriptures to our heart.

My friend, that is what it means to worship in spirit.

On the Lord's Day, when you bow your life down before the Lord Jesus Christ and worship Him the way the Bible describes with a genuineness of heart and soul, you will be spiritually refreshed.

CONCLUSION: Would you stand and bow reverently before the Lord.

An elderly gentleman once offered this prayer:

“O Lord, we will praise You; we will worship You with an instrument of ten strings!”

People wondered what he meant, but understood when he continued,

“We will praise You with our two eyes... by looking only unto You.

We will exalt You with our two ears... by listening only to Your voice.

We will worship You with our two hands... by lifting them in adoration.

We will honor You with our own two feet... by walking in Your ways.

We will magnify You with our tongue... by telling Your loving kindness.

We will worship You with our heart... by loving You first and most.”

My prayer today, Lord, is that I and all of this flock whom I shepherd

Would be a people who work well, as unto the Lord, six days

And who rest well, as unto the Lord, one day.

And help us oh Lord to honor You by making our day of rest a day of worship,

That we might be refreshed in body, soul, and spirit

To love You and to live for You, another day, another week.

In Jesus' name. Amen