##### **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

**Lesson 6 - The Fourth Commandment: A Holy Day (Part 1)**

**Exodus 20:8-11**

**Introduction:** The mention of the Sabbath arouses controversy from several angles. The controversy centers around the perpetual observance of the seventh day, what may or may not be allowed in the way of activity, and much more.

G. Campbell Morgan suggests that the observance of the Sabbath is to be a symbol of the relationship that exists between God and man. “At regular intervals through all the days, man is to turn wholly from that which is material to that which is spiritual.” With his statement I agree, but where and how does one find the proper balance and understanding with regard to what should and should not be done on the Sabbath? For example, the Jewish scribes and elders had more do’s and don’ts for the Sabbath than the IRS has about our taxes. The Puritans were very, very strict on the observance of the Sabbath to the point that even good people dreaded the arrival of Sunday. Even today, some people will not buy or subscribe to a Sunday newspaper, eat at a restaurant, or do any business transactions on Sunday. Some believe any recreation is wrong on Sunday and others will limit themselves in other areas of activity.

Surely we can come to some reasonable understanding that will allow us to avoid the legalism of the Pharisees and yet please God by not allowing the day to be so totally secular that it in no way honors God.

# i. Mark 2:23-28 a commentary from jesus

## A. The Pharisees continually accused Christ of Sabbath violations.

### 1. He healed the sick and performed miracles, often on the Sabbath day.

### 2. In Mark 2, His disciples pulled ears of corn off the stalk, ground the kernels into their hand, and ate it … and got nailed by the Pharisees. This sort of activity had been ruled upon by the scribes and elders as “work,” and constituted in their minds a clear violation.

### 3. The Jews had 39 classifications of what they called “work” to be forbidden on the Sabbath day. Those 39 of course were main headings and under each of them were the endless details that went beyond being absurd. For example, on the Sabbath, you could administer medical practice to keep one’s condition from getting worse, *but* you could not administer medicine to make one better; that would be work! You could carry a child, but not a stone, on the Sabbath. If you carried a child with a stone in hand … violation!

### 4. As we said, there are 39 headings and sub-points that are equally ridiculous as the ones just mentioned. They would make Sabbath rules, find ways around them, and make more sub-rules to prevent the violations, etc.

## B. Mark 2:27-28 Jesus’ words put the matter in perspective.

### 1. V27 Man was not made for the Sabbath. Rest assured, the Sabbath was not instituted by God to become yet another burden for man to bear. God did not say, “Aha! To further restrict man and put hard limitations upon him, I will institute the Sabbath.” No way!

### 2. V27a The Sabbath was made for man!

#### a. God made the Sabbath for us; for our good; for our benefit.

#### b. Why of course! All the commandments are for us.

#### c. God is God no matter what you and I do. We could all profess atheism and live like animals and God would be no less God than if all were devout in the faith. Our keeping or not keeping God’s commands will not change God.

#### d. But *we* are changed by keeping God’s commandments, and they are for us.

## C. Leave it to sinful man to take the goodness of the Sabbath and make it something to be dreaded.

### 1. The Jews, when right with God, called the Sabbath “the queen of days” and “the desire of days.”

### 2. It was intended by God to be a day to anticipate and to be a blessing to man.

# ii. in what ways is the sabbath for man?

## A. Physical rest from toil and labor.

### 1. Genesis 3:17-19 With sin came toil, labor, sweat, and weariness.

### 2. Adam actively cared for the garden before sin, but it never was a burden until after sin.

### 3. Exodus 20:8-11 God knows we need a day of cessation from labor.

### 4. V11 The Lord created all that is in six days and rested the seventh. No, God was not exhausted and weary. “Rest” means He ceased from His creative work and set forth the pattern for man’s life.

### 5. We, however, do grow weary from labor. Our bodies and minds need to cease from the toil and stress to be refreshed.

### 6. V10 God knows that children, slaves, and even the lowly beasts that labor need a day of cessation from toil.

## B. The rest from the physical toil and labor is to profit the spiritual part of man.

### 1. Notice this quote from Morgan: He said that God in His infinite love “… in perfect understanding of the need of His own creation, provides that every seventh day man should lay aside the tools of his craft and enter into the upper reaches of his life’s possibilities.”

### 2. From the observance of the Sabbath day, man rests from his normal physical labor and routine and gives a day of attention to his Creator God, renews his spiritual strength by acknowledging his dependence upon God, and is then prepared for another six days of labor.

### 3. It is not that one day is “religious” and six days are “secular.” It is that the one day of rest from labor and for devotion to God enables the other six days to be holy as well as the seventh.

### 4. Without special attention to God and the soul on the seventh day, man will be far less holy on the other six days. A person, especially one who professes to be a child of God, who believes he or she can engage in labor and self-interest seven days per week, week after week, and be just as well off spiritually as when they rested a day to give attention to spiritual nourishment, is not being realistic or honest.

## C. The reasonableness of God is also manifest.

### 1. Let’s use the tithe as an example.

#### a. We owe our ability to earn and have resources to God.

#### b. That being true, God is to be acknowledged as God by the tithe; one-tenth. That means we are left with nine-tenths. Is this reasonable? Yes!

### 2. Now consider that seven days every week are a gift to us from God!

#### a. God tells us to take six days and labor and do our work; to labor, get gain, do our pleasure, etc.

#### b. Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy; set apart from the normal, and separated unto God. No sane person can argue against the reasonableness of God!

#### c. We should remember when tempted to use the seventh day for ourselves, that God gave us six days. We in effect say to Him that we also want His day for ourselves.

# III. How is the day to be kept holy?

## A. Again, there is to be rest from normal labors and activity.

## B. It is to be holy unto God.

### 1. We know the day was not necessarily to be free from any activity.

### 2. The activity of the day was to be related to honoring God; holy.

### 3. See Nehemiah 13:15-17 as a classic example of violation of God’s Sabbath.

**Conclusion:** In this lesson, we were primarily focusing on the command as it relates to Israel. In the next lesson, we will discuss the matter of Sunday and the Sabbath. Is Sunday the Sabbath for the New Testament Christian? If so, why? Is the seventh day Sabbath Jewish only? Why don’t Baptists and others worship on Saturday rather than Sunday?