

Jesus Christ came to earth to be our Saviour and Lord.

- He lived a perfect life as our example.
- He taught about God's kingdom.
- He showed how to live in harmony with our Heavenly Father—and with other people.

He said that loving God with our complete being is the most important commandment--and that loving other people is the next most important. These two principles (loving God and loving people) are the foundation for the Ten Commandments.

God not only gave the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel, but He gave them for all people.

God included Sabbath observance in His basic Law. The Fourth Commandment says to “remember” (keep or observe) the seventh day of the week as “the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.”

The calendar has changed, but the seventh day of the week has always remained the same. Most people call that day Saturday.

God commanded observing Sabbath as part of the moral law. It is one of His Ten Commandments. He wrote it on the stone tablets along with the instructions to honour Him, not to murder, to be faithful to our spouse, and to honour our parents. God tells us that Sabbath-keeping is very important. It is no more “legalistic” to keep the Sabbath than it is to keep the other nine commandments.

It is not *my* Sabbath It is not *your* Sabbath. It is not *the Jewish* Sabbath. **It is God's Sabbath.** In the Old Testament, God called it His Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13). In the New Testament Jesus said He was the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). God chose the day. No one has a right to change it.

Since all this is true, how should we keep the Sabbath today?

Jesus observed the Sabbath every week, but He rejected the way the scribes and Pharisees thought it should be kept. He showed how important it is to be compassionate and to look at the needs of others as we keep the Sabbath.

The Pharisees set up a rule for every possible situation. They believed that keeping these rules pleased God. Their rules got in the way of a genuine, living relationship with the Heavenly Father.

When we keep the Sabbath, we are doing something that pleases our Heavenly Father.

- We observe the day that His Son kept while He lived on earth.
- We follow the example of the apostles and the New Testament church.
- Our minds are ready to receive special blessings from the Lord.
- As we meet with other believers, we receive blessings from them.
- As we meet with other believers, we can be a blessing to other believers.

Keeping Sabbath is more than “going to church on Saturday.” Sabbath is a twenty-four hour period starting at sunset on Friday and ending with sunset on “Saturday.”

There is more to keeping God's Sabbath than a bunch of rules and regulations. It is easier to follow rules than to think for ourselves. Some Sabbath-keeping groups try to set up rules for their people. That approach is very similar to the way the Pharisees tried to enforce the Sabbath in the days of Jesus. It is what he condemned.

Keeping Sabbath is more than giving up certain experiences or activities. Keeping the Sabbath is the positive act of offering a whole day to God. We offer it to Him by moving out of our regular activities and into special experiences of study, worship, and rest.

The following Scripture passages may help you decide how to keep the Sabbath.

(Jesus speaking) “Then he said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath’” (Mark 2:27-28).

(God speaking through the prophet Isaiah) “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 honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.’ The mouth of the Lord has spoken.” (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Mature believers do not need a long list of rules and regulations on how to keep the Sabbath. These questions may help when you wonder if an activity is good use of the Sabbath.

- Would this activity be appropriate for a Christian at any time?
- What values and principles am I exposing myself to by being involved in this activity?
- Can I honestly say my involvement in this activity is pleasing to God?
- Does this activity build me up spiritually?
- Does this activity help me remember that the Sabbath is special time set aside by God for me to use in fellowship with Him and His people?
- Does this activity limit the time I have to spend in worship and study with God's people?
- Is this activity "doing my own pleasure" or am I doing His will?
- When involved in this activity, am I thinking more about sacred things or secular things?
- When involved in this activity, am I spending time with God's people or with people from "the world?"
- Does this activity follow the example of Jesus--of showing compassion for other people?

- Is this activity something that I could better do at another time?
- If this were a Sabbath-keeping world, would this activity be necessary on the Sabbath?
- What affect does my example have on people who may see me as a Sabbath-keeping Christian?

Rule-keeping would be easier, wouldn't it? God's word challenges us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). God gave us minds to use. Mature believers must obey God. Mature believers must move beyond simple rule-keeping. Mature believers must know, understand, and live by the principles behind the rules.

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Keeping the Sabbath

Without being a Legalist

Guidelines for
Sabbath-keepers