



Morality and the Post-Modern World: The Ten Commandments for Today

Sabbath: Refusing the Worship of Work

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Biblical moral standards

Biblical morality is based on God's revelation of himself to us through his word and through his Son.

Not our own reasoning, preferences, or our culture's tendencies



First Three Commandments

- 1. You are to recognize only one God; you will have no other gods that you worship.***
- 2. You are not to make false representations of God; no idols, no substitutes for God.***
- 3. You are to make no professions of allegiance to God that are false or deceitful, no appeals to him as your witness that are duplicitous attempts to deceive others; no claims of belonging to him that are not backed up by your actions of faithfulness to his covenant.***

Sabbath Questions

- What does it mean?
- How do we obey it?
- What is the point and purpose?
- Why does it matter?
- Is it still relevant to us today?
- How is it related to questions of morality?



Defining Sabbath

Sabbath: a day to cease from one's work.

Specified as the final day in the seven-day week.

Certain days during the annual feasts were designated as Sabbaths.

Every seventh year was a Sabbatical year, where the land was allowed to "rest."





Remember the Sabbath

1. A holy day: a day that belongs to God
2. Intended to provide rest for the people
3. Included all in the community, not just the privileged elite

History of Sabbath Observance: Old Testament

Unique to Israel among Near Eastern cultures

Little information from early centuries

8th c. BC: Commercial exploitation and ignoring Sabbath

7th c. BC: Indication of neglect of Sabbath years (for 500 years)

5th-4th c. BC: Reforms started to restore Sabbath observance; addition of synagogues as places for community gathering for weekly worship and celebration



Sabbath at the time of Christ

Sabbath-keeping: one of the most important markers of Jewish identity; particular point of emphasis for the Pharisees.

Development of the “oral law”: specifying exactly what constitutes “work” and is therefore prohibited on the Sabbath.



Conflict over Sabbath

Disputes over the Sabbath laws were at the center of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees.

Jesus was adamant that the Pharisees had misunderstood both the intention of the law about Sabbath and its proper use.

Paul on the Sabbath

One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. (Romans 14:5-6a)

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. (Colossians 2:16-17)

The Letter to the Hebrews

A new "Sabbath-rest" is available:

- **Not weekly Sabbath**
- **Not Canaan rest in the promised land**

Rest that comes from believing the message of the gospel and brings eternal life



What we need to consider

Text of the commandment itself (Exodus 20/Deuteronomy 5)

Development of Sabbath observance as evidenced elsewhere in OT

Jesus' teaching and example in gospels

Other NT teaching, especially Paul and Hebrews

Experiences of the church in history



JESUS IS MESSIAH



Key Principles (1)

Observing the Sabbath as a day of rest was a covenantal sign. It marked those who belonged to God.

Identification as God's people began in the home and grew outward to include the community.



Key Principles (2)

God's intention was to provide rest for people, that they might be well.

Observing Sabbath teaches us that productivity is not the measure of our value or the goal of our existence.



Key Principles (3)

Sabbath both symbolizes and requires the *determination to trust in God to provide for our needs.*

I choose to trust that God will bless my working on the other days of the week so that I can have a day to rest and to worship.



Key Principles (4)

The commandment reflects *God's humanitarian concern for all people.*

Those who employ or manage others at work must be *concerned about their well-being, not just their productivity on the job.*



Key Principles (5)

Practicing a weekly Sabbath offers a way to improve spiritual, emotional, and physical health.

The most
important point

*The weekly Sabbath
rest points to the
greater Sabbath rest
that comes with
believing the gospel
and trusting Christ
for salvation.*

