

Commandment #4
Give God the Time of Your Life
Exodus 20:8-11 (03/13/16)

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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 a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy

When God repeats this in Deuteronomy 5:15, He emphasizes taking time to remember being redeemed out of Egypt on the Sabbath. So the Sabbath was a time to reflect on God's creation and on God's redemption, a beautiful summary of God's grace and mercy for His people.

God is dealing with the time of our lives here. Have you ever gotten impatient with God's plan of 24 hours in a day? Maybe you've caught yourself impatiently thinking, "I can't wait to get my license, to get my own car, to get married, to get another job – my job stinks, to retire." What if God gave you what you wanted?

Ever hear the story of Peter and His Magic Thread? Peter was never satisfied with where he was. He hated school and time went way too slowly for him. Plus, he had a girl friend and couldn't wait to get married to her and get a real job. One day he was lying on the soft forest floor, about to doze off, when a lady appeared to him holding a silver ball with a gold thread. This was Peter's life thread. If he ever wanted time to pass more quickly, all he had to do was pull on the thread a little. However, once he pulled the thread out, he couldn't push it back in. And he couldn't tell anyone about his golden thread or he would die immediately.

Peter took his silver ball with the gold thread sticking out and, as you can imagine, he began to pull it a little during school and school was over. Soon he pulled harder and things happened much more quickly. In a flash he was working as a carpenter, another tug and he was married to Leise. Peter was not one to wait. Another tug and they had a family, another mighty pull and the children were full grown with their own families. But by now everyone looked older, his hair was now white, and the thread had turned gray. You'll have to find the story to hear the details of its outcome. I will tell you that at one point he confessed, "My life had passed like the blinking of an eye and I had nothing to show for it."

Hopefully that won't be your story. It's a good thing we aren't in charge of the time of our lives. This fourth commandment tells us that God has given us the time of our lives and He is Lord of our time. Waiting on the Lord and being patient are attitudes of submission to the Lord of days.

SUNDAY – SABBATH OR RESURRECTION DAY?

Before we see how this commandment applies to us, we need to see that this is one commandment that is not repeated for the church. If you search Sabbath, you'll find 78 occurrences in the Old Testament, 58 in the Gospels and Acts, two times in the rest of the New Testament. And when it is referred to in the epistles, it is never given as a command to observe. In fact, just the opposite. Hebrews 4 speaks of a Sabbath rest for God's people, speaking of Christ. And Colossians 2:16 tells us clearly that the Sabbath, as well as all Israel's special days, were shadows of the good things to come and that Jesus is the substance, the fulfillment of those shadows. So we are not under a Sabbath law.

The church of Christ through the centuries has dealt with the Sabbath in three ways. First, the Seventh Day Adventists and other groups say we are to keep the Saturday Sabbath. In fact, they claim Protestants have taken the mark of the beast by worshiping on Sunday. One group makes keeping the

Sabbath the way to be saved! The second way is that Sunday replaced Saturday as the Christian Sabbath – called transfer theology. The Reformers rejected this view, but the Puritans were big on it. Many Reformed churches still teach this today. Some of you remember the blue laws, when most of the stores were closed. Bergen County in New Jersey still shuts down for the day, and the people love it.

The third way of dealing with the Sabbath is to say it ended with the work of Christ, as B. B. Warfield said, “Christ took the Sabbath into the grave with him and brought the Lord’s Day out of the grave with him on the resurrection morn.” Along with the church in Acts and the early church, we meet on the first day of the week because Jesus arose on this day. Now granted, there are different views as to what you’re allowed to do on the Lord’s Day. There have been a lot of non-biblical legalisms attached to it, like saying you’re not allowed to have any fun on the Lord’s Day. Alistair Begg tells of a Scottish preacher who was to preach in a church, but the river was frozen over and the ferry couldn’t transport him. Wanting to fulfill his obligation, he decided to skate across the river to the church. However, some of the congregants spied him and the issue became a huge discussion about whether he had broken the Sabbath. After much debate, they decided to ask him one question, “Did you enjoy yourself?” Al Mohler tells about the time his mother caught him washing his car on Sunday. “What are you doing? Don’t you know it’s Sunday?” He was half way finished, and that is how his car remained for that Sunday afternoon!

So what do we do with this commandment? It is God’s Word and God has wisdom in it. There are abiding principles here, although there are no lists of do’s and don’ts for Sunday. Here are four principles teaching us to give God the time of our lives.

God gives you just the right amount of time to do His will.

God created time. Someone said God created time so everything wouldn’t happen at once. God gives each of us an amount of time to accomplish what He wants us to do with our lives. Here God says He has given us six days to do something and a seventh day to do something else.

Psalm 31:14-15, “But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD, I say, ‘You are my God. 15 My times are in Your hand....’”

Psalm 90:12, “So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom.”

Have you ever caught yourself saying, “There just aren’t enough hours in the day to get everything done!” Here’s a biblical principle: God has given you just the right amount of time to use for His glory! Every day is a gift from God to you! It’s like a coloring page waiting for you to fill in the areas. “Use the next 16 hours to glorify Me! I have given you this day as a gift and as a mission. Don’t waste it!” Jesus perfectly fulfilled God’s will in the same 24 hours a day that you have!

If you feel all frazzled day after day because you are not getting your work done, you may be taking on responsibilities God never gave you. Or do you like to talk about how crazy busy you are, inwardly thinking it may impress people with your importance? Some folks should stop talking endlessly about how busy they are and how they just can’t get it all done, and get busy doing what they need to do!

But there are people on the other side who aren’t burning out; they are rusting out, wasting their hours and days on worthless pursuits. “Teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom!” Think of the time of your life as an investment for eternity!

God expects you to invest six days a week to be productive.

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

Work is sacred. God ordained work in Genesis 2, *before* the fall of man into sin. And here with this command #4, God gives us this six-day work week. God expects every capable person to work, to invest their days in some kind of productive activity. No one feels worse than the lazy person who isn’t being productive. God designed worms to work, and God designed us to work. From what I read, there are around 90 million capable Americans not working today.

So God expects you to work. Work is a blessing. Six days you shall work. If you hate your job, thank God for it until you find another one, but keep working because you are pleasing God by working and providing for your own. Go to work by faith. 1 Corinthians 7:21 says if you are in one job but have an opportunity to improve your situation, go for it. And if you lose your job, you still have a job. Your job now becomes a vigorous pursuit of a new job. In the meantime, there's always something to do, someone to serve, some way you can productively invest your time.

Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men." Some people think they have to be in so-called "full-time Christian service" like preaching or missionary work for their life to really count for God. Listen, as long as you aren't running an abortion clinic or a marijuana shop, you are serving the Lord! God never said you have to do a certain thing to really please Him.

"Well, I just don't like working. I'd rather be playing." Really? What about this from Paul. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, "10 If anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat either. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in a quiet fashion and eat their own bread."

You mothers, you are working six days a week, right? Your kids don't mess their diapers, spill their milk, or get sick on Sundays, do they? No, it doesn't work that way. You mothers are doing some of the noblest work in the world! Some of you are even raising pigs or chickens or whatever. Martin Luther and Kate, his wife, bought some pigs. Kate took responsibility for the porkers. So Luther called her, "My lord Katy, Mistress of the Pigsty!"

Six days to be productive. That's what God says. Oh, and did you see in verse 11 how long it took God to create the worlds and everything in them? Yep, six days. Unlike many who think they know better than God these days, what did God Himself believe about those six 24 hour periods? He wasn't talking about six long ages of millions of years, I assure you.

God provides you with the "one-in-seven" pattern for rest and worship.

"10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day;"

The word Sabbath means cease from work. I don't know how these Israelites received this, but God is being so kind and gracious to them. They just came out of Egypt slaving for the Pharaoh for 400 years, and you can believe they didn't get Saturdays off. Now here God provides His people with over seven weeks of vacation a year, spaced out every seventh day. God knows we need rest, time to stop and smell the roses, time to go out and enjoy His beautiful creation. Time for diversion. Even Jesus took His men out for some R and R. We need brakes as well as accelerators in our lives.

Notice too, who all got to rest here. He gives seven categories, all the way down to the donkeys and mules. Not just the owners, but the workers! Now, did Israel keep this wonderful blessing of rest on the seventh day? Not long after this they are out in the wilderness and some dude has the audacity to go out and gather sticks on the Sabbath, exactly what God said not to do – Numbers 15:32! God was serious. That man was put to death for his rebellion against God's will.

So we need rest. Why do we conk out on Sunday afternoons? And if we don't, why do we tend to have miserable Monday mornings? We need rest! Even while watching the Eagles or the Packers, some of us fall asleep. Or rest may mean taking time for diversion from the weekly toil. It's a time to play with the kids, have some fun, walk through the woods.

But God also knows our need to worship, and this one-in-seven pattern works perfectly for concentrated, focused worship. Hebrews 10:24-25 says we are not to forsake gathering together, as is the habit of some. You need this special day for worship. I know Sunday mornings may not feel like rest. There were

homes this morning where kids were crying, spilling their cereal, mom was trying to get them cleaned up, dressed, and out the door. Dad was dutifully waiting in the car for his poor wife to finally scramble out with all six kids and pack them in. And then he may have said, "What took you so long? We're going to be late!" That was a frosty ride to church that morning. This is to put all you Sunday morning dads on high alert! And here's a tip. Get prepared Saturday night for Sunday morning and you'll have less chaos.

Remember back in the old days when you had Sunday clothes: Sunday shoes, Sunday suits, Sunday shirts, Sunday dresses. We may have been more concerned with how we looked than what we were coming for – not to be seen of men but to worship the Lord! But listen, there are no laws here governing our Sundays except you need to meet with God's people on the Lord's Day to worship, learn, grow, pray, fellowship, encourage one another. It's an oasis! It's like a rest stop along the highway of your life. Every Sunday you come to another rest stop to pull over and really seek the Lord and praise Him! That's why healthy believers love Sundays!

God designed the Sabbath day to teach the gospel.

Hebrews 4:9-11, "So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience."

Sabbath means to cease from work. Here's the sweetest thing about this 4th commandment. Jesus came and fulfilled the Sabbath. He invited you and me to come to Him and find rest for our souls. When you come to Jesus, you enter God's eternal Sabbath rest. You don't come in working your way to God. You come in resting in what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross!

SO WHAT?

- God gives you just the right amount of time to live for Him.
- God expects you to invest your time in productive work.
- God provides you with the one-in-seven pattern for your rest and worship.
- And God designed the Sabbath to preach the gospel. Have you entered that rest of faith in Jesus? He paid it all. He cried out, "It is finished." The price for sin was completely paid for all who will receive Him. He finished the work on that cross, giving us an open door into His rest! Have you entered?