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Exodus 20

“Get Some Rest”

Pastor Gary Hamrick

The Sabbath Day is technically Saturday, which is the seventh day of the week. In our culture, Sunday, the first day of the week, is most often considered to be the Sabbath. In [Revelation 1:10](#), Sunday is referred to as *“the Lord’s Day,”* so it became the regular day of worship for the early Church as a perpetual celebration of the Lord’s resurrection, which took place on a Sunday.¹ Historically, then, Sunday took on Sabbath significance, and while it doesn’t technically replace Saturday as Sabbath, it can be observed as a Sabbath. In [Romans 14:5](#), Paul wrote: *“One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.”*

In this study we’re going to look at what the Lord wants from us concerning observance of the fourth Commandment: Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Practice On The Sabbath

1. Acts of Necessity are always permitted and encouraged.
 - a. [Mark 2:23-27](#) – *“One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, ‘Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?’ He answered, ‘Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions. Then he said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.’ ”*

¹ See [John 20:19, 26](#); [Acts 20:7](#); and [1 Corinthians 16:2](#).

2. Acts of Mercy are always permitted and encouraged.
 - a. **Mark 3:1-6** - *“Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, ‘Stand up in front of everyone.’ The Jesus asked them, ‘Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?’ But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.”*

Purpose For The Sabbath

3. Remembrance
 - a. God compared the Sabbath to their time of slavery and how he delivered the Hebrews.
 - b. **Deuteronomy 5:12-15** - *“Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, not your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.”*
 - c. Today, Christians are reminded of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and how he has delivered them from a greater slavery to sin!
 - i. **Romans 8:2** - Jesus Christ has *“set us free from the law of sin and death.”*
 - ii. **Revelation 1:5-6** - *“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father - to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.”*
4. Rest
 - a. God compared the Sabbath to how he rested after his work of creation was completed.
 - b. **Exodus 20:8-11** - *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a*

Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Principle Of The Sabbath

5. The Sabbath is not a *day*.
 - a. Even though Saturday is still technically the Sabbath day, the Sabbath principle is not about a day.
 - b. [Colossians 2:16-17](#) - *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”*

6. Our ultimate rest is in Christ.
 - a. [Hebrews 4:11](#) - *“Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest...”*
 - b. [Matthew 11:28-30](#) - *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.

2. Read [Exodus 20:8-11](#) to provide an overview for this study.

3. Review and discuss the legal implications of Sabbath observance in early America.
 - a. In 1611, a set of laws and statutes was adopted by the Jamestown settlement of Virginia, and, according to *History of American Law* (Lawrence Friedman), it contained the following criminal code:
 - i. Every Virginia minister was required to read the “Articles, Lawes and Orders” to his congregation every Sunday, and, among other things, parishioners were reminded that failure to attend church twice each day was punishable in the first instance by the loss of a day’s food.

A second offense was punishable by a whipping, and a third by six months of rowing in the colony's galleys.

- ii. In early Virginia, every minister was entitled to appoint four men in his fort or settlement to inform on religious scofflaws.
- iii. In the early 17th century, Roger Scott (Boston, Massachusetts) was picked up for "repeated sleeping on the Lord's Day." His sentence was to be severely whipped because he was guilty of "striking the person who waked him from his godless slumber."
- iv. Virginia law in 1662 required everyone to resort "diligently to their parish church" on Sundays "and there to abide orderly and soberly."
- v. In 1668 in Salem, Massachusetts, John Smith and the wife of John Kitchin were fined "for frequent absenting themselves from the public worship of God on the Lord's days."
- vi. In 1682 it cost Andrew Searle (Maine) five shillings for merely "wandering from place to place" instead of "frequenting the publique worship of god."
- vii. A Captain Kemble, who returned from a three-year tour at sea, was arrested for "lewd and unseemly behavior" because he kissed his wife in public on a Sunday. He was sentenced to several hours of public humiliation in the stocks!

4. What were Sundays like in your family when you were a child?
 - a. Did your parent/parents have a strict observance of Sundays or was it "anything goes"?

5. Do you think it would be possible for people in our culture to go back to the days of the Blue Laws? ² ³
 - a. Spend time talking about the way the Lord has blessed prominent Christian businesses that don't open on Sundays.
 - i. Hobby Lobby (David Green) grossed \$2.28 billion in 2011 (#194 on Forbes 500).
 - ii. Chick-fil-A (Truett Cathy) grossed \$4 billion in 2011.
 - b. Do you know other Christian business owners who have made the decision to honor the Lord by closing on Sundays?
 - c. Do you shop or go to restaurants on Sundays?
 - i. Do you think it's okay for Christians to shop on Sunday?
 - ii. Do you struggle with figuring out the Lord's will for you in this area?
 - iii. Should it be a matter of personal choice or standard practice for Christians to refrain from these activities?
 - iv. What would the benefit be to you and your family if you didn't shop or go to restaurants on Sundays?

² <http://www.inc.com/news/articles/200407/bluelaws.html>

³ <http://www.vahistorical.org/onthisday/11574.htm>

6. How have you “practiced Sabbath observance” since you became a Christian?
 - a. Are you “closed on Sundays”?

7. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s comment regarding the fact that the NFL didn’t permit Sunday games until 1949.
 - a. Would sports-crazy Americans be able to handle it?
 - b. How do you handle Sunday practices, games, and tournaments for yourself or your children?
 - c. Do you have a “church-first” personal/family philosophy?
 - d. How has the advent of Saturday evening services helped or hindered?

8. Read and discuss [Exodus 31:15](#).⁴

9. Review and discuss some of the ridiculous aspects of following the Jewish Mishnah.⁵
 - a. There were 39 major categories of regulations, including things like sowing, plowing, reaping, threshing, winnowing, cleaning, kneading, and baking.
 - b. Prohibitions for Sabbath observance include:
 - i. A person was not allowed to throw hot water because that was considered to be cleaning.
 - ii. A person was not allowed to wear false teeth, because they would be tempted to pick them up if they fell out of their mouth. This was considered to be carrying a load.
 - iii. A person would be allowed to spit on a rock, but not on the ground, because the spit may create a tiny furrow in the soil. This was considered to be plowing!
 - iv. If a deer came into your house, it was impermissible to close the door because that would be considered hunting.
 - v. A woman was not permitted to look in a mirror on the Sabbath, because she may be found guilty of harvesting a gray hair.

10. Review and discuss the statistical evidence concerning the need for Americans to get some rest!
 - a. Study after study has found that Americans are overworked and sleep deprived.
 - i. Americans work more hours and take less vacation time than another industrialized nation.

⁴ “For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death.”

⁵ A collection of traditional laws compiled by various Rabbis as commentaries on the Law (compiled 200BC - 135AD).

- ii. When adjusted for inflation, middle-class Americans have lower incomes today than 40 years ago.
 - iii. Americans work approximately 11 more hours per week now than they did in the 1970s, yet the average income for middle-income families has declined by 13% (adjusted for inflation) in that time frame.
 - iv. On April 6, 1933, the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly passed a bill that would have made the standard work week 30 hours, and any additional hours would be considered overtime. The bill passed the Senate but failed in the House. Five years later, in 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act passed, giving Americans a statutory 40-hour workweek.⁶
 - 1. And yet, in the U.S. today, 85.8% of men and 66.5% of women work more than 40 hours per week,⁷ and they still can't manage to get it all done.
 - v. The U.S. Centers for Disease and Prevention reported that 30% or 40.6 million American adults are sleep deprived, getting six or fewer hours of sleep a night compared to the recommended seven to nine hours.⁸
 - 1. Sleep deprivation results in accidents on the job, auto collisions, weakened immune systems, obesity, as well as other physiological and psychological problems.
11. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: recognize and understand the biblical principle of keeping the Sabbath; be reminded of the significance of the Lord's sacrifice on the cross for their sin, as well as the resurrection; purpose in their heart to intentionally set apart one day in the week to be physically and spiritually renewed and refreshed; and find their ultimate rest in the Lord.
- i. You shall have no other gods before me
 - ii. You shall not make for yourself an idol
 - iii. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God
 - iv. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy
 - v. Honor your father and mother
 - vi. You shall not murder
 - vii. You shall not commit adultery
 - viii. You shall not steal

⁶ Workweek Woes, *New York Times* by John de Graaf, published April 12, 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/12/opinion/workweek-woes.html>

⁷ The U.S. is the Most Overworked Developed Nation in the World - When do we Draw the Line? by G.E. Miller on October 12, 2010. <http://20somethingfinance.com/american-hours-worked-productivity-vacation/>

⁸ <http://www.medicaldaily.com/articles/9695/20120427/cdc-sleep-deprivation-working-u-s-employment.htm#IE6qGzbY5ccPIYhW.99>

- ix. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor
- x. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).