

Ten Commandments

5: Weekly Maintenance

Exodus 20:8-11

Dr. Matt Cassidy ---- June 29, 2025

Well, good morning, Grace! You're going to be glad you came here today. We're studying the fourth commandment today, and it's a great commandment. The fourth commandment says that you need to keep the Sabbath day holy. This is a gift from God that commands us to enjoy the rhythms of life and his presence. Wow—it's the fourth commandment: Imitate God Almighty by resting and enjoying.

And today we need that more than ever. I pity the younger parents with kids in sports. We had kids in sports, but it's not like it is today. I don't know what's happened, but see if you relate to this video. I think some of you could probably be part of this video.

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Video on Kids' Sports:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C6ufVbXL3YH/?igsh=NTc4MTIwNjQ2YQ%3D%3D>

Coach: All right, parents listen up. Congratulations on your son making this elite travel baseball team. Your weekends belong to me.

Dad #1: Yeah ... what's the name of our team?

Coach: We're the Thunder Bats Shark Fin Dirt Devil Long Bombers.

Dad #2: That's like four names.

Coach: The first tournament is a regional in south Florida. It costs \$27,000 per family. From there we'll head to Costa Rica and Ecuador for two more tournaments.

Dad #1: I didn't know a passport was going to be part of this.

Dad #2: I don't have a passport.

Coach: [interrupting] If we win the second tournament we get an automatic bid into the Travel Baseball National Championship Elite Sectional, Silver Bracket ...

Dad #1: Oh, wow. That will be ...

Coach: ... which is a Qualifier for the World Series Travel Baseball International Tournament of Baseball.

Dad #1: Where is that?

Coach: Mumbai

Dad #2: I don't know if we can commit to that much.

Coach: What's that? You don't know, Jeff?

Dad #2: It's just, I have a job.

Coach: Well, you'll have to call in, won't you? Possibly quit. This is your life now.

Dad #2: Okay.

Dad #1: I don't know if I have enough on my credit card to pay for all this.

Coach: Take out a loan, Alan. Put a lien on your house. You need bats, gloves, cleats, pants, jerseys, specialty jerseys, carts, tents, chairs, speakers. This is basically the Major 1 Leagues.

Dad#1: Is it?

Coach: All right, here's our roster. Any questions?

Dad #2: Yeah. I do.

Coach: Jeff, take a couple of laps.

Dad #2: Will do.

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There's a style of humor called hyperbole where you exaggerate something to obscure levels, and that's what makes it funny. That was history. That wasn't even comedy. That was just history.

People need the fourth commandment in their lives desperately, especially parents of young kids. But when I looked at the fourth commandment there was something I was intrigued by this week. I kept staring at it. What's wrong with this? I had the hardest time understanding why it was in the top ten. The Ten Commandments are the moral laws of God.

In other words, there are three types of laws in the Old Testament. The moral laws are meant for all people, at all times, in all eras. And these are the laws that are written on our

conscience. And then we have this one that says to keep the Sabbath Day holy. Why is that universal? Why does that belong in the top ten?

Here's why. It has to do with the way we're made, the way we're designed. It has to do with creation itself. Even past anthropology has asked not just how man is made, but all of creation itself. We are designed and built to work six days and to pause and rest on the seventh. That's the rhythm of all of creation.

Seven is an especially powerful number in the Bible, because seven is the rhythm. Seven is how everything works. And if you violate that rhythm, it's at your own expense. This is the way God set things up.

Sorry—this is another great video. It's by the Bible Project people. Listen to the rhythm they are referring to.

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Bible Project Video on the Sabbath:
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C6ufVbXL3YH/?igsh=NTc4MTlwNjQ2YQ%3D>

Narrator #1: The number seven is a big deal in the Bible.

Narrator #2: Yeah, in biblical Hebrew the word “seven” is connected to the idea of fullness or completeness.

Narrator #1: And that's something that we all long for but don't often experience. Instead, we find ourselves working endlessly, fighting back chaos with no real rest.

Narrator #2: Yes. Now, keep all that in mind as we turn to Genesis 1 in the Bible. It begins with darkness and disorder. But then God speaks to bring about light and order so that life can flourish.

Narrator #1: And this happens over the course of six days.

Narrator #2: Each day is marked with the phrase “There was evening and there was morning.” But on the seventh day something special happens.

Narrator #1: God stops and rests.

Narrator #2: Right. Creation is brought to its completion on the seventh day. And that phrase “There was evening and there was morning” doesn't appear on day seven.

Narrator #1: It's like a day with no end.

Narrator #2: On the seventh day God’s presence fills His creation. The land provides for all of God’s creatures, including humans, who are appointed to rule the world with God forever.

Narrator #1: Kings and queens of the seventh day rest. I can get into that.

Narrator #2: But the humans are deceived by a dark power, and they forfeit that rest. They are exiled into the wilderness where they have to work as slaves to the land ...

Narrator #1: ... until they die and return to the dust from which they came.

Narrator #2: But God wants to restore humanity back to that seventh day rest. So, He chooses to give the family of Israel that experience of ultimate rest so they can share it with others.

Narrator #1: But how? They’re in Egypt, slaves to an oppressive empire that’s grinding them into the dust.

Narrator #2: So, God confronts Egypt and He liberates the Israelites, taking them through the darkness and chaos on the way to the Promised Land.

Narrator #1: Now while they’re on the way, they find themselves in the wilderness. It’s easy to get lost, life is a struggle. They’re not in the land of rest yet.

Narrator #2: But while they’re on the way, God invites them in the wilderness to start living as if they’re in the Promised Land.

Narrator #1: But how do you practice the future rest in the wilderness?

Narrator #2: Well, God tells them that every seventh day they are to stop their work—or, in Hebrew, to *shabbat*—so they can rest and enjoy God’s good world.

Narrator #1: So, take a whole day to live as if the ultimate rest has already come.

Narrator #2: Yeah, this is the Sabbath, celebrated every week on the seventh day. But there’s more. The Sabbath is just one of seven festivals that Israel practiced every year, each one anticipating that seventh day of rest.

Narrator #1: That is a lot of Sabbaths.

Narrator #2: And there’s even more. Every seven years the Israelites were to liberate slaves, forgive debts, and let the land rest for a whole year. And then, every seven times seven years was the ultimate seventh day of rest, called the Year of Jubilee. If anyone had lost their or gone into debt, all was forgiven and everything restored.

Narrator #1: So, this Sabbath, these feasts, this Year of Jubilee, are all pointing towards the hope of future rest.

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There's the power of that rhythm. There's a purpose and music, a tone, a melody, that's playing underneath. And it is six days of work and one day of rest.

**Sabbath is woven into the very fabric of the universe,
the thread that holds the world together.**

---Richard Lowery

Here's a great quote: "The Sabbath is woven into the very fabric of the universe, the thread that holds the world together."

That is essential to understanding the Sabbath. Let's read it together: "Sabbath is woven into the very fabric of the universe, the thread that holds the world together."

Our problem is that, unless we detach ourselves and are disciplined enough to have this weekly maintenance checkup where we pause and we reconnect with ourselves and the people around us, with nature, and with God—unless we do that, we find ourselves in soul fatigue. Our spirits become heavy. Our hearts are sometimes embittered. And that's why God gives us this fourth commandment. It's impossible to become what God's ambition is for your life without practicing the Sabbath. You can't become like Christ unless you act like Christ when it comes to the Sabbath.

Vince Lombardi, a famous football coach, said "Fatigue makes cowards out of all of us." That's absolutely true. And I found in my own life, and I bet you have too, that sometimes when we fail morally, it's not because we have this high-handed, rebellious streak towards God. Sometimes we do that just because we're tired. And we end up getting in an argument or saying things we shouldn't have said because we didn't have the strength to guard our tongue, or more importantly, our heart.

C. S. Lewis put it this way: "I believe that if the devil himself cannot get us to deliberately disobey God and openly do that, then he will make us busy, unfocused, and exhausted." That's a haunting fact of the spiritual life.

There are hundreds of studies over the centuries that have shown that hard work doesn't work—that the harder you work people for longer periods of time, the less they produce, and the

quality dissolves significantly. And why is that? It's because we violate this rhythm, this common thread that holds together all the universe, a seven-day cycle: six days of work, one day of rest.

This is the gracious and generous gift of God Almighty. He's trying to save us from ourselves. He's trying to get us to grab hold of that thread that holds the universe together.

Genesis 2:2-3

By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.

Look what it says in Genesis 2: “By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.” He's living in the seven-day cycle.

And then the Israelites—please note—before they ever make it to Mt. Sinai, before there are two tablets with the Ten Commandments, the moral laws for all of mankind, practice the Sabbath while they are on the way to Mt. Sinai in Exodus 16. They are to gather manna on six days, and then rest on the seventh day, because that's the rhythm. That's how the world works.

This Sabbath commandment is the way our lives are to be ruled. It's how we can maintain an effective and intimate relationship with ourselves, with our friends, with God and nature.

Let's look carefully at the Sabbath itself. There's no other commandment that takes up as much space as the fourth commandment. No commandment is nearly as verbose. I think God likes this one. He wants us to understand why.

One Command, Two Reasons Behind It

The word “Sabbath” itself in Hebrew means “to stop” or “to desist,” “to cease.” As my dad would say “Knock it off.” And what's interesting in the fourth commandment is that it's one

command, but for two different reasons. As many of you know, the Ten Commandments are found in two different places. And they're all but identical. They're in Exodus 20, but also in Deuteronomy 5. But what's interesting is that nine of the commandments are quoted almost verbatim. With the fourth commandment there's a difference. There's a different reason and purpose for the fourth commandment in these two explanations in Exodus and Deuteronomy.

What I'm going to do now is summarize the differences between Exodus and Deuteronomy, and then we're going to go and look more carefully at those. But I wanted you to know what to look for. So, listen carefully. It'll be coming at you fast. These are crucial differences between Exodus and Deuteronomy.

In Exodus the grounds for having the Sabbath is based on creation. And in Deuteronomy the grounds for having the Sabbath is the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Exodus focuses on Eden, and Deuteronomy focuses on Egypt.

We're to practice the Sabbath in Exodus by imitating God. We're to act like God in the Sabbath. In Deuteronomy there's just a flat-out command, and we're to obey God.

Exodus looks up and enjoys the presence of God, imitating Him. Deuteronomy looks back in history at the slavery that Israel was under.

Exodus exalts God in His character. And Deuteronomy exalts God in His power—the power of redemption.

Exodus is about holy mimicry. You're mimicking God, being like God. But Deuteronomy (listen for it later) is holy defiance. It's a resolve.

In Exodus God is reminding us that we are the children of God. And in Deuteronomy God is saying, *You are not slaves. You were never meant to be slaves—not to Pharaoh or to Nebuchadnezzar or to Xerxes—anyone. You belong to me.*

Exodus is a kind invitation. And Deuteronomy is a command. It's a warning.

Those are the differences.

Exodus

Exodus 20:8-11

“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.”

Let’s look specifically at Exodus now. Here’s the fourth commandment, a giant paragraph, Exodus 20:8: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to YHWH 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.” Here’s the why. “For in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore YHWH blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

In Exodus our command is to imitate God. God worked for six days and then rested. We’re to do the same thing. And we’re certainly to rest our bodies. It’s a cease and desist, we do no labor, our bodies take a rest. But there’s a soul and spirit effect on practicing the Sabbath. Because as we imitate God (there’s some irony in the application), we realize that as we’re trying to be like God, we’re not like God at all. We are supposed to be reflecting on our own personal frailty as created humans. From dust we came, and from dust we shall return. We start realizing our weakness, our smallness. We’re reflecting on the majesty and the grandness of God. And also, we’re finding ourselves realizing that we’re made from dust, and we’re just jars of clay. And it’s easy to break us, hurt us. And if you don’t practice the Sabbath, that jar of clay shatters.

The temptation, especially as pronounced in Exodus, is that we say, *But it’s me. I mean, do you know who I am?* (This was a few years ago)—*I mean, I’m young and healthy. I don’t have to rest on the seventh day. I mean, I have ambition, and I have discipline, fortitude. I can do*

things with technology at my hands. I also have drive. I can even use medication to keep going a little longer and a little harder. We think we don't have to submit to the rhythm of all of creation. And if we do that long enough, we'll find out that we're jars of clay, and we're fragile jars of clay. We break up and we burn out.

The number one cause of physical illness is stress. And usually the stress is because a person is running for too long and too fast. You can't run at those rpms for very long. And some of you can join me in a lifetime illness because we ignore the fourth commandment. And our body is bent. And the point is that we need to imitate God in resting. And we don't and try to pretend to be God, we'll find out that we're not. We're just fragile and easy to break.

Exodus says to learn from God's example and His rhythm. And I love it—Exodus is a tender invitation. It's like when you've got an irritable toddler because they need to take a nap. And sometimes as parents or grandparents, you say, *Follow my lead. Let's just lay down and snuggle together, and let's both take a nap. That's what Exodus is saying. Come take a nap with me and have dreams about how good and great God is.* In Exodus you have to do this to follow God's lead.

There's a fun story of how some American explorers were going to the mountains of Brazil. And they hired a team of natives for the jungle, to help with their supplies, but also to get them through the pass. And they had great ambitions, so they were going at a rate that was exhausting, three full days from sunrise to sunset. And they were moving at a pretty good rate as well.

And on the fourth day at about three o'clock all the natives just stopped. And they started unpacking and setting up camp for the night. And the Americans were too far ahead. They had to come back and say, "What's going on? We still have plenty of light left."

And the spokesperson, the tribe leader, said, "Oh, no, we have to stop here and wait for our souls to catch up." They knew they had been going too long and too hard, and they knew that their bodies might be able to go farther, but their souls couldn't.

Does anybody here feel like you're running too long and too hard and you just need to pause and let your soul catch up?

You can't experience the joy that comes from the Lord if you're exhausted. And probably the reason that you're exhausted is because you're not honoring the fourth commandment, and you're not keeping the Sabbath day holy.

Keep the Sabbath day holy. Exodus says to return to Eden. For just a moment, picture life as an optimist and enjoy all the things that God has done around you, what He's brought into your life, the creation that He's revealed, and ultimately, to God Himself. Rest ... pause ... enjoy. That's Exodus.

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

“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, ... 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.”

In Deuteronomy it's a different tone for a different purpose. It's like a twin, but it's not an identical twin. It's another reason to observe the Passover.

In Deuteronomy 5, Moses says, “Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, for YHWH your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to YHWH your God. On it you shall not do any work.” (I cut through all the maidservants ...) “ ... so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. Remember”—here's His reason—“that you were slaves in Egypt and that YHWH your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore YHWH your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy.”

There are two parts to his motivation, and part one is, *Do you remember how it was? Do you remember that you were slaves? You had no choices. You had no freedom. You worked all day, you worked every day. You were motivated by bullwhips. You had no freedom. You didn't rest, because you didn't have a choice to rest. Do you know who had rest? Free people. Pharaoh was free. You were a slave. Do you remember that? They turned you into something other than*

human beings. You lost your dignity as a human being. Do you remember that—having taskmasters over you so that you could never stop working? That was slavery. And then, do you remember this—how the power of God Almighty, YHWH, steps in with His righteous right hand and His overreaching arm? That means power. Do you remember the power of salvation that took place in Egypt?

“Who is YHWH that I should obey Him?” Pharaoh said.

This is YHWH. He obliterates Israel and He drowns the Egyptian army. It’s a twofold story of how very bad it was and how very great and powerful God was. And YHWH took them away from Egypt so that they might enjoy YHWH. He took them away from Egypt so that they might enjoy freedom. He took them out of Egypt so that they could enjoy rest, so that they could become human again. And we go back to Egypt. Our own ambitions and the culture all around us say, *I need to work all the time.*

Anyone who cannot obey God’s command to observe the Sabbath is a slave, even if he or she is self-employed.

---Tim Keller

Tim Keller writes about this commandment. He says, “Anyone who cannot obey God’s command to observe the Sabbath is a slave, even if he or she is self-employed.”

It’s personal ambition. And we are drowning in a worldview around us, which is to work 24/7—stay busy. We brag and complain at the same time.

Hey, how are you doing?

Oh, I’m really busy.

And we say that because that’s the way to be. When we say “Do not be conformed to this world,” what world? The world of slavery. A world of work and busyness. We’re back to being humans doing instead of human beings. And the logic here, the reason that Sabbath is to be kept holy in the Book of Deuteronomy, is this: He’s saying, *Do not revive what YHWH has removed. Don’t go looking in the sand for the heavy yokes that YHWH destroyed, that you carried on your shoulders to put them back on.* Don’t resuscitate what He’s killed. Why are you doing that? You’re destroying your life. You’re going back to Egypt. You’re forgetting how bad it was.

So, you have to choose. There's an existential mandate here—existential being choice. You need to choose: Will you be a slave or will you be free? If you're free, you'll rest. The Sabbath out of Deuteronomy says, *I will no longer be a slave. I'm always going to be free. I belong to YHWH.* It yells at the culture and says, *I'm not buying what you're selling. I'm no longer part of the rat race. I'm going to be independent. I'm going to follow God's fourth commandment, whatever it costs.*

It's this holy rebellion against the culture that is all around us. *And I'm going to show you how rebellious I am against this addiction to more, by resting. I'm going to rest on Sunday. So there.* And that's how you do it. You show the world that you're defiant, by resting.

In an interview I heard once with Denzel Washington they were surveying his career and all the roles he'd had. And someone asked him this: "Have you ever turned down some roles?"

He said, "Yeah, there were two."

"Why did you turn them down?"

He said, "Well, they were Civil War era, and they wanted me to play a slave." And then he just stared right into the camera: "I won't wear chains."

Yeah, a black man with his background ... *I won't even pretend. I won't wear chains.*

That's Deuteronomy. We don't wear chains. We were enslaved, and the almighty arm of God set us free. We're never going back. That's Deuteronomy. That's how we make the Sabbath holy—we show our freedom in Christ.

Observing the Sabbath Requires Faith

In the practice of the Sabbath, you're going to have to live by faith. This is where the rub is. Here's what has helped me learn to understand the Sabbath. The Sabbath is tithing time. Let me start by explaining the tithing of money. The Bible asks us to give generously to the Church. So, when you tithe, in our experience, that means we're going to have to trust God to live below our means in order to save money for the future and to give generously to our church. And when circumstances ebb and flow, we're still going to be committed to giving generously. And in our history, we've had multiple activities where we tell God, *This is not going to work and it doesn't make sense ... and I need to find a new accountant.* And God loves to come back and say, *Watch me.* Multiple times in our experience we didn't think we could make ends meet, and the bills

were coming due, and God somehow made it work. I still don't know how. I have a degree in finance. I'm telling you, it's magic.

We appeal quite often to the passage in Malachi, which is the only time God will double-dog dare us to obey Him and live by faith. *Give me the tithe, give me the full tithe, and watch me work. Just watch, and I will fill your storehouse with so much abundance you won't know what to do with it all. Come on! Let me in your checkbook. Let me in your bank account, and I'll show you Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides.*

And so, that's tithing well. And it's been a fun experience for us. The Sabbath says, *Okay, can I see your calendar?* The Sabbath is tithing time. Sabbath is saying, *Hey, you've seen what Jehovah Jireh can do with finances. Look what He can do with your plans and your perk charts, and all of your ways of making things happen.* Sabbath says, *Lord, I'm tying into Your rhythm, the rhythm of the entire universe. I'm going to grab the thread that holds the universe together, work six days, just one day of rest. And I'm going to trust You. I'm going to follow the commands in Deuteronomy and do it, because you set me free from slavery, and I'm not going to wear chains.*

And Sabbath keeping goes like this. There will be two finishes for this event of faith—two outcomes for this event of faith. One outcome would be that God is going to somehow make seven days of work fit into six days. I don't know how. Sometimes it's predictable. Other times it's clear that everyone's working efficiently. *I can't believe the cabinets got done. I can't believe people showed up on time*—whatever it might be. Seven days of work gets done in six days. *I can't wait to see how God is going to get Himself out of this trouble, because I'm doing the Sabbath.*

The other outcome is that it doesn't get done. It doesn't get done. There's not this third outcome where I panic and I'm going to work anyway. Because then I'm not doing the Sabbath, and every week there's always something. Isn't there? Isn't there always something? Next week I'll do it—I'll trust God and see if He comes in.

The Sabbath says God's going to do seven days in six or it's not going to get done. That's how you live by faith, by practicing the Sabbath. The Sabbath says, *I will not wear chains. I'm not going back to that.*

The Sabbath isn't just about the stuff you're doing. I think a lot of it is that you have to stop the way you're thinking. It's a whole mindset. It's seeing that quote where you realize that

God is the creator of all of creation, and He's set things up in a way that you need to sing His melody, get involved with His rhythm, and watch and enjoy. It's sailing, not rowing. It changes your way of thinking about who you are. You're not a slave. You've been redeemed. It cost a lot. It was His strong hand and His outstretched arm, the depth of Jesus and His resurrection—that's what it took to set you free. And what did He free you from? The rat race. What's a guy like you doing in a place like that anyway? And the Sabbath makes you stop and think on that day, *Wait, what am I doing here? How did I get here? Did I stop imitating the rest of God? Did I forget how bad slavery was and what it took to get me out?* That's what the Sabbath means. That's how to live the Sabbath.

How to Practice the Sabbath

Now I want to do some very quick (if you don't mind) things that I've learned over the years about how to practice the Sabbath, and maybe some steps you could take to keep the Sabbath and make it holy.

The first thing you have to do is to decide to have a Sabbath. This is the first part and maybe the most important and sometimes the hardest. You need to resolve. It's not like, *Hey, I think I'm going to give that a try.* It's a resolve. Because, like I said, it's living by faith, and faith comes with a counter-faith, and that's temptation. Something's going to come up, and you're going to stay with that. You're going to say, *I'm going to enjoy the gift that God gave me.* And you pray, *Lord God, I'm going to need some help. I want to obey Your command. I want to find myself in the rhythm that You set out for the whole universe to abide by. I want to hold on to that thread. I want to sing that melody. I will not wear chains. You have to choose.*

Second, as a consequence of that, you have to protect the Sabbath. I can't imagine not doing this. You fill in that Sabbath day with "I'm busy." You can put in things you're doing with family time, or just say, "It's my Sabbath rest." And then when somebody says, "You want to go do something, this, that, or the other thing?" and it doesn't fit into one of the categories of practicing Sabbath, you say, "Sorry, I'm all tied up." Save that date every week.

Three is to just be flexible. On that side of the resurrection the Jews had all kinds of rules about the Sabbath. Some were in the Bible, most were not. But still, the point is that on this side of it, it doesn't have to be on Saturday, as in their case, or on our Sunday. That's the spirit of the law, not the letter of the law. You can also choose when to start. It's supposed to be twenty-

four hours. It can start in the morning, it could start at sunset. Some people start at noon. Whatever works, just do it. You can pick the day, whatever day you want.

When Billy Graham's wife Ruth was raising the boys, her Sabbath was having devotional books all over the house open. And so, whenever she had a chance to pause, she put her Sabbath together in 30-minute increments whenever she got a chance, coming up in rare moments. I understand what that's like.

At the Cassidy house we started on Saturday before sunset, especially in summer times. We'd bring the kids in early, they'd have baths early. We had a lot of fun for dinner—they got to have one of their favorite meals. Then we had favorite games to be played and sometimes a favorite movie. They went to bed early so they could wake up and be fresh on Sunday morning. And besides having them wanting and looking forward to going to church on Sunday, (and this is one of the things I want to emphasize) it was supposed to be fun. The Sabbath is supposed to be joy-filled for everyone involved, the kids especially.

The Puritans, bless them, got it half-right and half-wrong. They honored the Sabbath, but often turned it into a funeral. No laughter, no play, only solemn faces and long sermons. But the Sabbath was given not only to cease from toil, but to delight—to feast, sing, and smile under God's smile.

---Joy Davidson

Here's a great quote from Joy Davidman, C. S. Lewis' wife. She said, "The Puritans, bless them, got it half-right and half-wrong. They honored the Sabbath, but often turned it into a funeral. No laughter, no play, only solemn faces and long sermons." (Hey, wait a minute ...) "But the Sabbath was given not only to cease from toil, but to delight—to feast, sing, and smile under God's smile."

How do you keep the Sabbath day holy? By looking out at the world and seeing all that is good; by entering into all the goodness and the fullness of friendship, and loving activities, and rejoicing in them. And above all, looking beyond all of that in this world to YHWH, who sustains it and gives it to us. Make it fun.

Involve the whole family. Teach the children how to do the Sabbath. That would be a good time for them to help you have a Sabbath. That could be a time when they get to make lunch and clean up after, whatever that might be. You get the picture. It's a whole family event.

If you don't have a family, if you're single or your kids are out of the house, find someone else to do it with. Half the fun of the Sabbath is enjoying other people. So, have them over and enjoy a meal together. Talk about things like at Thanksgiving, almost. What are you thankful for this week? What has God been doing in your life this week? You could have a family rhythm there.

Learn from others. I have found this to be an incredible resource—just asking how other people do it, especially in whatever season of life I was in. A couple of resources I'd like to suggest to you are Kevin and Kate Maurice. Kevin, one of our other pastors, wrote his doctoral dissertation on practicing the Sabbath. He's read everything. You can ask how they're doing it with four little ones. I've found that Jeremiah and Dayna Ebeling (another pastor at our church) are very creative in ways that they did it with four young children growing up. They had different Sabbath days. I think Jeremiah took Friday off, and he was safe from father responsibilities. And then on Tuesday Dayna took that day as her Sabbath. And so, the kids learned, *Oh, we can't talk to Mom, it's Tuesday. We've got to go talk to Dad. Oh no, he'll say no.* Too bad.

Anyway, the point is that there are a number of people who have been doing this for a number of years, and you can learn something from others.

Grace, here's my challenge to you. I mentioned that it's a rhythm, and we did rhythms at the beginning of this calendar year. Why don't we all practice the Sabbath through the end of the summer. It's six more weeks—just do the Sabbath. Work six days and enjoy the seventh day. Keep the Sabbath holy for six weeks in a row and see what happens.

Fundamentally, the question here is, Who would you be if you practiced the Sabbath, if you kept that day holy, if you joined into the rhythm of all of creation and weren't off sync with that? If you chose to hold on and grasp that thread that binds all of creation together? What if you resolved, *I won't wear chains?* What if you chose to become like Christ in the way Christ observed the Sabbath? If the Father rested on the seventh day, then you should too.

Here's a picture of the Sabbath. I'm sorry for the disrespect, but it's a Corona beer ad. I think about it a lot. Remember those ads where someone's in a beach chair, it's a beautiful beach, and he's skipping rocks. He doesn't have a care in the world. And then you hear this pager go off. And you think, *Uh-oh*. And he reaches over and he grabs that pager, and he holds it like a flat rock. Not today, Satan. I'm not a slave, and this is my Sabbath. I'm not going to be part of the world. I'm going to be part of the kingdom. Let's do that—once a week. God is asking you if you would be interested in taking a nap with Him. And when you dream, would you dream of His glory? That would be good for you. I thank God for that fourth commandment. Let's do that.

[Prayer]

Lord Jesus, thank You for being Lord of the Sabbath. And Father, thank you for boundaries and curbs and guardrails that keep us from the freedoms that we have to destroy our lives. Lord, I'd ask that You would help us with a whole new appreciation of what we've learned today from Exodus and Deuteronomy about why the Sabbath is so essential. It glorifies You. It mocks demons when we rest. It reminds the devil that You've set us free and we belong to You. We're human beings and we're in Your image.

Lord, I want us to learn. I'd ask that You would give us the courage to say no to things that keep us working. Lord, I'd ask that You would give us miracles. Jehovah Jireh, please show up in the lives of the people who are listening here today that doubt the power of the Sabbath and what You're doing, and give them miracles that show them they can get seven days of work done in six when You're working with them, when they're trusting You. Give them a couple of quick victories so they can start living a life of faith by practicing the Sabbath. That would be fun. Give them some God stories, Jehovah Jireh.

Lord, I'd ask that You bless this church. Keep her rested and strong. Thank You for the Sabbath. We love that fourth commandment. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.