

Remember the Sabbath Day

The penalty for violating the Sabbath Day was death (Exodus 35:1-2). Israel was commanded to observe the Sabbath when God began giving them manna from heaven (Exodus 16:22-31). God also included the requirement in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8). It was the fourth commandment.

Sabbath means “rest.” The word is found over 150 times in the Bible. On the Sabbath Day, the children of Israel could not do any work (Exodus 20:9-10). If they disobeyed the commandment, they were to be killed.

The Sabbath commandment was rooted in how God did things in the beginning (Exodus 20:11). After creating the world in six literal days, God rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:1-3). This doesn't mean God took a nap or went on vacation. It means that God ceased His creative work. He was satisfied with His creation and ready to enter into fellowship with mankind in the garden.

Sunday is not the “Christian Sabbath.” Sunday is the first day of the week. It is a day when Christians are to assemble and worship God (Acts 20:7). The Sabbath day was Saturday.

The Sabbath commandment (along with the rest of the Ten Commandments) are not binding on Christians. Christians live under the New Covenant (Galatians 3:23-25; 5:4; Hebrews 8:13; Colossians 2:14-17; Romans 7:6-7). The Old Covenant was fulfilled and done away with when Jesus died on the cross.

Even though we are not commanded to keep the Sabbath in the New Testament, that doesn't mean we can't learn important lessons and principles from it. What can we learn from the Sabbath commandment?

The value of work

- God made man to work and be productive (Genesis 2:15).
- Before Israel could rest on the seventh day, God first wanted them to work on the first six days (Exodus 20:9-10).
- God also requires us to work and earn a living (2 Thessalonians 3:10; Ephesians 4:28; Colossians 3:23-24). Working enables us to care for our families, help others, support God's work, and avoid burdening others.
- Be thankful if you have a job and can work!

The value of rest

- God commanded Israel to rest on the Sabbath Day (Exodus 20:10). This was a holy day unto the Lord. Even the animals and slaves were to rest on this day!
- This allowed Israel to worship God (Leviticus 23:3), reflect on His blessings, and spend time with their families.
- There is an important principle to learn from the Sabbath. God knew that His people could get their lives off balance and lose focus on what really matters in life.
- This is a trap that we can also fall into! While we are not commanded to keep the Sabbath, there is wisdom in making time to physically and spiritually rejuvenate throughout the week.
- It allows us to avoid stretching ourselves too thin and wearing ourselves out.
- It is also good practice to constantly reflect on God and nurture our relationship with Him.

The need to long for God's rest

- The Hebrew writer mentions a rest that remains for the people of God (Hebrews 4:1-11).
- God's rest is something we can experience now by obeying and being in fellowship with God (Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:3).
- God's rest will be fully experienced in heaven with Him for eternity (Revelation 14:13). In heaven, we will rest from the trials and problems of this life.

- Until the reward of heaven's rest is received, we must labor diligently for the Lord!

Conclusion:

Are you on a path to experience eternal rest with God?

- Shawn Jeffries