

The Lord's Day

Exodus 20:8-11; Rom 14:4-6; Rev 1:10
SS Lesson for 02/15/2026

Devotional Scriptures: Col 2:16-19

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Key Verse: Exodus 20:11

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

THE SABBATH DAY (EXODUS 20:8-11)

Keep it holy (8)

- Keep it holy because to desecrate it brings death (Exod 31:14)
- Keep it holy because it is a commandment (Neh 9:14)
- Keep it holy because it is a sign between Jews and God (Exod 31:13)
- Keep it holy because it is holy to God (Exod 31:15)

Not for labor (9-10)

- No labor even for animals because they need rest (Exod 23:12)
- No labor because it is a day of rest (Exod 16:23)
- No labor because it is a day for sacred assembly (Exod 23:3)
- No labor including selling on the Sabbath (Neh 13:15)

Blessed by God (11)

- Blessed by God at creation (Gen 2:3)
- Blessed by God for not desecrating the Sabbath (Isa 56:2)
- Blessed by God for keeping the Sabbath (Jer 17:24-25)

HONORING SPECIAL DAYS (ROM 14:4-6)

No basis for judgment (4)

- Don't judge because it is God who judges (1 Cor 4:5)
- Don't judge because as we judge we are judged (James 4:11)
- Don't judge because it is God who justifies (Rom 8:33)

Individual convictions (5)

- Individual convictions that determines guilt or innocence (Rom 14:14)
- Individual convictions without doubt (Rom 14:23)
- Individual convictions where the heart does not condemn (1 John 3:20-21)

Always for God (6)

- Always for God to commemorate the day (Exod 12:14)
- Always for God because it is a Sabbath to God (Exod 16:25-26)
- Always for God so the observance will be acceptable to God (Isa 58:5)
- Always for God to ensure it is not for ourselves or man (Gal 4:9-10)

THE LORD'S DAY (REV 1:10)

Should be in the Spirit (10)

- In the Spirit when praying (Eph 6:18)
- In the Spirit because of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9)
- In the Spirit by walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16)
- In the Spirit in our worship (Phil 3:3)

Honoring the Lord's Day (10)

- Honoring by being in the presence of Jesus (John 20:19)
- Honoring by fellowshiping together (Acts 20:7)
- Honoring because Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8)
- Honoring because Jesus arose on that day (Mark 16:9)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The giving of the Sinai covenant comes at a key point in the history of Israel. The Ten Commandments or Decalogue (which means “ten words”) convey wisdom from God. By following these commands, the Israelites were invited to live at peace with one another and with the God who had just freed them from servitude in Egypt (Exodus 19:4-6). The fourth of these commandments, Sabbath, describes a practice of refraining from work on the final day of each week. It is without any precise equivalent in other ancient Near Eastern cultures. The distinctiveness of Sabbath practice became especially apparent when inhabitants of Judah went into exile and later returned to the land after it had been repopulated with other groups (sixth century BC). Alongside infant circumcision (Leviticus 12:3) and restrictive food laws (Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14), Sabbath became a mark of Jewish identity in the Persian, Greek, and Roman periods and the centuries before the birth of Jesus. But as Christianity, which began as a Jewish movement, grew to include many Gentiles, a question that the earliest of churches had to answer was, When shall we meet? Christian “voluntary associations,” which is how churches were seen by Romans, chose to meet before dawn on the first day of the week (Sunday rather than Saturday). Outsiders noticed the habit of Christians to gather on Sunday mornings. For instance, Pliny the Younger, a second-century Roman authority trying to root out the Christians in his region, reports to the emperor Trajan that Christians gather before dawn on a particular day, when they sing hymns to Christ.

Key Verse: Exodus 20:11

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. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Major Theme Analysis

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

The Sabbath Day (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. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Keep it holy (8)

Keep it holy because to desecrate it brings death (Exod 31:14)

14 "Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people.

Keep it holy because it is a commandment (Neh 9:14)

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

Keep it holy because it is a sign between Jews and God (Exod 31:13)

13 "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy.'

Keep it holy because it is holy to God (Exod 31:15)

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

Not for labor (9-10)

No labor even for animals because they need rest (Exod 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.

No labor because it is a day of rest (Exod 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.'"

No labor because it is a day for sacred assembly (Exod 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.

No labor including selling on the Sabbath (Neh 13:15)

15 In those days I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day.

Blessed by God (11)

Blessed by God at creation (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.

Blessed by God for not desecrating the Sabbath (Isa 56:2)

2 Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil."

Blessed by God for keeping the Sabbath (Jer 17:24-25)

24 But if you are careful to obey me, declares the Lord, and bring no load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy by not doing any work on it, 25 then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this city with their officials. They and their officials will come riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by the men of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever.

Honoring Special Days (Rom 14:4-6)

4 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

No basis for judgment (4)

Don't judge because it is God who judges (1 Cor 4:5)

5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Don't judge because as we judge we are judged (James 4:11)

11 Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

Don't judge because it is God who justifies (Rom 8:33)

33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

Individual convictions (5)

Individual convictions that determines guilt or innocence (Rom 14:14)

14 As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.

Individual convictions without doubt (Rom 14:23)

23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Individual convictions where the heart does not condemn (1 John 3:20-21)

20 whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God

Always for God (6)

Always for God to commemorate the day (Exod 12:14)

14 "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord, a lasting ordinance.

Always for God because it is a Sabbath to God (Exod 16:25-26)

25 "Eat it today," Moses said, "because today is a Sabbath to the Lord. You will not find any of it on the ground today. 26 Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any."

Always for God so the observance will be acceptable to God (Isa 58:5)

5 Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

Always for God to ensure it is not for ourselves or man (Gal 4:9-10)

9 But now that you know God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? 10 You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!

The Lord's Day (Rev 1:10)

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

Should be in the Spirit (10)

In the Spirit when praying (Eph 6:18)

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

In the Spirit because of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9)

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

In the Spirit by walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16)

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

In the Spirit in our worship (Phil 3:3)

3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

Honoring the Lord's Day (10)

Honoring by being in the presence of Jesus (John 20:19)

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Honoring by fellowshiping together (Acts 20:7)

7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

Honoring because Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8)

8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Honoring because Jesus arose on that day (Mark 16:9)

9 When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Personal Convictions Should Not Inhibit Harmony Among Christians (Rom 14:1-12)

The Issue at Hand. It is vitally important to our understanding of chapter 14 to be absolutely clear as to the issue at hand. The issue to which Paul speaks is the matter of personal convictions. Individual Christians will often differ over matters of conscience and of liberties. The differences of which Paul speaks are not over absolutes or fundamental doctrines of the faith. Specifically, Paul mentions the matter of eating meat or only vegetables (v. 2), of observing certain holy days (v. 5), and of drinking wine (v. 21).

While two Christians may disagree over whether or not a Christian should drink wine or eat only vegetables, no Christian should dispute the fact that lying, stealing, and immorality are sin. These are biblical and moral absolutes. No two Christians should differ over the virgin birth or the deity of Christ, the physical resurrection of our Lord or the substitutionary atonement. These are doctrinal certainties.

When we understand that Paul is speaking with regard to individual liberties, Christian rights, and personal convictions, then it is easy to see the difference in Paul's attitude in Romans 14 as compared with Galatians 5 and Colossians 2. There were those who taught that it was impossible to be saved apart from the keeping of the Law. "And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved'" (Acts 15:1).

With these Judaizers, Paul was very severe, for their doctrine was false. Those in Rome of whom Paul spoke were not of this sort. They were not saying that they had to avoid meat in order to be saved; they simply felt it was wrong for the Christian to eat meat, just as it is wrong to lie or steal.

The difference between Paul's response to the weakness of Romans 14 and the heresy of Galatians can be best illustrated by his actions with regard to the circumcision of Timothy and Titus. In Acts 16:3, Paul had Timothy circumcised so as not to offend the scruples and custom (and perhaps prejudices) of those who knew his father

was a Greek. But in Galatians 2:3-5, Paul refused to circumcise Titus because there the heretics were insisting that circumcision was essential to salvation.

Paul is particularly gracious and gentle in his instructions concerning the weak brethren in Romans 14, and it is because there was no heresy here, only a difference of understanding in the matter of Christian convictions and Christian liberties. Although Paul deals decisively with moral sin and doctrinal deviation in the New Testament he pleads for understanding and love when it comes also to immaturity in the matter of Christian liberties.

Who's Who? The Strong and the Weak

The story has often been told of the culprits who entered a department store at night and stole nothing—they simply switched the price tags. Refrigerators sold for \$9.95 while candy bars were \$500.

While I was attending seminary several years ago, the most amazing realization of my study of the New Testament was that someone had switched the labels on the strong and the weak.

I had always been taught that the strong Christian was the one who knew he couldn't. He couldn't smoke, drink, dance or go to movies. And she couldn't wear lipstick or make-up. The strong Christian is "... someone who lives in mortal terror that someone, somewhere, is enjoying himself." The weak Christian was the one who spoke of liberty.

If this has been your understanding of the 'strong' and the 'weak,' then you had better take a closer look at this chapter. The weak brother thinks it is wrong to eat meat, and so he eats only vegetables. The strong knows there is nothing intrinsically sinful about meat-eating (verse 2). The weak (we would assume) regards some days as more sacred, while the strong regards every day alike (verse 5). When I was a youngster, I can remember Christian friends whose parents thought it wrong to swim or water ski (or do anything fun) on Sunday. The strong knows he is free to drink wine in moderation (verse 21, cf. I Timothy 5:23), while the weak feels he must be a tee-totaler.

I must go on to say that the weak Christian is not just the one who believes something which in fact is a Christian liberty is prohibited, but he is one who is inclined to go ahead and follow the example of the strong in spite of his scruples. The weak Christian, then, is not just the one who heartily condemns drinking wine, but who also might drink wine against his conscience because you or I do it. In my estimation, those who preach on the evils of wine so vehemently are not weaker brethren.

The 'weak' and the 'strong' have several distinct characteristics.

(1) They are weak in faith. Literally, they are weak 'in the faith' or 'in their faith. I suspect that both elements are true. That is, the weak are those who have not yet come to the full realization of the freedom and the liberty which is a part of the faith. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

(2) They are correspondingly weak in their personal faith. A limited understanding of the nature and extent of grace limits subjective faith.

(3) The weak are prone to condemn the actions of the strong. As they have not yet come to understand Christian liberty, they do not accept it in others. The weak can be immediately recognized by the frown of contempt on their faces, and the "Oh, no!" look in their eyes.

(4) The strong are those who are more fully aware of the nature of grace and of the teachings of the word of God. They have a greater grasp of the faith (objective-doctrine) and so their faith (subjective-personal) is stronger.

(5) The strong are susceptible to the sin of smugness and arrogance. They can easily find contempt and disdain for those who cannot fully grasp grace. On their face can be seen the lofty, yet condescending, smile of contempt. Their eyes betray an expression of "Oh, really."

A Word of Warning. To each of these groups, the strong and the weak, Paul has a word of warning and instruction. The instruction is to stop passing judgment on the convictions of the other, and to welcome them into warm fellowship and acceptance. "Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions" (Romans 14:1).

In verses 1-12, Paul gives us several good reasons why it is wrong for Christians to attempt to correct the convictions of other believers.

(1) Personal convictions are private property. Paul wrote in verse 5: "Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind." Again in verse 22 we are told: "The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God

...” Paul’s point is uncomfortably clear. Mind your own business! Christian convictions are private property. We are responsible for our own convictions, but not those of our brother.

(2) Our acceptance of men into fellowship should be no more restrictive than God’s. The strong were apparently guilty of getting together with the weak only to ‘straighten them out.’ The effect of the matter was that strong and weak Christians were not associating with one another, or accepting them. We cannot demand the other brother to conform to our convictions before we will fellowship with him simply because this would be inconsistent with the acceptance shown by God. “Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him” (Romans 14:3). If God has accepted our brother, as he is, then we must do no less. We should not try to change the one God has accepted as is.

(3) A servant is accountable only to his master. Some time ago, I was asked to preach at a Bible church in Washington State. Perhaps unwisely, I selected a topic that I knew could prove difficult for some to accept. I told the pastor before the sermon that my message might prove a little difficult. I’ll never forget the response of that man of God. “You’re the Lord’s servant, brother, not mine.”

That is precisely what Paul is trying to get across to us in verse 4: “Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls, and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand.” (Romans 14:4). If we busy ourselves in judging our brothers, we are taking upon ourselves the prerogatives of God, for He alone is their master.

In verses 6-12, the emphasis of Paul’s words is that the life we live, we live before God. When Paul says in verse 7, “For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself,” he does not refer (here) to the impact we have on other men by our actions. Rather he stresses that nothing we do is done independently of God, that whether we live or die, we do so as to the Lord.

He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. ... for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s (Romans 14:6, 8).

If we wish to busy ourselves with the work of passing judgment, let us concentrate upon ourselves, rather than upon our neighbor, for at the judgment seat of God we will be judged for our own actions: “But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God” (Romans 14:10).

The force of Paul’s argumentation is irresistible. The Christian has no business trying to conform his brother to his own personal convictions, since convictions are private property, since God has accepted him as he is, and since every servant is accountable only to his own master.

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/16-strong-and-weak-romans-14>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

What does the Sabbath mean for Christians today? Answers to this question have needlessly divided congregations and families who seek to devote time and space to God. A consistent thread runs from the gift of Sabbath, to the discernment of early churches, to the earliest Christians who designate Sunday for celebratory songs: God is king of creation, and Christ the Lord is worthy of praise. For those who worship the Creator in reverent submission, the fitting response is to place God at the center of all life, to orient everything else around a mission to serve the king. Sabbath honors the rhythms of God’s productive creation, even as God’s people join him in productive work on days that are not Sabbath. According to Paul, we now have the freedom to act with confidence, as Christ’s own servants. Perhaps we may find that a particular day should be reserved for prayer, and we clear space for God by setting aside all distractions. Perhaps, like the earliest Christians, we find that rising early to gather on Sunday will make us peculiar. But whatever our king expects of us, our duty is not to go about asserting ourselves as the final judge. We can anticipate that, in the splendor of God’s kingdom, there are servants of Christ whose “orders from the king” differ from ours. If we seek peace together, as Paul teaches, we shall communicate best through humble actions, the kindnesses that point back to Christ as Lord of our lives.