

TEN COMMANDMENTS
(Part Four)
Respect For Rest

Text: Exodus 20.8 - 11 (in pew Bible p. 74 / in large print Bible p. 115)

Intro:

-Part Four in series on Ten Commandments.

- Part One = No Other Gods / *respect for God's authority.*
- Part Two = No Idols / *respect for God's uniqueness.*
- Part Three = Respect For God's Name / *God's essence & person.*
- Part Four = Respect For Rest.
 - **illust.** Compost Heap

-Laura Schlessinger: crisis of ethical vacuum *in our world.*

- ethics provide direction, meaning, purpose and value to life.
- help us to fulfill our mandate to represent God in this world (Genesis 1.26, 27).

-Ten Commandments provide a moral compass for:

- **Jews** = foundation of God's covenant w. O.T. Israel – *relationship & community.*
- **Christians** = all are reaffirmed in the N.T. & *therefore are binding on Christians.*
 - Christ has fulfilled the O.T. Law.
- **Everyone** = all people can understand & do the right thing.

-pattern for the Ten Commandments:

- 4 are God-ward = only one God, no idols, name not in vain, keep Sabbath holy.
- 6 are man-ward = honour parents, respect life, moral fidelity, honesty, truthfulness, no coveting.

Take Home Point:

- Lewis Smedes: instead of “live and let live” – “love and help others live.”

- transform prohibitions *into positive **directions.***

-paradigm for studying the Ten **Directions:**

- What does the command ask or forbid?
- Why does the commandment ask or forbid?
- How should I obey the commandment?

-so let us turn to the fourth commandment / **direction:** Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy (Exodus 20.8):

- God's principle of rest is essential for us to recharge, reflect and refocus our lives.

1. MEANING OF RESPECT FOR REST

-Sabbath = rest from work.

- frees us from a gerbil wheel to become a human being walking in God's ways.

-rationale for this command is rooted to creation (v. 11).

- first 6 days of creation God considered good, the seventh day he made holy.

-rationale in Deuteronomy 5.15 is rooted to Exodus event / redemption.

-rationale for Church shifting to first day of the week = *Lord's Day / resurrection*.

- Colossians = O.T. ceremonial days are shadow of the perfect which Christ has brought.
- Matthew & Hebrews = Christ gives the weary rest from life's burdens.
- for explanation of shift from Saturday to Sunday, from Sabbath to Lord's Day, cf. William Barclay's *The Ten Commandments For Today*. Eerdmans, 1977.

-principle of rest is upheld in both the Sabbath & Lord's Day.

- a day dedicated to God so that our relationship with God is intensified.
- a day of distinction in which life changes from the mundane to the holy.
- in our physical routine & spiritual relationship with God & others.

2. WHY WE MUST RESPECT REST

-to Israelites, a group of ex-slaves, the idea of rest was a tremendous blessing.

- for generations they had toiled under whips of bondage.
- Sabbath rest enabled them to acknowledge & savor the freedom granted by God.

-remember (v. 8) = zkr your ultimate purpose in life.

- set aside a day to worship & serve God.
- focus on God the Creator & Redeemer.
- God's principle of rest is essential for us to recharge, reflect & refocus our lives.
 - Abraham Joshua Heschel

-the Lord's Day is the day when in worship we realize the presence of God in order to go out and to walk in it through all the days of the week.

- **illust.** Havdalah
- **illust.** Seeing Queen Elizabeth Power Plant power stacks S. Sask. River.

-Day & Year of Sabbath realigned society.

- cycle of rest to work each day & each week.

- cycle of seven festivals of rest annually and one year of rest every seven years.
 - promise of bumper crop (Leviticus 25.20 - 22).

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3. HOW WE SHOULD RESPECT REST

-illust. Rashi.

- respect for labour:
 - he who never works is not fit for worship but he who never pauses to worship is rendered incapable of work.

-six days shall you work.

- theology of work = each profession has the potential for being a sacred job.
- values are tested and demonstrated in the workplace.
- opportunity to express divine productivity.

-respect the labours & rest of others (v. 10).

- children, servants and *draft animals*.
- express appreciation and *sensitivity*.
 - illust. Joseph Siyunda & Sundays.

-touching base with family members.

- society no longer has family businesses, so it strengthens our ties to spend time together free from the distractions of work.
- intergenerational dynamics.

Conclusion:

1. Know what God wants.

- God's principle of rest is essential for us to recharge, reflect & refocus our lives.
 - the command asks - avoid thinking of the Sabbath as time off.
 - view it as sacred time.
 - illust. Bill C-18

-the reason for this command – the Sabbath is a reminder that we are dispensable to work and the world but not to our families, community, and God.

2. Know how to do what God wants.

-illust. A day of rest from work.

- go away from our work and have some relaxation – *when you come back to your work your judgment will be surer.*

-instead of “live and let live” – “love and help others live.”

- respect the labours and rest of others.
- illust. Businesses Draw The Line

3. Know that you will do it.

-Closing Hymn: #392 Nearer, Still Nearer (all verses).

Compost Heap

Our lives need to have rest on a regular basis – like the ingredients in a compost heap. Daily life hands us all kinds of good and bad things – yard scraps, dog droppings & kitchen scraps. In a compost box all of these scraps rest in a heap they are transformed into fine black dirt which in turn nurtures plants. Godly rest can turn the difficulties of daily life into a rich resource for spiritual fruitfulness (*750 Engaging Illustrations* Craig Brian Larson, p. 453).

Abraham Joshua Heschel

The Temple was a sanctuary in space while the Sabbath is a sanctuary in time. For six days we live life on the level of “how;” but on the seventh day we change the focus of our existence to “why.”

When the artist steps back from his painting to view it, it seems as if nothing is happening. Yet, it is in this routine pause that the artist is able to consider whether the painting is meeting his expectations. Our lives, if they are to be works of art, require review and evaluation. The rest demanded by the Sabbath is to rest from the demands of the world and to dedicate oneself to the demands of our spiritual being in order to arrive at the meaning of our lives (Rabbi Benjamin Blech *The Complete Idiot's Guide To Understanding Judaism*. New York: Alpha Books, 1999, p. 138).

Havdalah

The end of Sabbath is almost traumatic. Jews have to give up the sacred and return to the secular. That transformation is marked by a beautiful ritual known as the Havdalah (i.e. separation) ceremony. In addition to a benediction blessing God for the ability to make distinctions, the ceremony makes use of beautiful symbols. The custom is to pour off a little wine to symbolize the hope that in the days to follow, “our cup will run over” with the blessings of prosperity, health and joy (Rabbi Benjamin Blech *The Complete Idiot's Guide To Understanding Judaism*. New York: Alpha Books, 1999, p. 143, 144).

Leviticus 25.20 - 22

You may ask, "What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?" I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.

Rashi

This commandment of the Sabbath includes not only deed, but attitude, for when the Sabbath arrives, one should feel that all his work is finished, even though his desk or workbench is still piled high. Six days shall you work and accomplish all your work means that no matter what is still left to be done, one should feel as much at ease as if everything was finished (Rabbi Benjamin Blech *The Complete Idiot's Guide To Understanding Judaism*. New York: Alpha Books, 1999, p. 143).

Bill C-18

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is opposing the government's Bill C-18, *An Act to Amend the Canada Elections Acts*, also known as the *Increasing Voter Participation Act*. The bill would usher in Sunday voting by proposing that polls open on the day before Election Monday.

A day of rest from work

Not working for wages or competing for awards.

Making some time to relax and do nothing.

Playing and talking with children, spouse & family.

Taking leisurely strolls.

Enjoying wonderful meals and discussions with friends and neighbours.

Attending religious services and reading religious materials.

Rekindling intimacy with your spouse (reconnecting in mind, body, and spirit).

(*The Ten Commandments* Laura Schlessinger, p. 105).

Businesses Draw The Line

A generation ago, finding a business open on Sunday was like locating a needle in a haystack. Today, the opposite is true. However, a handful of major retailers in Saskatoon still choose to close their doors on Sunday.

The sign at J&H Builder's Warehouse puts it succinctly: *Always closed on Sundays. We spend our Sundays building family values.* Rick van Duyvendyk of Dutch Growers asked to borrow this slogan too: *Closed Sundays, Growing Family Values.* This slogan underwent yet another twist when Eugene Dupuis, president of Prairie Meats adjusted it to say: *Closed Sundays: Cooking Up Family Values.*

Brian McCoy, the president of a huge independent American retailer whose stores are always closed on Sundays said, "Not everyone you employ is going to be of the same faith as you, but every faith has a common denominator – the importance of family. In a perfect world, you wish everyone would use Sunday off to establish a relationship with God, but if ... not ... you hope they will use the day to grow their relationship with their spouse, children and extended family."

When a major competitor came to Saskatoon and opened on Sunday, and others in the industry followed suit, Neufeld, president of J&H Builder's Warehouse chose to continue to remain closed. He was told, "You'll be broke within a year." The truth is, our business has grown by leaps and bounds," Neufeld said. "We have outstanding men and women working with us, and outstanding men and women from the competition continually asking when we will have a job opening. They would rather be at home on Sunday than selling 2 X 4'."

Rick van Duyvendyk, of Dutch Growers, stated: "We maintain Sunday closing partly out of our own Christian beliefs, partly out of respect for our parents, who didn't even cook on Sunday – all that was done on Saturday – and partly to give us and our employees an opportunity to go to church and spend time with family."

Eugene Dupuis, president of Prairie Meats noted: "My mother used to say, 'If you set an example, you don't have to set the rules.' I believe it is important for me as president of the corporation to set a good example for my employees, as well as for my 13-year-old son. Jesus set the supreme example, and He always rested on the Sabbath" (Darlene Polachic *The Star Phoenix*. F8, August 4 / 07).