

KEEP THE SABBATH

Scripture used: Exodus 20:8-11 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

As we continue on in our current series, "God's Top 10," we come to God's fourth commandment for His people found in Exodus 20:8-11: keep the sabbath. How should we understand this fourth commandment in our modern, busy world? Silicon Valley workaholics, this message is for us! The notion behind "sabbath" is to cease from work or vacate from work. In other words, stop your work. This notion finds its roots in the creation story in Gen 1:31-2:3 where God rested on the seventh day. Did He just chill out? No, scripture tells us it was a deliberate act of contemplation and enjoyment of what He had done. Celebration of work and what He had accomplished was important. Work was affirmed and blessed but more importantly, God chose to celebrate life with joy. He made very VERY good gifts for all of creation! The sabbath is for joy!

KEY POINTS

1) Why should we keep the sabbath? What is the impact of keeping the sabbath?

- It is a sign of freedom. Slaves don't get a day off. Slaves work, and work defines who they are. Their identification is found in their work contributions.
- It is designed to keep us free. Stopping work requires an active choice. The consequences of going "unplugged" from work can be frightening. We are actively choosing to trust God to take those consequences and make them into something good. The impact of NOT choosing to trust God results in enslavement and can be devastating to us, to our health, our staff, our families, our children, and other important relationships. Because of Christ, we should intentionally remember the freedom we have been given at such great cost.

2) How do we keep the sabbath?

- We must choose our sabbath day. The sabbath day does not always have to be Sunday. Some may work on Sundays, and another day would then be chosen. Thus, there is a conscious choice to make.
- We make a holy day by setting it aside as dedicated to the Lord. One day needs to be different from the other days. It would be a day without normal labor. Our sabbath would involve a time of contemplation of God's blessings or gifts to us and celebration of joy and thankfulness. The central focus of the day would become nurturing relationships with God and with others.
- Replenish and shape our souls.
 - a. Reconnect by setting aside time for worship and engaging with God and with fellow believers.
 - b. Reflect by creating a space to slow down and ask questions. What is God saying to you? Journal your thoughts.
 - c. Relax and rest in faith. Take a nap and glorify God, too!
- Finding joy in what God is doing is:
 - a. A practice of trust.
 - b. An expression of commitment.
 - c. A source of generosity.
- How to begin?
 - a. Decide ahead of time to make it a priority.
 - b. Set aside a percentage of time to commit to sabbath time.
 - c. Review and examine your choices: Are you progressing? Can you increase your sabbath?

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** Ask yourself, "Why is it so hard for me to stop work and keep the sabbath? What fear drives me?"
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** Compare your last 4 sabbaths with the list above in "how do we keep the sabbath". How do your sabbaths compare?
- 3) **DO** This week choose one specific step you want to change in your sabbath practices. Share your plan with your group. Read Exodus 1-20 to understand why God chose this time in history to give the Top 10.

PRAYER