

# Sabbath Observance

Exodus 31:12-18

SS Lesson for 09/17/2017

**Devotional Scripture:** Matt 12:1-14; Col 2:6-17

## OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON

*Key Verse: Exodus 31:13*

*Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

*Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary*

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

SABBATH COMMANDED (EXODUS 31:12-13)

*Commaned by God (12)*

Commaned to become the duty of man (Eccl 12:13)

Commaned to not add or subtract from it (Deut 4:2)

Commaned as the way to life (Prov 6:23)

Commaned to be guarded so that we will live (Prov 7:2)

Commaned to be obeyed through love (John 14:21)

Commaned to be doers of it not just hearers (James 1:22)

*Commaned to show God is our Lord (13)*

Lord through being set apart as Lord (1 Peter 3:14-15)

Lord through being revealed by God (Matt 16:15-17)

Lord through the truth from the Holy Spirit (John 15:26)

Lord through acknowledging Jesus is God (1 John 4:2)

Lord through the glory of God (Phil 2:10-11)

*Commaned to sanctify us (13)*

Sanctification through God's truth (John 17:17)

Sanctification through Jesus (John 17:19)

Sanctification by the God of peace (1 Thess 5:23)

Sanctification by God who is Lord (Lev 20:8)

SABBATH REGULATIONS (EXODUS 31:14-16)

*It is to be holy (14)*

Holy because Christians are called to be holy (1 Cor 1:2)

Holy because God chose Christians to be holy and blameless (Eph 1:4)

Holy because of God's mercy (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Holy out of reverence for God (2 Cor 7:1)

Holy through living a holy life (1 Thess 4:7)

Holy through God's grace (Titus 2:11-12)

*It is for rest (15)*

A rest that is an inheritance of which God will never forsake (Ps 94:13-14)

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

A rest that provides relief from troubles (2 Thess 1:7)

A rest that is a blessing for those who are dead and who die in the Lord (Rev 14:13)

A rest that comes through faith (Heb 4:2-3)

*It is to be perpetual (16)*

Perpetual because God does not violate His covenants (Ps 89:33-36)

Perpetual because God out of His great love blesses (Ps 106:43-45)

Perpetual because God continues to redeem His people of the covenant (Ps 111:9)

Perpetual because God upholds His people (Isa 42:6)

Perpetual through Jesus' blood covenant (Matt 26:28)

SABBATH SIGNIFICANCE (EXODUS 31:17-18)

*It is a sign (17)*

Sign of God's compassion by renewing them every day (Lam 3:22-23)

Sign of God's refreshing through the sign of the rainbow (Gen 9:13)

Sign of God's promise through His sign of stopping the sun for a day (Isa 38:7-8)

Sign of God's deliverance of the Jews by worshiping on His mountain (Ex 3:12)

*It is to refresh (17)*

Refreshment and rest is the reason for the Sabbath (Heb 4:9-10)

God refreshes the faint (Jer 31:25)

Refreshment awaits all Christians in heaven (Rev 14:13)

God is the ultimate refresher (Ps 103:5)

God refreshes like a well-watered spring (Isa 58:11)

*It is part of God's Commandments (18)*

God's commandments were spoken by God and carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21)

God's commandments are true and are the actual words of God (1 Thess 2:13)

God's commandments should be obeyed (John 14:15)

God's commandments shows Himself to us (John 14:21)

Obedience to God's commandments keeps us in God's love (John 15:10)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

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## Introduction

### Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson teaches us how to understand the regulations of the Sabbath commandment related to the **Sabbath Observance**. The **study's aim** is to recognize the meaning and purpose behind the Sabbath commandment. The **study's application** is to strengthen our commitment to Sunday as a day to worship God and honor Him in special ways.

*(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*

### Key Verse: Exodus 31:13

*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*

### Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

One of the great events in the history of Israel, and perhaps in the history of all mankind, is the giving of the Law. The Law was not given so that the Israelites by keeping it could attain righteousness (Rom. 3:20a; Gal. 3:11). A righteous standing (justification) before God has always been only by faith (trust) in God (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3, 22; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; 3:6, 21). The Law functioned to show the Israelites their sinfulness (Rom. 3:19-20b; 7:7) in contrast with God's standards of holiness and righteousness, and to condemn mankind. The Mosaic Law in Exodus has three parts: the Decalogue (Ex. 20:1-21), the Book of the Covenant with civil and religious ordinances (20:22-24:11), and ceremonial regulations (24:12-31:18).

**20:1-2.** The Ten Commandments (in 34:28 "Ten Commandments" is lit., "Ten Words"), the hub of all of Israel's religious and civil laws, has two parts. The first four commandments pertain to the relationship of the Israelites with God, and the other six deal with social relationships within the covenant community. Before giving these 10 stipulations, **God** in the preamble spoke of His unique relationship with His people (**I am the LORD your God**, 20:2a) and in the historical prologue He briefly summarized what He had done for them (**brought you out of Egypt... the land of slavery**, v. 2b; cf. 13:3, 14; Deut. 5:6; 6:12; 7:8; 8:14; 13:5, 10). Centuries before, God had led Abraham out of Ur (Gen. 15:7); now He led Abraham's descendants out of Egypt. The Ten Commandments are an excellent summary of 10 divine rules for human conduct. They might be called rules of (1) religion, (2) worship, (3) reverence, (4) time, (5) authority, (6) life, (7) purity, (8) property, (9) tongue, and (10) contentment.

*The fourth commandment (20:8-11)*

**20:8-11.** 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).

**31:12-18.** 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).

### **Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary**

Who is in charge of the world? Governments like to think that they are. But we all know how many people circumvent the governments of the world. Mobs that take to the streets, terrorists, and anarchists also like to think they are taking over. But they usually come to ruin. Pop icons and those with a great following believe they are the driving force of countries and cultures. But they quickly come and go. The Christian believer knows that only God has the right to exalt Himself as the Ruler of the world and as the Sovereign over all men. This is what we learn from God's sabbaths, given to His Old Testament people, Israel, in the Law of Moses, as an abiding ordinance for their lives. They were to do their work in six days and then give God the seventh day. There were also other holy days of rest and worship. The Sabbath Day is called a sign (Exod. 31:13; cf. vs. 17) between God and His people that they were in covenant together. Going back to God's work of Creation, the Sabbath observances of Israel reflected God's rest and satisfaction with all that He had made (Gen. 2:1-3). The point is that those in a covenant with God are to recognize His authority and leadership. He has a right to issue His commands, and the people have a duty to obey them. The sign of God's Sabbath has a connection to sanctification. In this it is somewhat like the sign of circumcision. Notice the purpose statement in God's command to His people to follow the Sabbath: "that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." The word "sanctify" is the common term for making something holy, separating it for God's use. The point of God's covenantal dealings is to create a people for Himself who learn and display His holy ways. They belong to Him and are to be devoted to His purposes. This is one vital reason why entering into a relationship with God is so consequential. By doing so, we acknowledge God as the center of authority for our lives. We commit ourselves to obeying Him. We recognize His prerogative to issue commands and prohibitions that apply to our lives. We are acknowledging that we live to obey Him. We seek to give glory to His power and sovereign authority. This certainly goes far beyond any simple religious ritual. It impacts how we live every day. God's covenant with us calls us to daily service and obedience, a daily awareness of Him. The signs of the covenant are reminders of God's leadership in our lives. How passionate are we about obeying God and about learning His will and seeking to put it into practice? Are we gladly studying His Word and applying it to our lives? Are we really His covenant people? It is tempting to try to use God like our own personal heavenly caretaker. We call on Him when we want something. But the sign of the Sabbath shows us that God has covenanted with us for higher purposes; we are to be His holy people in the world.

## **Lesson Introduction and Background**

### **From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

The term burnout was popularized in the 1970s by American psychologist Herbert Freudenberger. In working with those who devoted themselves to serving others in free clinics, Freudenberger found that many clinic workers became exhausted, listless, and unable to cope over time. Doctors, nurses, and social workers exhibited burnout when their idealism gave way to cynicism as they felt increasingly ineffective and helpless. Today the word burnout is applied to those who are stressed-out in many other professions as well. The negative effects of burnout at work spill over into home and social life. When that happens, relationships do not get the full focus they deserve, prioritizing becomes difficult, and busyness replaces true accomplishment. Over the long run, burnout can make people vulnerable to illness. Our bodies have limitations. Overwork paired with insufficient rest is a poisonous recipe for burnout. Today we will look at God's antidote.

The subject of our lesson is early instruction to the Israelites regarding the Sabbath. But this instruction was not the first on this subject. The first mention of the word Sabbath as a noun was when God provided manna as the Israelites sojourned toward Mount Sinai. Two days' worth was to be gathered on the sixth day of the week so the people could rest on the seventh—the Sabbath (Exodus 16:21-30). On any other day, gathering more than one day's worth resulted in spoilage (16:20). But manna gathered on the sixth day and saved for the Sabbath did not spoil (16:24). In the third month after leaving Egypt, the Israelites assembled in front of Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1). There God spoke to them and gave them the Ten Commandments (20:1-17). The requirement to keep the Sabbath was the fourth of those and was the longest (20:8-11). Further instructions regarding the Sabbath followed. These required land to be left fallow one year in seven; a weekly Sabbath rest for every person and beast of burden was mandatory (23:10-12). Moses confirmed the covenant with the people in Exodus 24; then God called him again to the top of the mountain to receive more instructions (24:12). A break of sorts occurs with Exodus 24:18 when Moses "stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights." The section that follows (Exodus 25-31) records God's commands about the construction of the tabernacle and how to furnish it. Today's text comes at the conclusion of this section.

## **Major Theme Analysis**

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

### **Sabbath Commanded (Exodus 31:12-13)**

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.'

#### **Commanded by God (12)**

*Commanded to become the duty of man (Eccl 12:13)*

13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man.

*Commanded to not add or subtract from it (Deut 4:2)*

2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.

*Commanded as the way to life (Prov 6:23)*

23 For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life,

*Commanded to be guarded so that we will live (Prov 7:2)*

2 Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.

*Commanded to be obeyed through love (John 14:21)*

21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

*Commanded to be doers of it not just hearers (James 1:22)*

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

### **Commanded to show God is our Lord (13)**

*Lord through being set apart as Lord (1 Peter 3:14-15)*

14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." 15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

*Lord through being revealed by God (Matt 16:15-17)*

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

*Lord through the truth from the Holy Spirit (John 15:26)*

26 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

*Lord through acknowledging Jesus is God (1 John 4:2)*

2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

*Lord through the glory of God (Phil 2:10-11)*

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### **Commanded to sanctify us (13)**

*Sanctification through God's truth (John 17:17)*

17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

*Sanctification through Jesus (John 17:19)*

19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

*Sanctification by the God of peace (1 Thess 5:23)*

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Sanctification by God who is Lord (Lev 20:8)*

8 Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy.

## **Sabbath Regulations (Exodus 31:14-16)**

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 to be holy (14)**

*Holy because Christians are called to be holy (1 Cor 1:2)*

2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ — their Lord and ours:

*Holy because God chose Christians to be holy and blameless (Eph 1:4)*

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love

*Holy because of God's mercy (1 Peter 2:9-10)*

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 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.

*Holy out of reverence for God (2 Cor 7:1)*

7 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

*Holy through living a holy life (1 Thess 4:7)*

7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

*Holy through God's grace (Titus 2:11-12)*

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

### **It is for rest (15)**

*A rest that is an inheritance of which God will never forsake (Ps 94:13-14)*

13 you grant him relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked. 14 For the Lord will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance.

*A 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.

*A rest that provides relief from troubles (2 Thess 1:7)*

7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.

*A rest that is a blessing for those who are dead and who die in the Lord (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."

*A rest that comes through faith (Heb 4:2-3)*

2 For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. 3 Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest.'" And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.

### **It is to be perpetual (16)**

*Perpetual because God does not violate His covenants (Ps 89:33-36)*

33 but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. 34 I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. 35 Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness — and I will not lie to David — 36 that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun;

*Perpetual because God out of His great love blesses (Ps 106:43-45)*

43 Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sin. 44 But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; 45 for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented.

*Perpetual because God continues to redeem His people of the covenant (Ps 111:9)*

9 He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever — holy and awesome is his name.

*Perpetual because God upholds His people (Isa 42:6)*

6 "I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,

*Perpetual through Jesus' blood covenant (Matt 26:28)*

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

### **Sabbath Significance (Exodus 31:17-18)**

17 It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed."

18 And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

### **It is a sign (17)**

*Sign of God's compassion by renewing them every day (Lam 3:22-23)*

22 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

*Sign of God's refreshing through the sign of the rainbow (Gen 9:13)*

13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

*Sign of God's promise through His sign of stopping the sun for a day (Isa 38:7-8)*

7 "This is the Lord's sign to you that the Lord will do what he has promised: 8 I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz." So the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down.

*Sign of God's deliverance of the Jews by worshiping on His mountain (Ex 3:12)*

12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

## **It is to refresh (17)**

*Refreshment and rest is the reason for the Sabbath (Heb 4:9-10)*

9 There remains, then, a Sabbath — rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.

*God refreshes the faint (Jer 31:25)*

25 I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint."

*Refreshment awaits all Christians in heaven (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."

*God is the ultimate refresher (Ps 103:5)*

5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

*God refreshes like a well-watered spring (Isa 58:11)*

11 The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

## **It is part of God's Commandments (18)**

*God's commandments were spoken by God and carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21)*

20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

*God's commandments are true and are the actual words of God (1 Thess 2:13)*

13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

*God's commandments should be obeyed (John 14:15)*

15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.

*God's commandments shows Himself to us (John 14:21)*

21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

*Obedience to God's commandments keeps us in God's love (John 15:10)*

10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### ***Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh***

See Bob Deffinbaugh's web pages on [The Sabbath Controversy in the Gospels](#) and [The Sabbath in Apostolic Preaching and Practice](#) for a good examination of the observance of the Sabbath. [*Ctrl-Click on the underlined titles to be taken to the web pages*]

### ***Heart of the Lesson from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary***

Rest. It is necessary for our survival, yet for many of us it is difficult to obtain. Our society pushes us to constantly be on the go. Many people work five to six days a week and then spend Sunday either attending

sporting events for the kids or preparing for the next week. We have lost the sacred-ness and forgotten the necessity of having a day of rest.

In Genesis 2, we read that the Lord sanctified the seventh day; in other words, He set the seventh day apart from all the other days. There was supposed to be something special about the seventh day—rest. In Exodus, the Lord told Moses to tell the people that they were to keep the Sabbath as a sign between them and God. Why was the Sabbath a sign? How did it help remind the people that it was God who sanctified them? Sanctification is more than just consecration or cleansing; the word also means "set apart." Therefore, by taking a day of rest from work, the nation of Israel was doing something different from all the other nations. They were placing their trust in God to help them complete their work in six days. They were trusting Him to make their crops grow. With the tyranny of the urgent constantly beating down our door, are we able to trust God enough to observe His day of rest and let it be a testimony to others?

God said, "Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you." When we are told to keep something, that means we hold on to it. We do not let it go. The Lord did not put a time frame on the Ten Commandments. He did not say to keep the Sabbath until the Messiah comes, then work seven days a week. God said to treat the day of rest in the same manner that we would treat anything else "holy." In other words, we treat the day with honor, and we prepare for it. We must prepare ourselves for rest.

The Sabbath, or day of rest, was so important to God that He ordered that anyone who did any work on that day was to be put to death. The Lord said that the observance of the Sabbath was a sign of the covenant between Him and the people of Israel. God said, "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." If God took a day off and was refreshed, how much more do we need a day without work or other activities? When you feel the candle burning at both ends, it may mean you are in need of a holy day of rest! Even in our go-getter society, some Christians make every effort to keep a day of rest. A former coworker of mine refused to do any work on Sundays. This included laundry, cooking, and shopping. She and her family not only remembered the commandment but also strove to keep the commandment to observe a day of rest. Rest is not something that we find time for. It is something that we must make time for. The Lord is our Shepherd; He promised to restore our souls. By observing His law to rest, we are giving God time to fulfill His promise to restore our souls. What changes are necessary if we are to live life observing a day of rest? Imagine a day without obligations. God wants that for us every week.

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary***

Examining the Ten Commandments alongside Christian practice, we reach a conclusion that is uncomfortable to many: it seems that nine of the Ten Commandments still apply, but one—the command to keep the Sabbath (Saturday)—does not. A close look at each of the Ten Commandments in light of other Scripture reveals why this conclusion is valid. Nine of the commandments are based on the nature of God; and since his nature never changes (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17), neither does the application of those nine. The Sabbath commandment, however, is based on works of God. His works of the old creation (Genesis 2:2, 3) and deliverance under the old covenant (Deuteronomy 5:15) are now superseded by his work of deliverance under the new covenant that results in new creation (Romans 8:19-23; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Since the new covenant is bound intrinsically with Christ's resurrection from the dead, we honor him on the day he won that victory (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1, 2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). This is the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10), the day we call Sunday. Although Sabbath requirements are no longer in force, are there benefits in the Sabbath principle of regular, periodic rest? Matthew Sleeth thinks so. A former emergency room doctor, Sleeth is the author of *24/6: A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life*. The book calls for making one day a week a work-free day. In an interview with CNN, he said, "I don't try to define what rest is for a person, but I ask you to figure out what work is for you, and don't do it one day out of the week." Taking a day off has been associated with a variety of health benefits, including stress management. No doubt, that is one reason God gave the Sabbath to his old covenant people—to provide rest and relief. But even if keeping the Sabbath principle as a day of rest is legitimate for one's personal health and devotion, it is not something to be demanded of others or made a test of fellowship (again, Romans 14:5, 6; Colossians 2:16). The Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27), and each man (and woman) is free to apply the principle of Sabbath rest as seems best. But the fulfillment, the substance, is Christ (compare Hebrews 4:1-13).

***Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary***

1. God makes His expectations clear to all men (Exod. 31:12)
2. As God's people, we live set apart for His purposes (vss. 13-14)
3. Through the principle of the Sabbath, God teaches believers to depend on Him (vs. 15)
4. Believers must teach the next generation to know, worship, and obey God (vs. 16)
5. God's people are renewed through worship and strengthened as they remember who He is and what He has done (vs. 17)
6. Man's standards can change from day to day, but God's will always endures (vs. 18)