

The Law For Life

Week 2: The Law for Today **Sabbath as a Model for 21st Century Application** *Grace BFC – Summer 2011 – by Mark Bickel*

*Note – We will begin today by completing the overview of Exodus from last week.
Those notes are in the Week 1 handout*

Understanding and Applying the Sabbath as a Model for all the Law

Principle 1: Read the Law, each place it is presented, and note what the passages say about it

- **Sabbath** is part of the **10 Commandments**, which are given in **Exodus 20** and **Deuteronomy 5**

Exodus 20:8-11

⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

² “Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. ¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

- **What do we learn about the Sabbath here?**

Principle 2: Look for Applications of the Law within the Old Testament

- **How did Moses and the people in the Pentateuch observe the Sabbath?**
 - The word “Sabbath” appears 94x in OT, 57x in NT in ESV
 - **Genesis 2:1-3** - 1st Observation of Sabbath – God as part of creation!
 - **Exodus 16:13-30** – God sets up this principle in the deliverance, before 10 Commandments given
 - **Exodus 23:10-14...** - Sabbath Year, Sabbath Day, and yearly Festivals set up on Mt. Sinia
 - **Exodus 31:12-18** - Eternal sign, for every generation, Death to all who do any work on the Sabbath!
 - **Exodus 35:1-3** - Instruction from Moses – do not even light a fire on the Sabbath
 - **Leviticus** - lots of laws governing Sabbath, many of the Festivals start or end with sacrifices and ceremonies on the Sabbath, as well as Sabbath Offerings in Tabernacle
 - **Leviticus 25** - sets up Sabbath Year every 7 years, and Year of Jubilee every 50 years (after 7x7 years)
 - **Leviticus 26:1-5, 27-35** - Leviticus promises blessings for nation if observe Sabbath , curse if not
 - **Numbers 15:32-26** - While in dessert, shortly after sinia, see seriousness of disobeying command
 - **Nehemiah 13:1, 15-22** - Nehemiah finds the law, sees they are breaking Sabbath ... so fixes it!
 - **Psalms 92** - Psalms provides a more positive picture with this song for the Sabbath
 - **Isaiah 56:1-2, 58:13-14** - Isaiah commends the Sabbath, and shows the blessings of keeping it
 - **Isaiah 1:10-17** - Isaiah condemns keeping Sabbath simply as law, with no heart & deeds to match
 - **Jeremiah 17:19-27** - God gives specific instructions, and warning to the people about the Sabbath
 - **II Chronicles 26:15-21** - In the fall of Israel, destruction of the Temple and Exile land gets it's Sabbath

- **So what do we learn about the Sabbath from all these passages?**

Principle 2.5: Look for Applications of the Law during Old Testament Times / in Jesus' Day

- Studying culture of the day can be helpful here ... note that culture can be right or wrong, and even where we get hints it is right it is not Canonical like Scripture!
- What else do we know about the Sabbath from Jewish history / history of Jesus' time?

Principle 3: How does this point to Jesus / How does Jesus fulfill this Law in the New Testament

- **What does Jesus do on the Sabbath / How do people respond?**

- **What Does Jesus Say about the Sabbath – it's purpose, and Jesus' fulfillment of it**
 - **Mathew 11:28-30, 12:1-14** (see also Mark 2:23-28, Mark 3:1-6, Luke 6:1-9)

 - **Luke 13:10-17** (see also Luke 14:1-6)

 - **John 7:21-24** (see also John 5:1-18)

Summary

- Sabbath is a day to observe God's Law, law of God is for benefit of whole man
- Sabbath is a day of rest and freedom – so setting people free is appropriate
- Sabbath is an example of God's mercy – acts of mercy are very appropriate to the Sabbath
- Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath
- Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
- Jesus brings true rest to the weary

Principle 3.5: Look for Jesus in larger picture / principles that derive from the law

- Again, these are our observations, so not Canonical like Christ's own claims.

- Are there principles we have drawn about the Sabbath that apply to / are fulfilled by Jesus?
 - **Traditional division of law is Moral, Ceremonial/Religious, Civil/Governmental law**
 - Part of Sabbath is Moral
 - Part of Sabbath is Ceremonial
 - Part of Sabbath is Civil

 - **All three aspects point to / are fulfilled in Christ**
 - Moral
 - Ceremonial
 - Civil

 - **Question for us is how will we apply the Sabbath** – how does Jesus' re-interpretation of the Sabbath, his observation of the Sabbath, and His fulfillment of the Sabbath effect us?
 - Moral
 - Ceremonial
 - Civil

Principle 4: How do the New Testament Authors apply this law?

- **What does the rest of the New Testament say about the Sabbath?**
- **Paul on Practice of Sabbath:**
 - Galatians 4:8-11

 - Romans 14:1-8

 - Colossians 2:16-23

- **Hebrews and Entering God's Rest:**
 - Hebrews 4

Summary

- Jesus never eliminated the Sabbath – he practiced it
- Women that buried Jesus practiced it (did not prepare body until after Sabbath)
- Paul is often said to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath
- But we are free from law ... know now keeping law not get us to God, so not follow Sabbath as it bound to a law, as if slaves, or as if it earns us favor with God
- Different people practice differently ... that is alright, it is an area we can disagree
- It is also an area we should be full convinced of, and practice in away we are convinced fulfills the Scriptures and honors God ... while also honoring those with different convictions
- It is a gracious provision, for our benefit – both in providing rest, and in being a holy day
- Should lead us to Christ, being careful to enter His rest, holding firmly to our High Priest!

Principle 4.5: How did the early church interpret / apply this law?

- Again, not Canonical like Scripture, but we believe God does lead and guide the church, so practices of the early church, especially ones continued through time, are good starting points in our own application.
- How did the early church apply the Sabbath Laws / Sabbath Principles?
 - **Is Sunday ‘the Sabbath’, ‘the Lord’s Day’, or both?**
 - **Westminster Longer Catechism on 4th Commandment (Q. 116, 117)**

Q: *What is required in the fourth commandment?*

A: The fourth commandment requireth of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian sabbath, (Deut. 5:12–14, Gen. 2:2–3, 1 Cor. 16:1–2, Matt. 5:17–18, Isa. 56:2,4,6–7) and in the New Testament called The Lord’s day. (Rev. 1:10)

Q: *How is the sabbath or the Lord’s day to be sanctified?*

A: The sabbath or Lord’s day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day, (Exod. 20:8,10) not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; (Exod. 16:25–28, Neh. 13:15–22, Jer. 17:21–22) and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy (Matt. 12:1–13)) in the public and private exercises of God’s worship: (Isa. 58:13, Luke 4:16, Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:1–2, Ps. 92, Isa. 66:23, Lev. 23:3) and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day. (Exod. 20:8,56, Luke 23:54, Exod. 16:22,25-26,29)

Principle 5: Apply the Law in my Life / the Church’s Life Today

- **A good starting point can be summarizing and big picture issues / principles.**
 - **Options for Today**
 - Have to Practice – Sabbath as Law for Today (legalism?)
 - Ought to Practice – Sabbath as Model for Today
 - Helpful Practices – Sabbath Principles for Today
 - Not Practice – Sabbath Repealed (what about eternal Sabbath?)
 - **Principles from the Sabbath**
 - {see previous summaries ... do these help us narrow down our options?}

- **Wisdom from other Godly Men of Today**

- **BFC Articles of Faith** (article 21 – The Lord’s Day)

21-1 The first day of the week has been recognized by the Church as the Lord's Day since apostolic times. We believe, therefore, that it ought to be observed by all believers, voluntarily and in love, as a continuation of the sabbath principle, a day of remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead and a day of worship of God, rest from physical toil, service for the Master, and fellowship of the saints. Christians should engage only in duties of necessity and mercy on the Lord's Day.

- **BFC Biblical Principles for Living** (article 104-2 – Work and Rest)

104-2.1 Human work and rest find their origin in the work and rest, or sabbath, of God. The original cycle of God's work and rest at creation sets the pattern for human work and rest. Work and rest are therefore an essential part of God's design for the human race. Humanity's fall into sin brought a curse upon work and rest, resulting in pain, difficulty, and futility.

...

104-2.4 Christians should also observe the principle of rest in reverence for God, Who mercifully provides a weekly rest for weary workers. The law of Moses also required rest during the three annual feasts, and during the sabbatical and jubilee years. These establish a precedent for occasional opportunities of extended rest as the Lord provides. The principle of rest is violated when people fail to take proper physical and emotional rest.

104-2.5 Human work and rest will be consummated at the return of Jesus Christ, when He rewards Christians for their labor and invites them into His rest. In heaven, where the Christian will be completely free from sin's curse, meaningful work for the Lord and glorious rest in His presence will continue forever.

- **John Piper Summary of the Sabbath** (from 2005 Sermon)

Therefore the Sabbath principle was not abandoned by the early church. The shadow of Christ across this weary world still offers shade, namely, the first day of the week—the Lord’s day. And the meaning of that day is that Jesus is risen and Jesus is Lord and Jesus is Creator and Jesus is Redeemer and Jesus is the only place of rest for the soul. It’s a day for worshipping Jesus. It’s a day for saying by what we do and don’t do that Jesus, not our work and not the money we get from our work, is our treasure and our meaning. It is a special day for the honor and the glory of the Lord. A day for mercy and for man.

- **Practical Applications for Today**

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 - **Principle 2.5:** Look for Applications of the Law during Old Testament Times / in Jesus’ Day
- **Principle 3:** How does this point to Jesus / How does Jesus fulfill this Law in the New Testament
 - **Principle 3.5:** Look for Jesus in larger picture / principles that derive from the law
- **Principle 4:** How do the New Testament Authors apply this law?
 - **Principle 4.5:** How did the early church interpret / apply this law?
- **Principle 5:** Apply the Law in my Life / the Church’s Life Today