Section: Commands (Law)

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q48. Why does God give the fourth commandment: Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy?**

So we will worship and rest in God andremember the finished work of Jesus.

**Exodus 20:8** “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

**Genesis 2:3** So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

**Mark 2:27** And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

**2 Corinthians 1:20** (NIV1984) For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

**Hebrews 4:9-10** So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

The command of Sabbath is an interesting topic.

As we’ll be reminded of tonight, the Sabbath command has been one of much misunderstanding throughout human history. Two ways this has shown to be the case is in some people’s outright denying the reality of Sabbath or others embracing a Sabbath idea, but they load it with extra-biblical and unbiblical, burdensome requirements.

So, our hope in this lesson is that you gain some helpful and encouraging insight into the Sabbath doctrine and in that this teaching helps you see with fresh eyes what a blessing Sabbath is, both here and now, and in the age to come. And we also hope that you identify and repent of ways that you have not been honoring the Sabbath command from God, unto taking up a new approach to Sabbath.

**What Sabbath is not**

As we begin our lesson tonight, I want to begin tonight by saying what Sabbath **is not**.

+Sabbath is not simply about a day off from responsibilities for us to act like the lord of our own lives with no regard for God’s design for Sabbath.

You’ll see tonight that Sabbath is a blessing to you, **but** it is not ultimately **about** you.

This means, if we treat it like just another holiday or day off, we are not honoring Sabbath as God has commanded.

(We should know this because anything that we make only about us and not ultimately for God and His glory, is idolatry and sin and selfishness at work. On this topic specifically, the goal is to honor God with our lives and to be sure our Sabbath is ultimately about honoring and worshiping him.)

So, there is the first thing Sabbath is not; it’s not a free day devoid of God or biblical responsibilities.

+Another thing Sabbath is not. It is not a day of unpleasant burdens from God.

Sabbath is commanded to us, but it is not a bad thing. If we truly love Jesus, then Sabbath, as He has designed it, is an awesome and blessed thing. We hope you see that in our study tonight.

Now, let’s consider…

**What does Sabbath mean?**

An over simplified definition of Sabbath is **rest**.

But we need more clarity than that. The Sabbath term needs to be understood through informed biblical lenses.

So, that is our aim tonight; to biblically understand some foundational truths about Sabbath and then apply those truths to our lives as Christians.

Now, **what is Sabbath**? Perhaps Sabbath can be summarized this way:

*The purpose of the moral law of Sabbath in this creation is to provide us a special day of worship to God, physical and mental rest and refreshment, other God glorifying activities.*

Next we will consider….

**Why Sabbath?**

We need Sabbath. Sabbath under our great God is a beautiful reality that God has given. God has given sabbath so that we worship and rest in God and remember the finished work of Jesus. God designed man to rest in Him.

And for the saints, it will be experienced for all eternity.

One way we see this—one way we know sabbath is important is because with the fall of mankind, our sinful tendency is to produce (to earn) our identity, to prove ourselves, to make something of ourselves. But this longing is only satisfied in Christ, in salvation, and is rightly experienced in our resting in who God is and trusting in His gospel promises.

The practice of Sabbath is one way God ordains we make war with our work, prove, earn sinful struggle.

In Sabbath, we rest in Christ from our labor and it helps us cut ties with our sinful self-sufficiency.

Now, as we jump into the details of our study, it’s important first to call back to something we have covered in our catechism journey already. So, let’s begin with our first point tonight.

**Sabbath is a part of the moral law and it is communicated in the Ten Commandments**.

I hope you were here for the lesson on biblical law (biblical commands) I gave before our summer break. If you were, then this point will have the right context you need in order to see the value in it.

In that lesson, we saw that the Ten Commandments are a summary and expression of the Universal Moral Law. And that’s why we can look back now-in our day- to the **moral elements** of the Ten Commandments and see God’s revealed will for us even in our time in the New Covenant.

We saw this is the case because the moral law is eternal and unchanging.

God does not add things into the moral law or take away things.

The moral law is what it is because it is based on an unchanging God, so the Universal Moral Law always exists, with the same moral requirements.

Now, the fourth commandment of these Ten Commandments is found in:

**Exodus 20:8-11 (ESV)**

8“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11For in six days the Lord made heaven and 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.”

In this passage, the moral requirement of Sabbath is expressed, and we have supplementary data along with moral requirement. Hopefully you remember what “supplementary data” means from our law lesson.

So, that’s where we need to start, the important take away here is: Sabbath is a part of the moral law and it is communicated in the Ten Commandments. And therefore, it remains today, since Universal Moral Law doesn’t change.

I would spend more time explaining this point if we had the time, but since much of it was already covered in that biblical law lesson already given, we’ll move on and you can reference back to that lesson for reminders within this point.

With that critical point of review covered, let’s now go back and begin at the beginning of our Bibles on this doctrine. Which takes us to our next important point, which is…

**In creation God instituted and modeled the Sabbath ordinance for mankind.**

In this point, you also need to recall something else we taught in prior midweek lessons, that is about creation ordinances (we covered this in our marriage section).

In the creation of this creation, there were specific things that God instituted for mankind that need to be identified and understood as such. These things are often called “*Creation Ordinances*” or “*Creation Mandates*” in theology.

There are several creation ordinances, but to name a few, some of these include things such as:

**Marriage** – Marriage is instituted at creation as the unique covenantal bond between one man and one woman. This does not mean that marriage is for all people, but to those who are not gifted with singleness, are to be married in the way that God instituted in creation.

Another creation ordinance is:

**Work** – In creation, God instituted and instructed the necessity and goodness of God-honoring labor. This includes the task of having dominion over the rest of creation.

And another creation ordinance is our main focus tonight:

**Sabbath** – In creation, God instituted the Sabbath ordinance for mankind.

The important things we need understand about creation ordinances is that:

1. Creation ordinances are commanded to be rightly *honored* by all men and women.
2. Creation ordinances continue in force into this present day.

The two understandings about creation ordinances are illustrated, for example, in Jesus’ teaching on marriage. Remember when Jesus taught on marriage in the gospel books, such as in Matthew 19. Jesus teaches clearly that marriage is between one man and one woman, and to prove this is the unchanging standard for what marriage is, He calls back to the creation account and uses the *creation ordinance* for the basis for this reality. He says:

**Matthew 19:4-7 (ESV)**

4“…[God] created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

In this passage Jesus is referencing and quoting the creation account.

What this means is marriage does not change on the whim of culture or the attractions of any given person.

Rather, it is what it is and it must be honored how God has designed because it is a *creation ordinance* and that does not change in this creation.

Hopefully you see how Jesus didn’t use man’s desire or tradition to define marriage...He used God’s authoritative creation design as seen expressed in Genesis.

The Apostle Paul also shows us the importance of creation design in his teaching in a number of places. For example, he appeals to the creation order when He asserts the distinct roles that men and women have in the church and home, such as in 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 2:13-15.

He roots his arguments in creation; man was created first, then the woman from man.

So, in this the point that needs to be understood is that: *An ordinance that is creational is perpetual while we live in this creation*….therefore, *creation ordinances* continue today.

What we also need to understand is that *creation ordinances* are over all of mankind.

This means that marriage is not just for Christians. All people who are given the gift of marriage, Christian or not, are to seek it-in accordance to God’s design.

This means that work is not just for Christians. All people who are given the natural ability to work, Christian or not, are to work-in accordance to God’s design.

And, likewise, Sabbath is not just for Christians. All people, Christian or not, are given the ordinance of Sabbath and are expected to do it-in accordance to God’s design.

Now, this may seem odd to you, but it should not be.

Just think about it; No sound person is claiming that working is just for Christians.

And no sound person is claiming that marriage is just for Christians.

Now, as we’ve learned, a non-believer cannot do anything that truly honors God.

So…..while they may have a real marriage….in their hearts they do not intend it for the glory of God, and they do not intend for it to display Christ and the Church—as we’re told in Ephesians 5 is a high purpose of marriage.

But the fact that it isn’t done to God’s glory, does not mean the marriage is not real. If it’s between one man and one woman, it is a real marriage.

The same thing goes for work. Even non-believers should work according to their role and natural abilities. Even though they don’t do this “unto the Lord” as Scripture commands, it is still work—they should work.

And the same thing goes for Sabbath, non-believers should rest on a Sabbath day, and they should worship God. They won’t and can’t worship God as non-believers, but this doesn’t remove the obligation….rather it increases their guilt before God because they don’t obey Him in this.

The Sabbath ordinance really does sit over them, the fact that they are non-believers, doesn’t change this reality.

I hope that helps you understand what *Creation Ordinance* means, the importance of these, and what implications these have for mankind, created in God’s image.

Sabbath is universal moral law, so it is over all people. And, it’s a creation ordinance, so it is over all people.

Now, let’s see this in Scripture in regard to our point that: In creation God instituted and modeled the Sabbath ordinance for mankind.

There are three key texts that show us this.

First **Genesis 2:1-3 (ESV)**

1Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Why did God create creation over 6 days? Have you ever wondered that? God is omnipotent.

The all-powerful God could have created everything in one moment, so why six days? Well, it wasn’t for no reason. It should be obvious that He did it for a deliberate purpose as is true of all things that He does.

He did it to teach us.

Our text says that He rested on the seventh day, surely He didn’t need rest, He was not tired or weary, and this rest wasn’t sleep or a timeout from His sovereign sustaining of all things, so what does that mean?

Well, by resting, God was declaring that this work of creation was complete, **and He established a one day in seven day Sabbath model for us.**

Then the text says that God “blessed the seventh day and made it holy”, or some translations say He “sanctified” it.

What does this mean? Making it holy means that He set it apart, He designated it for something particular.

And what does “blessed” mean? God’s blessing affects a thing, it is effectual. When God blesses something, He makes it receive good and/or be the source of good for others.

So, in blessing one day in seven, He is making it a source of good, a source of blessing. For whom? For mankind, and ultimately for His glory.

In the blessing of one day in seven and making it holy, God is instituting Sabbath in this creation for mankind and in this way: one day in seven days. **God is setting the example that the moral law of Sabbath is to be honored in this way in this creation**.

Therefore, I hope you are seeing the creation ordinance of Sabbath, and it being important as to how God requires the moral law of Sabbath to be honored in this creation.

But I said we have three passages today that help us see this point, let’s look at the other two.

**Exodus 20:8-11 (ESV)**

8“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.”

Ok, pause in the text….so here we have the 4th commandment being laid out in the Old Covenant. We saw the Sabbath reality already in the creation account, now we see it again in the Ten Commandments.

Now, let’s pick up where we stopped to see what the 4th command is tied to, what example does God give through Moses **for keeping the Sabbath**?…

11For in six days the Lord made heaven and 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.

Now I hope you see that this is indeed a reference back to Genesis chapter 2.

Let’s reiterate a few important things in this passage:

-This passage clearly identifies and ties man’s Sabbath to the creation reality we saw in Genesis. In the 4th Commandment, God **grounds the obligation** to keep the Sabbath to His own *one in seven* example in the creation account.

God’s resting was intended to be imitated by mankind, His image bearers—This is part of the responsibility of being an image bearer of God.

-In this passage, we also see that Moses uses past tense words: *blessed* and *made*. **He is not saying now, years later, God is setting forth a new thing.** We see the past tense terms tell us this was done in creation and is tied to creation. And the fact that God had blessed and sanctified this day is clearly given in the 4th commandment as a reason to honor the Sabbath.

Now, moving on to the last passage we’ll look at to see that Sabbath is a creation ordinance is:

**Mark 2:27(ESV)**

27And [Jesus] said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

-Once again, we have the past tense term ‘made.’ Clearly Jesus is referring back to the creation account since we’ve already seen that God blessed the Sabbath day and ***made*** it holy *in the creation account*.

So, Jesus affirms what we have seen in Exodus and Genesis. The expression of the moral law of Sabbath **was instituted in creation**. It is a creation ordinance and it was instituted for mankind to obey and be blessed by.

Now, we will move on to our next important point about the Sabbath…we will see more thoroughly that…

**Sabbath was upheld by Jesus.**

Most of you are familiar with the discussions or arguments that the Pharisees had with Jesus about the Sabbath when He was walking this earth before the cross. And sometimes people misunderstand what was happening in those encounters. So, let’s look at this for clarity and to see our point here that Sabbath was upheld by Jesus.

As you know, the Pharisees were out to get Jesus, they were desiring to catch Him in some act or teaching that put Him in disobedience to God’s law, their extra-biblical law, or the law of the land. So, more than once, they tried to claim that Jesus was wrong in regards to the Sabbath. We see this for example in: READER

**Mark 2:23-** **Mark 3:1-6 (ESV)**

**Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath**

23One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. 24And the Pharisees were saying to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” 25And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: 26how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?” 27And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

**A Man with a Withered Hand**

3:1Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. 2 And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. 3 And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” 4 And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. 5 And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. 6 The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

The Pharisees accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath. In this account we see His disciples picking grain to eat as they walked through a field and we see Jesus heal someone in need.

What we must understand is that neither Jesus nor His disciples were violating the moral command of the Sabbath in these things. Therefore, Jesus was not excusing violations to the true Sabbath law. Rather, He’s asserting that He and His disciples have not violated it.

The problem for the Pharisees lies with the extra-biblical and unbiblical additional traditions they added that prevented someone from picking and eating grain as they walked through a field or the healing someone in need.

So, Jesus uses this Pharisee challenge to teach what true Sabbath observance looks like. In this, Jesus wasn’t changing moral Sabbath requirements, He was teaching what true Sabbath observance looked like and He condemned their false add-on requirements. Some might wrongly think that Jesus was loosening or changing Sabbath laws, but that is not correct. Remember His words in verses 27 and 28: Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

In this, Jesus is declaring His divinity and His Lordship as he upholds the moral Sabbath command, and helps inform how it was to be honored, correcting those who were adding extra requirements to it.

In fact, in the gospel books, **we see Jesus teach several important clarities** that benefit us to know well about Sabbath honoring.

For example, in calling back to David eating the bread of the Presence in the house of God, Jesus is teaching that acts of necessity are permitted on the Sabbath.

This means that a stay-at-home mom, for example, may do the work of cooking a meal on the Sabbath if it’s reasonable in the time and effort it requires, because this meets needs of necessity.

Another example of one of these points of clarity is in Matthew 12. There Jesus uses an example of the Old Covenant priests, and His point in that is to say that religious devotion, religious work, and worship is permitted on Sabbath. So, godly pastors and other church staff are not in sin for “working” on the Sabbath, because these are permissible acts of piety.

Another example of one of these points of clarity is that acts of mercy are not prohibited on the Sabbath.

On the contrary, it is glorifying to God to do acts of mercy to others on the Sabbath. We see this in Jesus healing others on the Sabbath.

Therefore, if you have a friend in real need, and a solid opportunity to do good to them on the Sabbath, do not decline that opportunity on the basis of it being your Sabbath day. Rather, where wise and helpful, do acts of mercy.

These points of clarity from Jesus may seem like common sense to us, and it surely is easy to see that the Pharisees had evil intentions in challenging these things, but with all the confusion around this topic throughout history, these are actually very helpful points for us to see and know.

So, there is much to be gathered from Jesus’ teachings on Sabbath.

I hope you see Him upholding and clarifying the moral law of Sabbath.

Next, we need to see that:

**There is an “already, not yet” reality to Sabbath.**

We have seen that in this first creation, mankind gets the command and blessing of Sabbath.

And, as believers in the New Covenant, we get the “already” aspect of this, namely that we get to enjoy and worship God **because of the work of Christ**. Look at:

**2 Corinthians 1:20** (NIV1984) For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

We “already” get to experience fellowship with God, and we “already” get to enjoy union with Jesus by grace alone through faith alone, not on the basis of our works.

But there is a “not yet” reality Scripture speaks to as well. As we all know, we are still in this broken creation. We are “not yet” on the new earth, we are “not yet” in the *final rest* God has planned for the elect.

So, we get to look forward to an even better rest awaiting us. The Sabbath we will enjoy in the new creation will be the ultimate and best Sabbath experience we can have. In Hebrews 4, we are told that “there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God (v.9)” and we are called to “strive to enter that rest (v.11).” As God’s people-God’s elect- we get to look forward to that “not yet” Sabbath experience with eagerness, and trust in the finished work of Christ as our basis for being given that rest.

In all of this, we have, once again, another way of seeing that Sabbath is a part of the unchanging, eternal, Universal Moral Law. Sabbath wasn’t abolished after the Old Covenant, and it doesn’t get abolished by the new creation. Sabbath is an eternal reality, and we will be empowered by God to keep and enjoy Sabbath perfectly in the new creation. What a great blessing and clarity.

**APPLICATION**:

Now, let’s spend the rest of our time talking about how to obey the Sabbath command.

I need to tell you, this is where many people have gotten into trouble in the past. I told you earlier that some people outright deny the reality of Sabbath or others embrace a Sabbath idea, but load it with extra-biblical and unbiblical, burdensome requirements.

So, my desire is to help you begin to understand what the Sabbath command requires of us in the New Covenant. In this, we can identify and repent of ways that each of us have not been honoring the Sabbath command from God, and take up a new approach to Sabbath.

Before we look at the application, I want to read a great quote from theologian AW Pink:

“…*the Sabbath is not to be looked upon as an irksome duty, but as a sacred privilege. Instead of being a burden grievous to be borne, it affords us a special opportunity for profitable and joyous exercises. The spirit in which we are to enter upon its hallowed employments is neither one of bondage nor dread, but of freedom and gladness. We are to find in it our greatest joy of the week, delighting ourselves in the Lord, all that is within us praising His holy name*.”

Yes, and amen.

And, let us be very careful to not cast aside real requirements of the Sabbath by misapplying liberty. We are not saved by our obedience, but we are saved unto obedience. To this point AW Pink said:

“*There is a world of difference between spiritual liberty and fleshly license. Those whom Christ makes free are freed Godwards and not sinwards.”*

…Now, first, I want us to consider three practical points about sabbath in this creation for you to know.

1. God has particularly appointed that one day in seven be a Sabbath to be kept holy unto him.

AW Pink, again, said this: “*Our first and chief concern must be to diligently see to it that the Lord is not robbed by us of any part of His due on the Sabbath Day.*”

Our sabbath day is to have a special focus by us on God.

We know that all of life is to be lived for the glory and worship of God, we know that. But Sabbath, in this creation, is designed to give us a break from the normal work and pace of life to be even more focused on worshiping and enjoying God.

So, practically, how does this look? This **can** include spending additional time in the Bible, spending additional time in prayer, spending additional time in study of sound doctrine from trusted Bible teachers, spending additional time singing songs of praise, spending additional time in fellowship with other Christians, and spending additional time in service to others as ministries of mercy to them.

Because of this point, often times, it is most wise to Sabbath on Sunday because of the scheduled gathering of Christians for what we often call “church.” This Sunday gathering includes these things, so it’s plain to see why Sabbath’ing on Sunday is recommended.

But I don’t want to leave you with the impression that simply going to church is sufficient to honor this first purpose of Sabbath. This purpose of Sabbath deserves more than a few hours on that day. So, we should not simply go to church, and then consider this first purpose met. *The* ***day*** *is given for this purpose*. Don’t leave worshiping and enjoying God at church when you walk out the doors at the end of service. Spend your day enjoying God, focused on Him in a particular way that is set above how you do that on other days of the week. He deserves our worship and has called us to this Sabbath **day** to get to do it in a unique way.

1. God has particularly appointed that this one day in seven be a Sabbath to be rested upon by each person for their own benefit.

This means that God also made Sabbath for *the man*-for mankind that is.

So, in addition to its being first and foremost about worshiping and enjoying God, it is also a day uniquely given for the blessing or benefit of each one of us.

We have the blessing of slowing down from work and the other demands of life to enjoy a day of rest. This is a great gift from God to us!

God is specifically calling each of us to stop the work labor we do on other days and rest from it. Depending on your work, this may be the day you need to rest your body from the normal physical demand your work puts on it.

It also may be the day you need to rest your mind from the normal demand your work puts on it.

It is both these things for everyone, but when your job stresses a particular part of you, Sabbath gets to give you the rest you need, especially there.

Consider though that in resting our minds, we don’t get to be thoughtless lumps on Sabbath, but we do get to rest from the mental stress of work…..like

the complicated multitasking serving 10 tables takes for a waitress,

or the stressful mental work that programming new software takes for the software engineer,

and so on.

Enjoy the blessing of Sabbath as a good gift from God!

Additionally, under this point I want to say that on Sabbath we very much get to still enjoy the things that God has given us. He’s given us many gifts and called us to enjoy them for His glory.

In this though, we must be careful to not pack our day with hobbies and such that would distract us from honoring the day rightly, but to do something that is enjoyable to you is permissible on Sabbath. ….Want to take your son to the park to throw the ball around on your Sabbath? That’s fine, so long as you don’t let it own your day, heart, or mind and it doesn’t keep you from fulfilling God’s design for Sabbath otherwise as well.

Really test yourself in this. We don’t want to fall off the path wrongly on one side or the other. Where is your heart and mind on this day? Tied up in things of the world and hobbies, or thriving in Sabbath realities? Ask for wisdom from spiritually mature people around you, and invite real accountability on this. Enjoy God’s gifts in this creation, even on Sabbath, but be sure to have all the elements of true Sabbath thrive by not letting the day be primarily about you and your hobbies.

1. God has designed that Sabbath function in additional ways differently under various covenants.

In the Old Covenant, the Sabbath was used in additional ways to bring about and display the need for the coming Messiah. One of these ways was told in Deuteronomy 5, that the Sabbath served to remind the people about their deliverance from Egypt, which was a foreshowing of the Messiah to come.

In the New Covenant, we can gather from Hebrews 4 that the Sabbath serves to remind us of the better deliverance God has now accomplished in Jesus the Messiah. This deliverance is in the finished work of Christ for the redemption of the elect….it us our salvation from sin and judgment unto eternal life with Christ.

In addition to this, there are other additional functions of “Sabbath” realties found in Scripture.

Unfortunately, I don’t have time to show you all the ways this works. But I’ll briefly explain what this means. Again, remembering back to what we learned in my Biblical Law/Commands lesson, there is often positive law and/or supplementary data added to moral law that applies for a particular time and reason. And this is certainly the case with the Sabbath reality in Scripture.

In addition to the moral command, (the one day in seven in this creation), there were other “Sabbaths” that were observed in the Old Covenant.

For example, you may know about the *Sabbath year*, as some call it, that was instructed by God in the Old Covenant. We must be careful to differentiate the unchanging moral command of Sabbath, from these changing Positive Law and/or supplementary things, like a Sabbath year.

The changing Positive Law and/or supplementary Sabbath things we see in the Old Covenant are abrogated (or abolished) by the New Covenant.

This is important to know, and is especially relevant because there are false teachers these days making a lot of money getting people worked up about Sabbath years and pretending to know some false Bible code that helps them supposedly predict things.

You may be familiar with the popular Harbinger book series, or things like it, that are spreading these unbiblical ideas in our day.

Properly understanding the Bible informs us that the Sabbath years and such are not a part of the unchanging moral Sabbath command and were Old Covenant realties that don’t apply today in the New Covenant.

So, as people living in the New Covenant, it is helpful to understand this.

Before we close our lesson, let me finish the application section by speaking more about preparation and what day of the week Sabbath is to be honored on.

**Prepare for Sabbath Day**

Regarding preparation: With the demands for our attention and of life in general on a 21rst century person, if we are going to do Sabbath well, we will need to prepare for that day.

We need to see to it that the things that will tempt us to disobey Sabbath or distract us from proper Sabbath observance are dealt with before Sabbath day arrives.

God has made each of us stewards of the time, resources, and responsibilities He has given us. It is our duty to Him to manage these things well so that none of them put us at odds with His commands.

So, practically we must plan our weeks around our Sabbath. We must know what day our Sabbath is, and get ourselves prepared for this day practically and in our hearts. If Sabbath really is “our greatest joy of the week,” then this shouldn’t be a burden. Pray for this kind of heart and approach. Don’t let the busyness of the week spill over into your Sabbath, protect the day so that you are honoring it appropriately.

And, Regarding which day: Under the Old Covenant, honoring Sabbath on the last day of the week was the positive law regulation for that covenant. Since Old Covenant positive law is not required in the New Covenant, the sabbath day is not required to be the last day of the week any longer.

So, **what day should we set apart for Sabbath in the New Covenant?**

Well, there has been many great reformed believers who believe that it is right to deduct from some various indirect passages of Scripture that Sabbath must be on the first day of the week in the New Covenant.

I respect these pastors and theologians immensely, I am friends with many of them, but at this time, at DC, we see this as well-intended but not the case in Scripture.

We could talk more later about what leads them to this conclusion, but for the sake of time, I’ll simply say we don’t find it fully compelling at this time—we don’t think they are correct in their hermeneutics on this point.

Rather, we believe, based on the testimony of Scripture, that there is not a specific day of the week chosen for New Covenant Sabbath observation.

Instead, it is the moral law obligation and creation ordinance pattern of *one day in seven* that is the requirement for each of us.

What that means is you must Sabbath one day in seven to be obeying this command. But what day it is depends on your conscience.

As leaders and teachers in this local church, we suggest and hope you can make this happen on Sunday, as that is a fitting day for fellowship of the saints and other Sabbath realties. But, our main desire for you is that you truly Sabbath one day in seven, and you do it the way God requires.

I will say, whether or not you make Sunday your Sabbath day, it is important to take note that God’s word still calls you to be at church service on Sunday, sitting under the teaching of the word, and in the fellowship of the saints. Scripture says for example to “not neglect meeting together” (Hebrews 10:25) and to “obey your leaders and submit to them” (Hebrews 13:17) and to “devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13) and it sets forth the example of devoting ourselves “to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

We do these things as a local church on Sunday, therefore Sunday church gathering needs to be a priority for all members of our local church body.

I hope you do strive to obey all of these commands and make Sunday morning corporate worship at DC a top priority for your week, whether that is your Sabbath day or not.

In closing, let us remember that the purpose of the moral law of Sabbath in this creation is to provide us a special day of worship to God, physical and mental rest and refreshment, other God glorifying activities.

It is a day of celebrating the goodness of God, a day of remembering and celebrating what Jesus has done for us; the work of His life, His sacrificial death, and His resurrection.

It is a day to fix our eyes on that fuller rest to come.

It is a day of gladness and joy, not a day of darkness and morbidity…it is a day of delighting in the fellowship of the saints.

It’s a day for acts of necessity, piety, and mercy, not a day for a self-focused preoccupation or nitpicking traditions.

And it’s a day that we legitimately and with good conscience can lay aside our early employments, so we can give ourselves to honoring the Sabbath and keeping it holy.

It’s a blessed and wonderful day. So, we must fight to make this happen.

For some of us, new habits need to be formed. For others, major changes need to be implemented. We can’t let our worldly desire for hobbies, big houses, nice cars, big bank accounts, and other **STUFF**, keep us from honoring the Sabbath.

We must make efforts to have jobs or get jobs that don’t put God’s command for Sabbath in the back seat for the pursuit of something temporary.

This will be a real struggle for many people. So, we do this together.

If your work prevents you from honoring Sabbath rightly, then talk with spiritually mature people; ask them for guidance in things like: helping you rework finances, helping you be equipped to talk to your employer, or helping you consider other job opportunities that don’t get in the way of obeying God on Sabbath.

Sabbath is not to be looked upon as a terrible duty, but as a sacred privilege…it affords us a special opportunity for worshiping King Jesus, profitable rest, and other God glorifying activities.

Sabbath displays God’s glory and it blesses us.

We’re excited to cover this topic today.

Hopefully, this renews or begins a new conversation among many about honoring God in this commandment.

We look forward to what God will do with this clarity.

Let’s pray.