

## COMMANDMENT IV

Exodus 20:8-11 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

The fourth commandment concerns the time of worship. God is to be served and honored daily, but one day in seven is to be particularly dedicated to His honor and spent in service to Him.

The word sabbath is from the Hebrew word *shabbath* (with the sound of the 'a' being a 'long a'), and the Greek word *Sabbaton*, which means to desist, cease, or rest. According to Webster's dictionary, sabbath could mean 'the seventh day of the week, Saturday, as the day of rest and religious observance among Jews and some Christians' (or) 'the first day of the week, Sunday, observed by most Christians in commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ ', (or) 'a day of rest or prayer'. The first time the word 'sabbath' is mentioned is in Exodus 16:23, although the principle of a sabbath day as a day of rest and holiness is given in Genesis 2:3 when the Scripture tells us that God 'rested' on the seventh day. A detailed explanation about the many ideas related to the word 'sabbath' and which day should be observed would make this lesson much longer than most people would want to read. So, please feel free to conduct your own research, and I think you will be surprised at the many meanings/times of observance given to the sabbath.

But, let us look a little closer at our instruction to remember the sabbath and to keep it holy. For one thing, the sabbath was to be a reminder that a person is more than just the job/position by which the person provides clothing, food and shelter for him/herself and the family. We need a spiritual communion with God so that the needs of our spiritual nature are also met. In Exodus and Deuteronomy the sabbath is portrayed as a day of joyous celebration---or remembering what God had done. (Although as mentioned previously, this should be a daily activity, we need to have a day set aside to 'remind us to be reminded' of God's goodness.) The keeping of the sabbath as a holy day is a privilege, not just a duty. Each of us should question our attitude toward the Lord's Day.

Initially, it seems that what we now know as Saturday was the day considered the day of rest. But, after the Resurrection of Christ, the early Christians began to meet on the first day of the week (Sunday). In I Corinthians 16:1 and 2, Paul admonishes the people 'upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.' When we look at the Sabbath day, and attempt to decide what we consider to be some activity that should or should not be done, let us know get so wrapped up in that aspects that we forget four little words that are included in the commandment. Those words? "...and keep it holy." When we consider how we should keep the Sabbath as a holy day,

perhaps words such as respect, reverence, adoration, worship, or praise may come to our mind, and may escape easily from our lips. But, how sincere are we in our hearts with this respect, reverence, adoration, worship, and praise? If each of use took a good look at our attitude toward the Lord's Day, would our actions be different?

Some questions for thought-----when God set aside a day of rest, was he thinking about the fact that our physical body would need a rest? Was he thinking about our spiritual 'body' needing a special day for rejuvenation?

So, ask yourself a question, also. "When I think of the Lord's Day, do I look forward to that extra time that I can spend with Him, and with His children in a common place of worship?" Or, "Am I glad to have Sunday off from work, so I can relax around the house?" Certainly there is nothing wrong with 'relaxing around the house', but let us not forget that 'this (which includes every day) is the day the Lord has made-----SO DON'T MESS IT UP by pushing God out of the picture!!!'

Are there certain activities we should not participate in on Sunday? Perhaps an argument could be made for an answer of 'yes', but let us remember another saying which I once read-----in essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, love.

I realize that this lesson may cause more questions than answers. But, never forget that every day that we have is a gift from God. How we spend it speaks of how we view God.

"Lord, may I remember that this is the day that you have made, and may I always rejoice in it. Amen."

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