

# COMMANDMENTS

## Remember the Sabbath

(Exodus 20:8-11)

**Bottom Line:** When we rest from our work, we are reflecting our trust in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

**If you were going to take a day off for rest, what would you do that day?**

**Do you get enough rest? Why or why not?**

**Do you think our culture values rest? Why or why not?**

It seems almost impossible to get enough rest these days. We've got Little League, cell phones, PTA meetings, grocery shopping, yards to mow (or snow to shovel), vehicles and houses to maintain, etc. And when you are married and have kids it multiplies your responsibilities ten-fold, leaving very little time to actually just stop and rest. But even still, rest is an important enough principle that God inscribed the command for us to rest in "The Big Ten." The command to rest on the Sabbath is important for all of us and if we're honest, we probably don't do a very good job of it.

**Read Exodus 20:8-11. Why is rest good for us? Thinking of the situation that God saved Israel out of, how do you think the Israelites received this commandment?**

Overworking ourselves is not good for anyone—ourselves, our employers, and especially not our families. Everything is harder when you're tired. Your work is not as fulfilling, your relationships are strained, you're not as patient in your parenting, your hobbies are not as enjoyable, and on and on. Your entire quality of life is worsened when you're tired.

**What excuses do we make for working so much? Are there ever seasons of life when it is okay to work so hard? When?**

All of that being said, sometimes the most godly thing you can do is take a nap. Finding the time to rest and rejuvenate is crucial to our flourishing. Jesus explains to us in Mark 2:27 that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." God knew we would need rest and time off, so He gave us the Sabbath. Again, like the other commandments, this command is for God's glory and our good. God doesn't expect us to constantly carry the weight of the world on our shoulders as if He needed the help. God commands us to incorporate rhythms of rest into our life that serve as a means to remind us that we are dependent upon Him for everything, that He is faithful to keep our world going even when we take our hands off of it for a while, and that we should humbly recognize our limitations in light of His strength and greatness.

**What exactly do you think God means when he tells us to rest from our work on the Sabbath? How may our idea of rest be different than God's idea of rest?**

So obviously, what God probably *doesn't* mean by "rest" is sitting on the couch watching Netflix and eating Cheetos. The key to understanding what God means by "rest" is found in verse 11: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on

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the seventh day.” When we read this, the question is, “Why did God rest?” He wasn’t tired, He’s God. He didn’t need to recharge. The answer is simply that He was finished with His work. There was nothing more for Him to do. He perfectly completed the task He set out to accomplish, and then He rested. So our Sabbath rest should be a reflection of this kind of rest. Understanding this, the point of obeying the Sabbath is resting and trusting in the *finished* work of God. And in our context, on this side of history, it means trusting in Jesus and His finished work on the cross. Apart from Christ, God’s demands of moral perfection still apply to us, and we are obligated to meet them. But when we trust in Christ, our striving ceases, our work ends. We no longer have to toil in order to earn God’s favor. Our work is done—“it is finished.”

**How can you structure your day of Sabbath in a way that reflects your trust in Christ’s finished work on the cross? Does our day of Sabbath *have* to be on Sunday? What about those who work on Sunday’s?**

The command is to take a day, a whole day, to observe God’s goodness to us. It may not be a Sunday, it may be another day. But we are all obligated to make a practice of regularly and periodically devoting a whole day to God. The *way* we do this might look different for each of us, though. God commands that when we take this time, we “keep it holy.” So whatever we do, we find a way to rest in God’s promises in a way that doesn’t violate any of God’s commands. Our rest is not a means of “escaping”, “just shutting down”, or “spacing out.” Our rest should be something that brings us *more* in tune with God, *more* connected to our reality with Him, and *more* aware of His presence in and around us.

**What are some practical ways that we can get more rest? When we do rest, how can we be intentional about obeying God’s command to “keep it holy?”**

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**Reflection:** Read these aloud, using your discretion about which questions should be pondered and which questions should be discussed.

**Are you striving to fulfill God’s requirement of righteousness on your own? Does the Christian life feel more like a burden to you rather than freedom? What are your motives for attending church, serving on a ministry team, attending this group? If you are doing any of this to try and earn God’s favor, your labor is in vain and these things will only get harder and harder for you as time goes on. Repent of your effort to save yourself, trust in Christ, and rest in His finished work on the cross.**

**Does work get in the way of your rest? Of your time with family? Of your time with the Lord? Is there any “extra” workload that you’ve added to your plate that you need to get rid of? Do you try to justify your busyness by saying it’s for the Lord? Does God want you to rest in Him or work for Him?**

**Hebrews says we should “make every effort to enter that rest.” What are some changes you need to make to do this?**