

#4. Set Aside A Special Day for God

(Exodus 20:8-11)

Introduction

Do you live a busy life? I sure do. I find myself dashing from one thing to the next all week long. Before I know it, the whole week has gone by, just like that! And I can find myself exhausted.

Our busy world bombards us with work and school and sports and lessons and all kinds of other activities. How we need a special day to re-energize our bodies and refresh our spirits!

Today we're going to discover that God, in His kindness, commands us to set aside one day a week to refuel and remember Him.

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, You are so smart to think of such a wonderful plan. Thank You for giving us one free day. Thank You for giving us this special time to refuel and reflect on You and Your goodness. Thank You for making us Your people—set apart as special. Help us to keep your commandments. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. (Exodus 20:8)

Lesson

We have been learning the Ten Commandments. Can anyone say the first three without looking?

1. *Do not have any gods but Me* – God wants us to recognize that He is the *only* true God who created all things. He doesn't want us to let anything or anyone become more important to us than He is.
2. *Do not worship idols* – God wants us to worship only Him. Don't let anyone or anything steal God's place in your life.

3. *Keep God's Name Holy* – God doesn't want us to ever think anything, say anything or do anything that would bring dishonor to His name.

The first four commandments teach us to love God with all of our hearts. And the other six commandments teach us to love others with that same kind of perfect love. By learning how to honor and love God first, you learn to honor and love others.

Today we're going to learn the fourth commandment.

Exodus 20:8-11 [Teacher, read...]

"Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. (9) You have six days each week for your ordinary work, (10) but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. (11) For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

The word *Sabbath* comes from a Hebrew word meaning "*intermission*." Have you ever been to a sports event that has an intermission in the middle? That's when they stop the play so you can stretch your legs, go to the bathroom, or buy more popcorn. In this case, it means "*to stop from work*." It says you are to remember to take the seventh day off from work and to keep it holy. "*Holy*" means "*set apart*." God was telling the people to set aside a special day each week for rest and worship.

Israel observed the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week, our Saturday. But, because Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, His followers began to set aside Sunday as their special day of worship.

Mark 2:27

Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath.

- Why do you think Jesus said this to the people?

Some people think that if they just keep the Ten Commandments they'll be able to go to heaven after they die. But really, God was giving this day of rest to the people as a gift.

Exodus 20:9

You have six days each week for your ordinary work.

God knew that doing ordinary work seven days a week would be too tiring for us. He goes on to say,

Exodus 20:10a

The seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God.

When we use one day a week to rest and worship, we show others how important God is to us and it gives us the extra benefit of refreshing our spirits.

Object Lesson

We live in a dark world that often forgets God. [Turn off the lights.] People out in the world don't know God. They break all of His commandments all the time. They take His name in vain and are disobedient to their parents. They lie and cheat and steal.

But God wants us to shine His light in this dark world. [turn on a flashlight] He wants us to show people the way to please God. God wants us to point the way to Him so that people can come to know Him and live a godly life that is pleasing to Him.

On Sunday, we come together at church to remember God and fill up on His love! When we are around other Christians, we glow like this light. It's as though our batteries are recharged.

But then Monday comes along and we go to school and someone calls us a mean name. So, we want to call them a name back. [put a plastic cup over the flash light] and then Tuesday comes along we have to take a test we didn't study for. So, we're tempted to look over

on someone else's paper to see what they put down for the answers [add another plastic cup] and on Wednesday Mom asked us to clean up our room and we sassed back at her [add another plastic cup]. Thursday and Friday come along and pretty soon we've forgotten all about God. Our lights grew dim. Not only are we not showing others the right way to live, we've lost our way, too.

Then Sunday comes along again and we go back to church. [Take away the cups.] Our batteries get recharged so we can zoom through another busy week. [Turn the lights back on.]

- What did you notice about the light? It got dimmer and dimmer, didn't it?
- How is this like the way our weeks go?
- How do you lose energy and enthusiasm for God during your week?
- What can we do to get our lights to shine brightly again?

This flashlight shines brightly because its batteries are fully charged. As the cups were added, the light got dimmer, as though the batteries were running out of power. That's how it is for us as Christians. But, when we come to church our batteries get recharged. God knew we needed a special day to refuel and remember Him, so He gave us His fourth commandment: Set aside a special day for God.

God commanded us to rest every seventh day. But not just to rest from our busy schedules... no, we're to take time out to think about Him and how good He is.

God knows what we need, isn't He wonderful? He knows that we will run around until we wear ourselves out and forget all about Him. God made us like a car that runs out of gas every six days. He planned for us to work six days and then to rest and remember Him on the seventh. In fact, He gave us this example when He created the universe. He made the world in six days and rested on the seventh.

Exodus 20:11

For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

We all work hard during the week at school and at home, so God gave us one special day called the Sabbath. He wants us to use that day to be refilled with energy and His love. That's why God thinks it's so important to set aside a special day for Him. Really it's for us.

- What can you do on Sunday to get filled up again?

God is so thoughtful to give us a day to refuel and remember Him, isn't He?

So far we have looked at the first four commandments, the ones that teach us how to love God. The next six commandments teach us how to love our fellow human beings. We will start looking at those next week.

Who's Acceptable?

Who is really acceptable to God—the one who obeys God's commandments or the one who believes in Jesus Christ? [Teacher, let the children discuss this.]

Many people in the world are confused about the way to be suitable to God. Do you need to obey or believe?

Most people believe that if they obey most of the commandments, they'll be good enough for God. Some people believe if they keep the Ten Commandments, then God will have to let them come to Heaven.

Here's the truth: The only way to be acceptable to God is to believe in what He has done for you on the cross. You are NOT saved by keeping the commandments. But if you really believe in Jesus, you will show your love for Him by obeying God's commandments. You wouldn't want to disobey Him because of the wonderful things He has done for you.

If you believe in Jesus, you *are* acceptable to God, even though you'll sometimes mess up and break a commandment.

John 1:12

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

If you really know who Jesus is and appreciate what He's done for you, you will want to obey Him with your whole heart.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, we come to You from our busy world. We come together with our Christian brothers and sisters to praise You and remember how awesome You are. Thank You for loving us enough to order us to set aside a special day for You. Help us to set aside time *every* day to think about You. We love You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. What does the word "*Sabbath*" mean? (The word Sabbath comes from a Hebrew word meaning "*intermission*.")
2. What does this verse mean: "*The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath*"? (God gave us this special day to rest and remember Him.)

3. Why do we say that the Sabbath was God's gift to His people? (God knew that doing ordinary work seven days a week would be too tiring for us. He knew we needed to spend at least one day a week thinking about how wonderful He is.)
4. How do you lose energy and enthusiasm for God during your week? (By not spending time with Him.)
5. Where did God give us an example of His plan for us to work six days and rest the seventh? (In creation.)
6. What does God want us to do on the Sabbath? (Rest and worship Him.)
7. What can you do on Sunday to get filled up again spiritually?
8. What do the first four commandments teach us? (How to love God.)
9. What do the last six commandments teach us? (How to love others.)
10. What is the way to be acceptable to God, to believe or obey? (To believe! If you really know who Jesus is and appreciate what He's done for you, you will want to obey Him with your whole heart.)

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