

1. LifeLines on 6/12 will be 1 John 4:17.

2. We'll meet during June, break during July & August, & resume September 11, after Labor Day.

LifeLines June 5, 2023

Today's Scripture: 3½ Verses

Exodus 20:8-10a

Remember the Sabbath day, & keep it holy. Six days you shall labor & do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work -

WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

CONTEXT

This is the fourth & longest commandment God gave in the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. In the first three, God told the people how to address & revere Him. Now, He gives them a gift – rest from labor.

“Sabbath” comes from the Hebrew word that means “to rest from labor,” & it’s related to a Hebrew verb meaning, “to cease.” In Creation, God demonstrated the balance of work & rest, & He wants His people to benefit from practicing the same balance. The Sabbath command was so the people under the Mosaic covenant would remember that they were once slaves in Egypt & were now to be free & finally free to worship their God.

The background for our LifeLine is in the OT, & the applications for NT living is relevant. Jesus Himself addressed God’s intent behind the command. In fact, this was the law about which Jesus was most frequently questioned by the Pharisees.

Some consider the fourth Commandment to be one of the most important because it relates to our relationship with & worship of God. When we understand the full meaning/purpose of the Sabbath, we see that it is one of the most practical & life-giving of the commandments. There are many passages throughout the Bible concerning the Sabbath.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS (Versions not listed are similar to the NRSV.)

AMP

Remember the Sabbath (seventh) day to keep it holy (set apart, dedicated to God).

CEV (Contemporary English Version)

Remember that the Sabbath Day belongs to Me.

GW

Remember the day of rest by observing it as a holy day. You have six days to do all your work.

KJV

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, & do all thy work:

MSG

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Work six days & do everything you need to do. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to God, your God. Don't do any work -

NCV

Remember to keep the Sabbath holy. Work & get everything done during six days each week.

NIV

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor & do all your work.

NLT (New Living Translation)

Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work.

SELAH Share memories of Sabbaths or Sundays when you were younger.

What are some of your thoughts, feelings, or questions re the Sabbath?

BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE

Remember... This commandment is introduced differently than the others. God is reminding them *do not forget*, because this commandment was first given in Exodus 16 in reference to gathering the manna God provided. The people were not to store up extra manna before the Sabbath. They were to trust God to provide enough on the previous day to satisfy their needs on the Sabbath. God always provides! In Genesis 22, God provided the ram for Abraham so he wouldn't have to sacrifice Isaac.

God provides time enough for us to complete our tasks if we will simply use our planning skills & humble ourselves to enlist help when needed. We are *not* to let Sunday become *just another day of the week* or use it as a *catch up day*.

Remembering anniversaries & other important days on your personal calendar & on the church calendar is a way to honor these days - to keep them always in the forefront of our minds.

the Sabbath day... This is a day to be set apart from the mundane, usual & ordinary. God set this day apart for us to worship & rest by: turning our thoughts & hearts to Him, meditating, reading, teaching/training children in the ways of God, & enjoying & growing closer to family & friends. In the OT, Sabbath was from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Because Christians normally worship on Sunday, today most of them consider Sunday to be their Sabbath. Many people who work in professions that require their presence on Sunday devote or set aside another day to observe as their Sabbath.

& keep it holy... Holy things are those that are sacred to God & dedicated to Him. He wants us to make & treat the Sabbath day different from the other days of the week. It is holy because on this day *God finished His work of creating the universe. He rested* because His creation was finished; & *He blessed & sanctified the day* because on it He rested. When we participate in Sabbath rest, we emulate God & the reverence He placed on the day.

Most of the commandments begin with *you shall*, or *you shall not*. The wording of this commandment is different. God told us to "keep it"! In Genesis, God already declared the seventh day *blessed & holy*. He reminds us to keep it that way. This became an example of sanctification for those who observe Sabbath.

Six days... Only 6 days are allowed for work. They are *work days* & the Sabbath should be treated differently, observed in a different manner than the 6 work days.

you shall labor & do all your work... This is generally taken to mean exertion & the daily work associated with one's occupation or business, errands, cleaning, & other tasks.

But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God... This day is a memorial to God's rest after all He accomplished in six days. The seventh day marks the cessation of work because that's the way God planned His work. He rested after completing His Creation. *Our work* becomes *our* creation, or contribution, to His world. He wants us to do as He did - rest, look back on the week & see that it was good. On the Sabbath, God wants us to rest from our normal routines & dedicate our thoughts & time to Him. He intended it as a perpetual covenant.

you shall not do any work... Not only are we to cease from work, the verse ends by saying your son, daughter, male & female slaves, the livestock & even the resident aliens in town *shall not* do any work. This is a day to focus on & enjoy the Godhead, family, visiting friends, providing a service or good deed, journaling, enjoying God's Creation, writing a friend, having a family or friend game night.

Many people have a tendency to work straight through the week without taking time to pause or be refreshed. God didn't give this commandment as punishment. He gave it for the refreshment our body, soul & spirit, to strengthen our relationship with Him.

Have you ever felt burned out? Have you ever been accused of burning the candle at both ends? Have you ever felt drained, as if there weren't enough of you to go around? Have you ever felt you didn't have enough energy to give the best of yourself to your family? Did you ever feel you were a stranger to your children because there wasn't enough time for you to get to know who they really were or what their dreams & aspirations were? Have you ever been so consumed with everything on your own plate that there was nothing left of you to help or give to anyone else?

The intent is to *refrain from work* – not lie around & do nothing! We are not to be preoccupied with the normal activity of work. The Israelites wanted their freedom from the Egyptians, because *slaves had no time of their own!* They had no time to worship & serve their God.

SELAH

RELATED VERSES (Add other related verses as you think of them.)

Genesis 2:2-3, And on the seventh day God finished the work that He had done, & He rested on the seventh day from all the work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day & hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that He had done in creation.

Genesis 16:23, Moses said to them, "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord; bake what you want to bake & boil what you want to boil, & all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning.'"

Exodus 31:13, You yourself are to speak to the Israelites: You shall keep My Sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me & you throughout your generations, given in order that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you.

Exodus 31:14, "You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you; everyone who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it shall be cut off from among the people."

Exodus 31:17, "It is a sign forever between Me & the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven & earth, & on the seventh day He rested, & was refreshed."

Deuteronomy 6:6-7, “Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children & talk about them when you are at home & when you are away, when you lie down & when you rise.”

Psalm 33:11, The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations.

Psalm 92:1 (Note: this psalm is entitled “A Song for the Sabbath Day.” You may want to read all 15 verses for *extra credit!*), It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;

Isaiah 30:15, For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning & rest you shall be saved; in quietness & trust shall be your strength.

Isaiah 58:13-14a, If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on My holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight & the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord, & I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth;

Ezekiel 20:12, Moreover, I gave them My Sabbaths, as a sign between Me & them, so that they might know that I the Lord sanctify them.

Matthew 11:28-29, “Come to Me, all you that are weary & are carrying heavy burdens, & I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, & learn from Me; for I am gentle & humble in heart, & you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 12:8, “For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

Mark 2:27, Then He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for humankind, & not humankind for the Sabbath;”

Romans 14:5-6a, Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord.

Colossians 2:16-17, Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food & drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Hebrews 13:8, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday & today & forever.

James 1:17, Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

1 Peter 1:15-16, Instead, as He who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

AN ASIDE BEFORE THE SUMMARY

Some scholars disagree with my obvious bias of observing the Sabbath today. Let me give some of them equal time: “The Sabbath was given to Israel, not the church. The Sabbath is still Saturday, not Sunday, & has never been changed. The Sabbath is part of the OT law, & Christians are free from the bondage of the law.” I agree we are free from the bondage of the law. Originally, Pharisees & others

placed so many rules & restrictions on Sabbath observance that it *became a bondage*. The purpose of the Sabbath & its rest, in my mind, continues to be a gift from God.

Others continue: “Sabbath-keeping is not required of the Christian – be it Saturday or Sunday. The first day of the week, Sunday, the Lord’s Day, celebrates the new creation, with Christ as our resurrected Savior. The apostle Paul said each individual Christian should decide whether to observe a Sabbath rest. We are to worship God every day, not just on Saturday or Sunday.” Now, I *do* agree with that!

As Paul suggested, I leave it to you to decide for yourself, based on the scripture & thoughts presented in our LifeLines study. How would you like to remember the Sabbath day & keep it holy; labor six days & complete all your work; honor the Sabbath as holy to the Lord our God, & rest in His Presence?

SUMMARY

There is only one day of the week that God *blessed & hallowed* – the Sabbath. To hallow is to honor, make holy & consecrate as sacred. We use this word, *hallowed*, in the prayer Jesus taught His disciples as a pattern for their prayers. The Sabbath is a gift. It’s an invitation to practice for an eternity in God’s Presence, to practice resting in God’s Presence & placing all our trust in Him for our provision.

Jesus spent a good deal of time trying to clarify the intent of the Sabbath for the Pharisees. He knew people everywhere are in need of rest, to stop hard work & be present with God. *Jesus is God’s rest!*

God didn’t cease from His work to rest because He was tired! He stopped because His work was finished. Where in the NT do you hear, “It is finished!”?

CONCLUSION

We are not expected to live by Israel’s laws, but the wisdom of this law remains. The law of the Sabbath is rich with significance for us today. God’s intention for the Sabbath Commandment was unity with Him, Creation & each other. Jesus said the Sabbath pointed to Him. In Him there is restoration of the rhythm we need for our lives. When we honor & observe the Sabbath, we share a sort of covenant with God. After all, He created us in His image – He remembers how we were made. He knows we need rest.

Studies show that rest increases our productivity, concentration, alertness, disposition & energy. Do you need a break from the fractured rhythm of your life? Take a break from the hustle & hardship. When our energies are depleted, we often turn in-ward, even complain due to fatigue, being out of patience with ourselves & those around us. When that happens, we are far from focusing on our God. We’re focusing on things that are seen rather than unseen, on other goals, & we’re placing other things above God.

There are great benefits to setting aside time to honor & get to know our Creator, enjoy His Presence & extend that rest to the world around us. When we practice a purposeful pause, strive to imitate God’s character & conduct, we make room for God to take up residence in our individual lives. When we do this, we take part in a new creation story, setting the stage for God to make His dwelling in us & on Earth! Observing the Sabbath is a wonderful opportunity for God’s people to demonstrate their faith & for God to demonstrate *His* faithfulness to us.

Many Americans are considered workaholics, worn out by the demands of the day. Some even take great pride (a tool of the devil) in how busy they are; how necessary they are to their company, firm, employer. When we begin thinking this way, it might be good for us to recall all the people *who have died* & whose companies continued to succeed without them! In addition, Satan has enjoyed hindering Christian’s worship in the 20th century when the repealing of the Blue Laws (1960’s – 1980’s) added to his delight.

On June 2, many of you read these statements in Sarah Young’s Jesus Calling: “Relax in My healing, holy Presence. *Be still* while I transform your heart and mind. *Let go* of cares and worries, so

that you can receive My peace. *Cease striving and know that I am God...* It is through knowing Me intimately that you become like Me. This requires spending time alone with Me. *Let go, relax, be still, and know that I am God.*” Well said!

The Sabbath is intended to be a blessing, a gift. I ask you to consider giving the Sabbath Day to God. Set it apart for Him & for the two of you together. It will be wonderful practice because one day, when our work is complete, we will enter into joyful eternal rest *with Him*. Until then, let us...

*“Take time to be holy, **the world** rushes on.”*

Let It!

Let this verse be a *LifeLine* for you!

SCRIPTURE IS OUR –

LifeLine!