

**The Doctrine of the Sabbath**

Passages: Gen 2:1–3; Ex 16:23; 20:8–11; Deut 5:12–15

*Memory Verse*

“Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.” (Ezekiel 20:12)

<b>Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]</b>	<b>Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]</b>	<b>Good Work [Behavior]</b>
The Sabbath is a day of rest for us to remember God’s work and salvation.	God is our Creator.	Keep the Sabbath with a joyful and thankful heart by worshipping and doing good works for God and man.

*Overview*

**Events and Spiritual Teachings**

- A. The Origin of the Sabbath Day
- B. The Purposes of the Sabbath
- C. Keeping the Sabbath
- D. Misconceptions About the Sabbath

**Life Application**

Finding Joy and Thanksgiving on the Sabbath

**Memory Verse**

**Conclusion:** Though keeping the Sabbath is a commandment, it is also a blessing given to help us remember God’s work in our lives and how He saved us from the bondage of this world. He wants us to experience true rest today as we look forward to our eternal rest in heaven.

## *Spiritual Teachings*

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### **A. The Origin of the Sabbath Day**

Being instituted at the time of creation, the Sabbath is the oldest commandment that we follow! In the beginning, after six days of creation, God rested on the seventh day. Being God, He hardly needed to rest, but He did this out of love for His creation, in order to set a day of rest for us. Through this act, God established the Sabbath, blessing and sanctifying it (Gen 2:1–3). Now, we are able to receive blessings from the Lord through the Sabbath Day.

Although God established the Sabbath at the time of creation, it was not a commandment until He led the Israelites out of the land of Egypt and commanded His people to observe the Sabbath through the gathering of manna. Manna would appear for six days, but on the seventh day, there would be none in the field (Ex 16:23, 26–27). This was to train His people to learn how to keep the Sabbath.

### **B. The Purposes of the Sabbath**

#### 1. *For our rest (Mk 2:27)*

Although keeping the Sabbath is a commandment from God, the Sabbath was created for us to enjoy. On the Sabbath, we are able to rest from our busy week. It is on this blessed day that we can find not only physical rest but also spiritual rest. As we worship together with our fellow brothers and sisters, we can experience peace and joy in the Lord.

#### 2. *To remember God's creation (Ex 20:8–11)*

God created everything around us in six days before resting on the seventh day and blessing it. When we keep the Sabbath today, we are remembering the wonderful work that our Creator has done. Everything that we see and touch in this world has been created by His hand. Without Him, nothing would exist. As we worship God on the Sabbath, we can remember and thank Him for all the things that He has created for us in this world.

#### 3. *To remember God's salvation (Deut 5:12–15)*

In Deuteronomy 5:12–15, God told the Israelites that keeping the Sabbath is a way for them to remember how He delivered them from slavery in Egypt. For us today, we can remind ourselves of God's mercy and how He saved us from the bondage of sin. We are no longer under the control of Satan but are now a part of God's kingdom. This is a blessing that we should always remind ourselves of.

#### 4. *To give us hope for our eternal rest in heaven (Heb 4:1–11)*

The Sabbath is not just for us to remember God's creation and salvation. It also prefigures the eternal rest that we will receive in heaven. In keeping the Sabbath, we can remember the eternal rest that is our hope for the future. This is the true rest that we seek.

### **C. Keeping the Sabbath**

Today, we keep the Sabbath under grace, which is different from how the Jews observed it in the Old Testament. For example, the Jews were not able to do any work, such as lighting a fire, and those who broke these commandments were even put to death (Ex 35:3; 31:12–14). Today, we do not follow the same Old Testament laws because Jesus Christ fulfilled all the laws, and through Him, we are now able to understand the true purpose of the Sabbath. So, how do we observe the Sabbath while keeping to its true purpose?

1. *We can observe the Sabbath with a joyful heart (Isa 58:13–14)*

The Sabbath lets us worship God together with other members. It is also a time of fellowship and sharing. So, we must observe the Sabbath with a heart of joy and thanksgiving. Going to church on Saturdays should not only be a routine or habit; the Sabbath should be a day that we look forward to during our busy week. We must evaluate our hearts and minds and consider the mentality we have towards keeping the Sabbath. Are we just going to church out of obligation or habit? Or do we really look forward to this blessed day?

2. *We can do holy work on the Sabbath (Jn 7:23)*

We are able to serve God and other members on the Sabbath. Our service to God is not limited to attending worship services but also includes serving our brothers and sisters. Leading hymns or cleaning the restrooms are just two of the various holy works that we can do on the Sabbath.

3. *We can join in fellowship with other members (Acts 2:46)*

Just as the apostolic church continued with “one accord” daily in the temple, we can also enjoy fellowship with brothers and sisters on the Sabbath. This does not mean that we can neglect our service or worship. Rather, a fellowship is an opportunity to bond while doing good works to help other people in need. There are many ways we can enjoy a good fellowship on the Sabbath with our brothers and sisters, such as visiting sick members or volunteering at local charities.

4. *We can save people on the Sabbath (Mk 3:4)*

Apart from serving and doing good deeds on the Sabbath, we can also preach and share the gospel with the people around us. Saving souls is important work that we can do on the Sabbath. We can pass out flyers in the neighborhoods around church or invite our friends to worship with us. God has given us many opportunities to save souls, but we need to gather the courage to reach out.

From these different examples, we can see that there are many things we can do to fully enjoy the Sabbath. Sometimes, we only focus on the things we cannot do, such as attend parties or join club events. However, it is even more important for us to realize the wide range of activities that we can do on this holy day. It is not a day of restrictions, but a day of true freedom in the Lord. We can lay aside our worries for the day and enjoy being in the presence of God with our brothers and sisters.

**D. Misconceptions About the Sabbath**

1. *“Jesus Christ abolished Mosaic law, so we no longer need to keep the Sabbath.”*

Even if Jesus Christ had “abolished” Mosaic law, the command to keep the Sabbath would not have been abolished because it existed at the time of creation, long before Moses’ time (Gen 2:2–3). Today, we no longer keep Mosaic law because Jesus Christ has fulfilled God’s salvation plan and saved us by grace (Mt 5:17–19). But we still keep the Ten Commandments, of which one is to keep the Sabbath.

2. *“The majority of Christians worship on Sunday so that must be the correct day to worship.”*

Sunday observance was not instituted by God. After the time of the apostles, the day on which Christians observed the Sabbath slowly changed over time. The first change instituted worship on both Sunday and Saturday. Religious leaders of the time deemed Sunday to be the Lord’s Day and the day that Jesus Christ resurrected. Eventually in A.D. 321, Constantine, the Roman emperor, decreed Sunday to be a holiday and outlawed work. In A.D. 364, the council of Laodicea decreed that all Christians would not rest on the Sabbath like the Jews did, but would instead observe the Lord’s Day, Sunday.

It is important for us to remember that the Sabbath is not something man can change. It is a day that God has made holy and blessed as a day of rest. The commandment of God is not something we can choose or change at our own convenience. If it were something that we could choose, then it would not be a commandment but a suggestion.

3. *“Jesus Christ and His apostles never taught the followers to keep the Sabbath.”*

It is true that the New Testament does not directly tell us to keep the Sabbath. However, it is important to note that Jesus Christ, His disciples, and the apostle Paul observed the Sabbath (Lk 4:16; 23:56; Acts 13:14; 17:2). From this, we can see that keeping the Sabbath did not have to be newly taught because the Jews had been observing it for hundreds of years. It may not have been taught in the New Testament, but this does not mean that it was not kept or that we no longer have to keep the Sabbath.

### *Check for Understanding*

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1. **When was the Sabbath instituted?** From the time of creation, God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day.
2. **When did keeping the Sabbath become a commandment of God?** While the Israelites were in the wilderness, they were given the command to “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” as the fourth commandment in the Ten Commandments. They practiced it through the gathering of manna, which would come down the first six days but would not appear on the Sabbath.
3. **What are the purposes of the Sabbath?**
  - a. For our rest (Mk 2:27)
  - b. To remember God’s creation (Ex 20:8–11)
  - c. To remember God’s salvation (Deut 5:12–15)
  - d. To give us hope for our eternal rest in heaven (Heb 4:1–11)
4. **How can we observe the Sabbath while keeping true to its purpose?**
  - a. We can observe the Sabbath with a joyful heart
  - b. We can do holy work on the Sabbath
  - c. We can fellowship with other members
  - d. We can save people on the Sabbath
5. **Why do we not worship on Sunday?**

The change to move worship from Saturday to Sunday was a man-made change and not according to the commandment of God. Keeping the Sabbath is part of the Ten Commandments.

### *Life Application*

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#### **Finding Joy and Thanksgiving on the Sabbath**

Though keeping the Sabbath is a commandment from God, the Sabbath is a day that God has given to us so that we can rest from our worries and find peace and joy. It is a day of blessing, but sometimes it can be difficult for us to truly enjoy it. There may be many things that worry or distract us. We may feel exhausted from our busy week at school or frustrated that we are missing out on opportunities to hang out with friends or participate in extracurricular activities. Today, let us think about some practical steps we can take to fully enjoy the Sabbath.

1. **Prepare our hearts**

There are many ways we can prepare our hearts before we come to church and observe the Sabbath. We can take a break from social media or other distractions, such as games or schoolwork.

This can help to calm our hearts and prevent our minds from wandering when we come to church. Oftentimes, our brains are so wired from our busy week that it is good to take the time to calm down our hearts and minds. Proverbs 4:23 tells us that we need to guard our heart, “for out of it spring the issues of life.” So, we must really think about what we do before coming to church to observe the Sabbath. Another way we can prepare our hearts is to spend time to reflect on our week. Were there any special blessings you received from God? Were there any lessons that you learned? You can write down these blessings and share them with brothers and sisters.

**Discussion**

1. What did you do today to prepare your heart for the Sabbath?
2. What else can you do to prepare your heart for the Sabbath?

**2. Watch what we say on the Sabbath**

This is something that we can easily do on the Sabbath. When we chat with our brothers and sisters on the Sabbath, we can use this time to talk about topics related to our faith, such as any blessings we have received. Though we may not talk only about God on the Sabbath, we must be mindful of the topics that we talk about. In this way, we can edify and encourage one another with our sharing. Since we only see our brothers and sisters once a week, this is a good opportunity for us to strengthen our relationships as the body of Christ.

**Discussion**

1. What did you talk about today during the Sabbath?
2. What is one spiritual blessing you can share about?

**3. Watch what we look at on the Sabbath**

We need to be mindful of the things we look at on the Sabbath. In the Bible, it tells us that the “lamp of the body is the eye” (Mt 6:22–23). When our eyes are good, then our body is filled with light. On the other hand, when our eyes are bad, then our body is filled with darkness. In the same way, our eyes influence our body and mind. As we keep the Sabbath, it is important for us to think about what we are looking at on this sanctified day. Are we looking at things that are able to put peace in our heart and help us think more about God? Or are we looking at things that distract us?

**Discussion**

1. What did you look at today on the Sabbath?
2. What are things that we can look at on the Sabbath?

**4. Spend more time in the presence of God**

During the week, we can be quite busy with schoolwork and our families, but the Sabbath is a day that we can dedicate to God. We can spend a little more time in prayer by going to church early to pray or we can also meditate on His words throughout the day. As we look around at the things He has made, we can thank Him for all that He has done and all that He has provided. It can be very easy to forget about what God has done for us, but on the Sabbath, we can take some time to remind ourselves.

**Discussion**

1. Did you spend time in the presence of God today on the Sabbath?
2. What can you do to spend more time in the presence of God on the Sabbath?

### Overall Discussion Questions

1. Did you feel that you kept the Sabbath today according to God's commandment?
2. What changes can you make to keep the Sabbath as God intended?

### Testimony

*In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I testify.*

*God showed me the importance of keeping the Sabbath holy through an experience that I had while going on a family trip. My family and I had been planning this road trip to Utah for months. The plan was to leave our home Friday evening so that we would arrive in Utah in the morning. We would then spend the day sightseeing. It was about 10:00 AM when we finally arrived at the first state park. The canyons were beautiful to behold, and we found a lookout point that we wanted to see. After parking the car, my mom gave me the keys to the car to put in my purse. We spent about thirty minutes at this lookout point and around 10:30 AM, we headed back to our car.*

*I remember unlocking the car so that everyone could get in and then I went to use the restroom. After returning from the restroom, I couldn't find the keys to the car. We took everything out of our car and looked through everyone's bags. However, the key was nowhere to be found. After about thirty minutes of frantic searching, we still couldn't find the keys. It was now 11:00 AM and starting to get very hot, so we decided to leave our car first and go to our campsite to rest. Thankfully, there was a park ranger nearby that was willing to help us carry all of our belongings to our campsite. My dad went with the ranger to our campsite, but since the rest of us could not fit in the ranger's car, we had to take the bus.*

*As we were sitting on the bus to our campsite, all of us were repentant. My mom looked at all of us and said, "I believe God wanted us to keep the Sabbath." When we got to our campsite, we set up camp and made lunch. All of us were very down because we were worried about how we were going to tow the car and how much new car keys were going to cost. Since I was the one who lost the car keys, I felt especially guilty. However, after some time, we decided to sing hymns and worship at our campsite. After we finished, I went to rest in the tent for a bit. As I was resting, my mom suddenly yelled! She was looking in her backpack and found the car keys inside. All of us were relieved and praised God for His mercy. As we were all discussing the incident, we realized that we lost the keys around 11:00 AM and we didn't find them until 3:00 PM, which was the time that we would have had service at church.*

*As a family, we really learned the importance of keeping the Sabbath and how highly God views this day. From that vacation onward, my family always makes it a point to keep the Sabbath no matter where we are. May all the praise and glory be unto His holy name.*

– Anonymous

### Memory Verse

"Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them." (Ezekiel 20:12)

### Meaning

The Sabbath is a way for us to remember God and what He has done for us in our life. It is a sign of His love for us, and by observing it, we glorify God and show others that we are the people of God.

*Conclusion*

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Through understanding how the Sabbath has been created for us, we are able to observe it with the correct attitude and mentality. Though keeping the Sabbath is a commandment, it is also a blessing given to us to help us remember God's work in our lives and how He saved us from the bondage of this world. He wants us to experience true rest, and as we continue to keep the Sabbath day, we have hope for our eternal rest in heaven.

Lesson 8 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What is the purpose of the Sabbath, and how do we benefit from observing it?  
*It is a way for us to remember God and what He has done for us in our life. It is a sign of His love for us, and by observing it, we glorify God and show others that we are people of God.*
2. How did God train the Israelites to observe the Sabbath?  
*Through the gathering of manna. Manna would appear for six days, but on the seventh day, there would be none in the field (Ex 16:23, 26–27).*
3. What is the Sabbath day a prefiguration of?  
*It prefigures the eternal rest that we will receive in heaven.*
4. Why is it incorrect to observe the Sabbath on Sunday?  
*Because Sunday observance was not instituted by God. Over time, the day on which Christians observed the Sabbath was changed. But the commandment of God is not something that we can choose or change at our own convenience.*
5. Do you keep the Sabbath day according to God's commandment? Why or why not?  
*Personal answers.*
6. After today's lesson, how can you improve the way you keep the Sabbath day in the future?  
*Personal answers.*