

The Sabbath Day

Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-16
SS Lesson for 12/06/2015

Devotional Scripture: Mark 2:23-28

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1. The sabbath is for rest and worship.
2. Sabbath rest and worship are both to honor God and to benefit man.

Must Christians keep the sabbath?

1. The principle of sabbath stemming from both creation and the law is valid for today.
2. The day of sabbath rest and worship for the Christian should be Sunday, the Lord's Day.

How should we keep the sabbath?

1. Don't observe it legalistically.
2. Observe it joyfully before God.

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson teaches the how and why **The Sabbath Day** was established. The **study's aim** is to observe that an order of life prescribed by God has multiple rewards, benefits and cautions. The **study's application** is to make it our habit to honor God's Word and ways, including the Sabbath.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Exodus 20:8

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The fourth commandment

A day of solemn worship of **God** should be kept weekly. Keeping **the Sabbath Day... holy** means to separate it, **the seventh day**, from the other six as a special day **to the LORD**. People are to work in **six days** and worship on the seventh. This contrasted with the Israelites' slavery in Egypt when, presumably, they had no break in their daily routine. The basis for this commandment is God's creating the universe **in six days** and resting **on the seventh** (Gen. 2:2-3; Ex. 16:23). This was not to be a day of slothful inactivity but of spiritual service through religious observances. For the violation of this command God imposed on Israel the death penalty (Ex. 31:15; Num. 15:32-36). In the present Church Age the day of worship has been changed from Saturday to Sunday because of Jesus' resurrection on the first day of the week (cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

The remembrance of the Sabbath

In the midst of His instructions on the work to be performed, God reminded **Moses** that obedience is also a religious duty. **The Sabbath** was the **sign** (vv. 13, 17) of the covenant that made Israel a theocracy. It was a test of the nation's commitment to God; failure to keep it a **holy** day would result in **death** (i.e., separation from the community which would probably result in death). This command, as stated in the Decalogue (20:8), was based on God's resting after His work of Creation in six days (31:17). Because the nation was in a **covenant** relationship with Him, the people were to do as He had done. **The Sabbath** marked Israel out as God's people. Observing the Sabbath showed that the Israelites were set apart (i.e., holy) to God. Now God's instructions **to Moses** given **on Mount Sinai** (24:12) concerning the tabernacle and its priestly ministry were complete. The Decalogue (the Ten Commandments; also called **the Testimony** because they testify of God's standards), were somehow inscribed by God on **two... tablets of stone**. God's **finger** (cf. 8:19; Deut. 9:10; Ps. 8:3; Luke 11:20) may suggest that this was God's doing. According to Moses' account in Deuteronomy 9:12-16 the Lord informed him that the people had become "corrupt" and "stiff-necked," by casting an idol in the shape of a calf. Within 40 days they broke their commitment to keep what **God** had already commanded (Ex. 20:4).

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The significance of the word time-out varies by setting. In sporting events, players often welcome a time-out for rest or to plan a critical play. On the other hand, no child wants to hear time-out from a parent, because it means that the child must take some quiet time alone after having disobeyed or becoming too rowdy. Today's Scripture highlights God's command to his people Israel to "remember the Sabbath." The Sabbath (which means "ceasing") was God's weekly time-out for his children of the Old Testament era. It was not for discipline of bad behavior, but to encourage them to remember their Creator and to imitate him in the important area of rest.

Since the theme of this quarter's lessons is tradition, some observations about that concept are in order. Often the word tradition carries negative connotations. For example, traditionalist may refer to someone who is rigidly tied to certain beliefs or practices and is unwilling to change them. Traditions, however, can assist nations, cities, churches, and families in remembering their roots and respecting their heritage. Yes, traditions can become stale and routine; but properly handled, traditions can achieve worthwhile purposes. Such was God's intent in instituting Sabbath observances as an ongoing tradition for ancient Israel. The first part of today's text is taken from the Ten Commandments, which God gave to his people at Mount Sinai after their exodus from Egypt (Exodus 19:1, 2). The second part of our text comes from Exodus 31 at the conclusion of the instructions regarding the construction of the tabernacle (which begin in chapter 25).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

The Sabbath's Institution (Exodus 20:8-11)

8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.

It is holy (8)

Holy because God blessed it (Gen 2:3)

3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Holy because it is sacred (Lev 23:3)

3 "There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord.

Holy because it is honorable (Isa 58:13)

13 "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,

Holy because God commanded it (Jer 17:22)

22 Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers.

Holy because God is holy (1 Peter 1:14-16)

14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Holy through God's Law (Neh 9:14)

14 You made known to them your holy Sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses.

It is a day of rest (9-11)

A rest that God commanded (Exodus 16:23)

23 He said to them, "This is what the Lord commanded: "Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning."

A rest from work (Exodus 23:12)

12 "Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be refreshed.

An eternal rest that is peaceful and secure (Isa 32:18)

18 My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.

An eternal rest that is a blessing (Rev 14:13)

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

An eternal rest from burdens (Matt 11:28-30)

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

An eternal rest in Jesus' presence (Exodus 33:14)

14 The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

The Sabbath's Importance (Exodus 31:12-16)

12 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

14 You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.

15 Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.

It is a sacred sign (12-13)

A sign between God and man (Ezek 20:12)

12 Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy.

A sign to make God known as our Lord (Ezek 20:20)

20 Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God."

A sign as a memorial (Josh 4:6)

6 to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you,

A sign that represents that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27-28)

27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

A sign of rest from slavery (Deut 5:15)

15 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.

A sign of denial (Lev 23:32)

32 It is a sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath."

A sign of rest even for land (Lev 25:4)

4 But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards.

It has a punishment if disobeyed (14-15)

Punishment of death (Exodus 35:2)

2 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it must be put to death.

Punishment of calamities (Neh 13:16-18)

16 Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. 17 I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this wicked thing you are doing — desecrating the Sabbath day? 18 Didn't your forefathers do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity upon us and upon this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath."

Punishment of God's wrath (Ezek 20:21)

21 "But the children rebelled against me: They did not follow my decrees, they were not careful to keep my laws — although the man who obeys them will live by them — and they desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in the desert.

It has a covenant obligation (16)

A covenant obligation through God's promise (Acts 2:39)

39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call."

A covenant obligation through belonging to God (Gal 3:27-29)

27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

A covenant obligation through being a part of Jesus' flock (John 10:14-16)

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

A covenant obligation through trust in God (Rom 10:10-13)

10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

A covenant obligation through God's mercy (1 Peter 2:10)

10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Steven Cole

God has called us to a weekly day of rest and worship.

I want to answer three questions:

1. What is the sabbath for?
2. Must Christians keep the sabbath? And, if so,
3. How should we keep the sabbath?

What is the sabbath for?

1. The sabbath is for rest and worship.

The Hebrew word “rested” is the root word for “sabbath.” It means to cease from busyness. Exodus 31:17 says that God “ceased from labor, and was refreshed.” The fact that God blessed and sanctified (= “set apart”) this day at the completion of creation implies that we are to set apart one day in seven to be different from our normal routine. On that day we who are made in His likeness are to cease from the work of the other days and be refreshed in body and soul as we spend time worshiping our Creator.

There is a big difference between the rest God intends for us and the so-called “rest” of pursuing leisure and recreation. We probably have more leisure time and recreational equipment than any other culture in history, and yet we’re burning out like light bulbs. Lots of people are “stressed out.” I can’t help but wonder if a major part of our problem is that we’re neglecting God’s ordained cycle of a weekly day for rest and worship, when we cease doing “our thing,” and devote the day to taking delight in the Lord (Isa. 58:13-14). Recreation may refresh the body, but we need worship to refresh the soul. Recreation is often self-centered, but worship focuses us on the Lord. As Calvin puts it, “God did not command men simply to keep holiday every seventh day, as if he delighted in their indolence; but rather that they, being released from all other business, might the more readily apply their minds to the Creator of the world” (*Calvin’s Commentaries* [Associated Publishers & Authors], 1:15).

That God sanctified and blessed the seventh day means that it is a special day, set apart from the other six days. Since He sanctified and blessed this day, it belongs to Him, not to us. It should not be a day for doing what we normally do, but rather a day to take the time out of our busy lives to spend with the Lord and His people. Often we're so busy during the week that time with the Lord gets squeezed out or hurried. We don't take time to read God's Word, to pray, or to reflect on whether our lives are pleasing to Him. Taking time to spend with someone is a way of saying, "I love you, you're important to me." Taking one day each week to be with the Lord says, "Lord, I love you and want to get to know You better because You're first in my life." On this set apart day, we should rest from our normal work and take the time to be with the Lord and to worship with His people.

What is God's intent for such rest and worship?

2. Sabbath rest and worship are both to honor God and to benefit man.

The first day of existence for Adam was a day of rest. Later God assigned him tasks to do, but the first order of business for this newly created man was a day of rest. What do you suppose Adam did that day? It's likely that God told Adam about the world He had just created. Thus Adam, in communion with God, living in a perfect environment, reflected on the greatness and majesty and goodness of God. He enjoyed fellowship with God and thought about the wonder of himself, a creature, being able to commune with God, the Creator. The first sabbath was spent in rest and worship.

Worship is not for our benefit, but to honor God as the Almighty Creator and Redeemer, who alone is worthy of praise and glory. But the by-product of worship is that we are blessed by blessing God. So when we set aside one day in seven to stop doing our normal work and to worship God, we are benefited. As Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

You say, "That's all well and good so far as it pertained to Adam and later to Israel. But we're not under the law, are we?" That leads to the second question:

Must Christians keep the sabbath?

Here the controversy rages! There are three main views. Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh Day Adventists say that Christians must strictly observe Saturday as sabbath as ordained by God at creation and in the Mosaic law. A second view, following the Westminster Confession, transfers sabbath observance to Sunday, making it a Christian sabbath. The third view is that the sabbath was a part of the law of Israel; since we are not under the law, it is not applicable to the church at all. This is probably the view of most evangelicals in our day.

I'm somewhere between the second and third view. I do not believe that Sunday should be a strictly observed Christian sabbath; but neither am I comfortable casting off the sabbath principles altogether. Sunday is the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10); this means it belongs to Him. There are principles in the sabbath, both as established at creation and under the Mosaic law, which apply to the Christian observance (or celebration) of the Lord's Day. While we are not under the law, there is much in the law which applies beneficially to us. The prevailing view today, which sees Sunday as a day to go to church and then do whatever you please, is robbing God's people of the blessing He intended at creation by setting apart one day in seven to cease from our work and to focus on our Creator and Redeemer.

1. The principle of sabbath stemming from both creation and the law is valid for today.

There is debate about whether the sabbath was instituted at creation, with application to all people, or in the Ten Commandments as applying only to Israel. Those who say it was only for Israel argue that Genesis 2 and Exodus 16 (both of which occur before the giving of the Ten Commandments) were anticipatory, not prescriptive. Without going into all the arguments pro and con, it seems to me that a normal reading of Genesis 2:1-3 would lead us to say that God's ordering of the creation and resting on the seventh day had

some instructive purpose as it applied to Adam and all his descendants. There is a rhythm of work and rest built into creation, and it applies to all who are created in God's image, whether they know it or observe it or not.

Another debate concerns whether the sabbath as the fourth commandment is a part of the moral or ceremonial law. If it is a part of the ceremonial law, then obviously we need not regard it, since no Christian claims that we must observe the Jewish laws of diet, purification, sacrifice, etc. But if it is part of the moral law, then it would be binding on us, since the moral law stems from the holiness of God and does not change.

It would be tough to argue that there is no moral aspect to the sabbath commandment, since the rest of the Ten Commandments are clearly moral. The moral aspect is the fact that it provides for the regular worship of God, which is binding upon all human beings. But there are also ceremonial aspects to the sabbath which applied to Israel alone: The people could not do any work at all. They could not even kindle a fire (Exod. 35:2-3). A man caught gathering sticks on the sabbath was stoned to death (Num. 15:32-36). And yet Jesus defended His disciples for plucking grain on the sabbath, which He never would have done if they had broken the moral law of God (Matt. 12:1-8).

As Christians, we are not under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14; Col. 2:16-17). The meaning of that is a sticky theological issue, but I see it as entailing two things. In the first place, we are not under the Jewish ceremonial law nor under the laws which applied to Israel as a theocratic nation. We don't have to wash in order to be ceremonially clean. We don't stone adulterers, homosexuals, and rebellious children. Those things applied only to Israel as the theocratic people of God. Second, not to be under the law means that we are not under the principle of law as a means of relating to God. The law was given in part to show sinful man that he could not live up to the holiness of God in his own effort. Under grace, God gives us the Holy Spirit so that the requirement of the law is fulfilled in us who walk according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-4; 10:4).

When it comes to the sabbath, then, we are not under the rigorous Jewish regulations for that day. But there is a moral aspect to the sabbath, that of the proper worship of God and stewardship of our lives, which requires that we set aside a day each week for rest from our normal work so that we can worship God. It stems both from creation and from the moral law of God as revealed in the Ten Commandments. As we walk in the Spirit and grow in the love of God, He will work in us the desire to honor Him by setting aside a day for Him each week, not as a duty of law, but as a delight of love.

But, which day: Saturday? Sunday? Friday evening?

2. The day of sabbath rest and worship for the Christian should be Sunday, the Lord's Day.

I disagree with those who worship on Saturday. But I also disagree with progressive evangelical churches which have a congregation that meets only on Friday evening (or some other day), but not on Sunday. I think there are solid reasons why we should set aside Sunday as the Lord's Day.

The main reason it's important to observe Sunday as the Lord's Day is that our Lord arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). That fact alone is enough reason to gather in celebration on Sunday. At least six of our Lord's eight resurrection appearances recorded in the gospels took place on Sunday.

It was on Sunday that the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost. The early church gathered on Sunday to break bread, listen to the teaching of the Scriptures, and give offerings (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). It was on "the Lord's Day" that John received that great revelation of Christ in His present glory (Rev. 1:10). In addition, from early in the second century on there are many testimonies that the Christians gathered on Sunday for worship (see *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* [Zondervan], 3:965-971). By worshiping on the Lord's Day we affirm His resurrection along with the saints down through history. So it is important to set aside Sunday as the Lord's Day, a day when the principle (not the letter) of the sabbath can be observed.

Thus we have seen that the sabbath is for rest and worship, a day designed to honor God but also for our blessing. Also, we have seen that there is a sabbath principle stemming both from creation and the law which is valid for today, and that Christians should set aside Sunday as the Lord's Day for observing that sabbath principle. One question remains:

How should we keep the sabbath?

As I said, I don't agree with calling the Lord's Day a Christian sabbath, so perhaps we should ask, How should we observe the Lord's Day? Should we require our kids not to play? Are we allowed to go to the store or mall? Should we go to restaurants, thus making others work? What about those who have jobs that require them to work on Sundays? I can't deal with every question you may have, but let me state two broad principles for observing the Lord's Day.

1. Don't observe it legalistically.

Martin Luther, with his characteristic bluster, said, "If anywhere the day is made holy for the mere day's sake-if anywhere anyone sets up its observance on a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to ride on it, to dance on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall remove this encroachment on Christian liberty" (cited in ZPEB 3:969).

God looks on our hearts, not on outward observance of man-made rules. The history of the Jews shows how prone we all are to set up rules that are not from God and take pride in keeping them, even though our hearts are far from God. We all tend to judge others by our own standards, based on outward matters. All such judging is sin because it stems from pride. The idea of the Lord's Day is not to produce a list of things you can and cannot do. Legalism doesn't produce godliness (Col. 2:16-23).

2. Observe it joyfully before God.

View the Lord's Day as a gift from God, not as a duty to be fulfilled. God has established many principles for our benefit, principles of health, nutrition, mental outlook, emotional well-being, relationships, etc. The principle of one day each week set aside from our hectic lives to rest and worship God is for our benefit. The God who made us built the principle into creation, and we violate it, just as we do the law of gravity, to our own peril. God blessed the seventh day and set it apart, and there is blessing for us if we honor Him one day each week.

Gather with God's people on the Lord's Day. It ought to be a day of celebrating the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ with others He has redeemed. Part of your time on Sunday ought to be spent reflecting on who God is as our Creator and Savior. Think about His sacrificial death for you. Rejoice in the finished work of Christ, that you can rest in all that He is and cease from your own efforts to merit God's favor through good works (Heb. 4:1-11). Reflect on your own relationship to Him. Think back over the week that has just gone by. Did it reflect the direction it should for a child of God? Think about the week to come. Does your schedule reflect the proper priorities? Make sure that any known sin is confessed and put away. Sin robs us of God's rest. Use the Lord's Day to serve Him and do good deeds.

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-5-god-s-day-rest-genesis-21-3>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Rest for the Week

At first blush, the idea of ceasing work may seem appropriate for the ancient Israelites, but not for us today, since life in our "24/7" culture is so much more complex. Just think how things on our to-do lists remain undone for weeks and weeks! The state of the economy pressures many people to work more than one job. The situation seems especially difficult for single-parent families. A weekly day of rest seems like an impossibility

for many. So how should Christians view the fourth commandment? How does it apply, if at all, to us? Does God expect modern Christians to rest the way he expected the people of ancient Israel to rest on their Sabbath? While the New Testament provides a precedent for setting aside the first day of the week as the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10), it does not specifically require us to abstain from work as the Israelites were required under the old covenant. Nowhere in Acts or the Epistles do we find any discussion of this particular issue. Perhaps the closest thing to it is Paul's instruction to the Christians in Rome concerning certain days being regarded as sacred or special, but he clearly sees this as a matter of personal conviction (Romans 14:5-8). Ideally, not having to work on Sunday at one's regular job is a blessing. Some individuals, like David Green, the founder and CEO of the Hobby Lobby chain, have committed themselves to keeping their businesses closed on Sunday to give employees time for worship and family. But many Christians who would greatly appreciate not having to work on Sunday do not have this option. Some occupations by nature require work on Sunday (example: firefighters). Even so, it is important that the spiritual purpose behind observance of the Lord's Day be given its due in some way. Observing the Sabbath reminded the Israelites of God's role as Creator not only of the world (Exodus 20:11) but also of their nation when he delivered them from Egyptian bondage (Deuteronomy 5:15). Christians give special attention on the Lord's Day to remember their deliverance from the spiritual bondage of sin through Jesus' death and resurrection. Sabbath observance in Old Testament times focused on the old creation; Lord's Day observance in New Testament times focuses on the new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). If one's work schedule does not allow attendance at worship on Sunday morning, then the remembrance should occur, if possible, at some other time on Sunday. This could be a Sunday evening worship service (if available) or, in a more private setting, worship with a smaller group of believers who also have to work on Sunday. We live in a time when it is all too easy to let Sunday be treated as "just another day" on the calendar. Is reserving the Lord's Day for worship a priority for you? May we not let either business or "busy-ness" distract us from this priority!

Rest for the Weak

While the previous section addressed the necessity of spiritual renewal, the benefit of physical rest is certainly worth considering as well. Following a series of very busy and exhausting events, Jesus told his disciples on one occasion, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (Mark 6:31). Jesus recognized the need for some downtime for his disciples. His counsel should be heeded in our world of frantic schedules and over-commitments. As Vance Havner (1901-1986) observed, "If you don't come apart, you will come apart!" What he meant was that if one doesn't set aside time for personal rest and rejuvenation, he or she eventually will pay the price for not doing so. Making time for adequate rest is a matter of stewardship; it is taking proper care of our bodies. Lack of rest reflects poor stewardship, and it detracts from our ability to serve God faithfully and to the best of our ability.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. Honoring the Sabbath was an opportunity to shut out the secular and deepen one's relationship with God (Exod. 20:8)
2. God showed us how to set aside a day for rest and worship of Him (Exod. 20:9-11; cf. Matt. 12:1-14)
3. Just as God spoke to Moses audibly, He speaks to us today through the written Word (Exod. 31:12)
4. Obedience to and knowledge of God are essential to a believer's relationship with Him (vs. 13)
5. Disrespecting God's will leads to isolation from God's people (vss. 14-15)
6. Setting aside one day a week to worship God is a way a person can show his relationship with God (vs. 16)