



# One Page Sermon

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#### Words of Life: Remember the Sabbath and treat it as holy

The fourth commandment serves as an important transition. Many commentators have made the observation that the first four commandments are about our relationship with God and the last six are about how to relate to one another. What is often ignored is that this transition actually lies within the fourth commandment. It is the only one of the ten which includes instructions on how to relate both to God and to other people.

“Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.” This is the directive of this commandment, but the second part of the commandment is often skipped. “Do not do any work on it—not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your animals, or the immigrant who is living with you.”

Sabbath is not just about you and your relationship with God. Sabbath is about living in a community of justice and rest. It is about creating a society that is different from the society that Pharaoh created in Egypt. Pharaoh oversaw an economy based on fear and scarcity. He killed, plundered, hoarded, and forced vile labor on people so that his power could be maintained. Sabbath is a call to a different way of life. It is a call to an economy based on trust in God’s provision, and not based on fear of scarcity.

Sabbath is not just about closing businesses on Sunday. And it is definitely not meant to be used as a marketing tool for stores and restaurants to show how righteous they are. For those companies that advertise that they are closed on Sundays so their employees can worship, I wonder if they pay a living wage. Do they give maternity and paternity paid leave? Do they provide affordable health care for their employees? Do they source their products from responsible companies and maintain fair business practices? If not, then I think the prophets may say to them, “I hate, I reject your festivals. I don’t enjoy your solemn assemblies” (Amos 5:21).

The Bible gives us two reasons for Sabbath. Exodus 20:11 tells us that we keep the Sabbath because God rested. We who are created in the image of God are in need of rest just as God was in need of rest. In fact, the Hebrew

word translated here as “rest” could have been “refreshed,” or “re-powered.” Exodus reminds us that God needed to be refreshed, so we who are created in God’s image

Deuteronomy 5:15 reminds us that the people were

once slaves in Egypt, and that God saved them from this tortuous state. In Deuteronomy, the people are 40 years removed from the plagues and the parting of the Sea of Reeds. They are about to enter a Promised Land—that is already occupied. On the precipice of their glory, God reminds them of the source of this glory. God reminds them of their roots. “You were once slaves” is a reminder once again that they are supposed to be doing things differently. God cares about justice. God cares about compassion toward the vulnerable people on the margins of society. Sabbath is a chance to create a society that cares about the things that God cares about.

Sabbath is meant to be a joy. It is a gift for people to have a chance to reflect on their own “imageness” of God. It is a gift to remember what God has done in our lives. It is a gift to slow down and know that our value does not come in what we produce or consume.

We no longer live under a Pharaoh, but we still live in a society that demands constant production. We still live in a Pharaoh-like economy that operates on fear and scarcity. We still live in a world that oppresses the vulnerable, enforces unfair labor, provides slave wages, and values people only for what they “contribute.”

Sabbath is about restoring joy in our lives. Remember the Sabbath by taking time to focus on a God who creates and a God who saves. Take joy in rest, reflection, prayer, and worship. Remember the Sabbath and restore joy.



Sabbath is not a marketing tool for companies to show how “righteous” they are.