

Faith and The Lord's Day

BORN TO GROW

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

STUDY 5

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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Born to Grow series is designed to give you a good basic understanding of what it is to be a Christian and how to live a powerful and effective Christian Life.

It consists of six sets:

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|--------------------------|------------|
| Foundations | 6 studies |
| First Principles | 7 studies |
| Kingdom Living | 8 studies |
| Apostle's Doctrine | 12 studies |
| Ten Commandments | 11 studies |
| Gifts of the Holy Spirit | 10 studies |

RULE

Exodus 20:8

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

This commandment points to two things. Firstly, it deals with God's command that His people gather for regular times of worship. Secondly it deals with God's requirement that we learn to rest in His provision, that is to live by faith. Scripture reveals that present-day obedience to this commandment is not found in the ritual observance of the seventh day. The ritual observance of the seventh day was the Old Testament way that God sought to reveal these principles to His people.

Regular Worship

Colossians 2:16-17

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

This Scripture shows why the Saturday Sabbath no longer applies. It was a shadow. We can now have the reality. The reality is available to all who will, in submission to God, exercise the principles of obedient worship and faith in their lives. Even though the ritual observance of the Sabbath no longer applies, regular weekly worship is still required. This is why Christians, right from the very earliest days, worshipped on the first day of the week. That is, they worshipped on Sundays. This is sometimes called "the Lord's day" in the Scriptures. Sunday worship is also a memorial of the resurrection of Jesus, who rose again on the first day of the week. In this sense Sunday worship has replaced the Old Testament Sabbath.

Revelation 1:10

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

Obedience to this commandment, therefore, requires a commitment to weekly worship. People who say, things like "I can be a Christian without going to church" or who find reasons and excuses to absent themselves from worship are in violation of this commandment.

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

The Life of Faith

Obedience to this commandment also requires an entering into the life of faith. It was for this that the Old Testament Sabbath was established as a means of instruction. In this sense, it commands a life commitment that every day seeks to be at rest in faith in the completed work of Christ. It is this lifestyle of faith that is to replace a ritualised weekly rest. It is important to note that this weekly ritual failed to result in the true rest it pointed to. This rest is only possible through faith in Christ. It seems then that the Saturday Sabbath has been done away with to ensure that nobody ever thinks again that the observance of a day can bring the peace and rest that can only come through the everyday life of faith. This rest of faith that the ritual Sabbath could not bring was spoken of in Hebrews 4.

Hebrews 4:9-11

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. 11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

This principle of the rest of faith is so important that the Scriptures contain special instructions about rejecting the teaching of those that still seek to apply the Old Testament type of Sabbath (See Col 2:16-17 quoted above).

REASON

The reason this commandment is needed as a rule in our lives is to bring us into a place of worship and faith before God. It aims to release us from self effort in achieving results that only God can attain. Self effort in this way can only operate out of motivations of fear, reward or approval. It seeks either intentionally or unintentionally to selfishly share God's glory. God will never allow His glory to be shared. Rather than to work for our own glory or security, we are to cease from our labours and to come and worship His glory.

Isaiah 48:11

*For My own sake, for My own sake,
I will do it;
For how should My name be profaned?
And I will not give My glory to another.*

REACTION

People that have failed to honour God as God and given Him His rightful place in their lives are condemned to live in various forms of reaction. These reactions become the sin patterns for each commandment. When obedience to the principles of this commandment of weekly worship and daily faith, that fulfil the Sabbath, are not present, four problems appear. These are neglect of worship followed by hypocrisy, worldliness and legalism.

How the first of these problems, the neglect of worship, violates this commandment is not difficult to understand. It relates to the plain meaning of the commandment. The following three issues relate to the principle of the rest in faith that is the focus of the deeper meaning of this commandment. That is, they are a result of trying to live a life that depends on its own efforts and fails to be at rest in faith. This follows as a result of disobedience to the previous commandment in which dishonour for the name of God leads people to seeking to build their own name.

As a result of trying to increase stature by securing a reputation, the drive to achieve results for self takes over, this is self dependence. Self dependence defies the principle of dependence on God which is the faith rest challenge of this commandment. The self dependent may achieve results, even impressive results. God, however will not be in them, nor will He be impressed. Such works are dead works. Such “spirituality” is carnality. It is this carnality that expresses itself in hypocrisy, worldliness and legalism.

Neglect of Worship

Attendance at and involvement in regular worship is not an option. It is a command of God. It is not something we go to because we “Get something out of it”. It is an act of obedience to a loving Creator who has commanded it. Any motivation less than sacrificial obedience is not up to the standard commanded.

Often attendance at worship services can be exhilarating and powerful. At other times it can be a time of endurance. Life circumstances and emotions change. Sometimes worship services are well executed with beautiful music, vibrant singing and the powerful release of the gifts of the Spirit. Sometimes they are clumsy and awkward. Sometimes our emotions are on top of everything and we are full of energy. At other times we are unable to respond to the most beautiful worship or the most powerful preaching. At all times, however, we must be careful not to let the changing moods and challenges of life affect our response to a loving God who changes not and in whom there is no shadow of turning. At all times, therefore, our motivation must be to present ourselves to God in such a way as to be a sacrifice that is pleasing to Him and to be prepared to pay whatever price is necessary to be present and to achieve this (cf Rom 12:1-2).

Hypocrisy

This is the first of the life principles that may be seen to be in reaction to the principle of the rest of faith. Hypocrites are actors. To them it is more important that things appear to be right than it is that they actually are right. The seemingly great and often sacrificial efforts that come from this dependence on self effort are often to gain approval. Sometimes this is sought from others. Sometimes we seek it from ourselves. Sometimes we are aware we are doing it, at other times our motives may be hidden from our consciousness. The example of hypocrisy is found in the Pharisees and scribes. Jesus strongly challenged their spiritual abusiveness and pride (Matt 23:13-15).

Matthew 23:28

Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Worldliness

Worldliness is the second of the life principles that violate the rest of faith. It is a result of trying to achieve with our own efforts what only God can achieve. Because this approach has disqualified itself of the help of heaven it depends on the strength of the world. As a result it becomes overcome by the world. Worldly philosophies and approaches to achieving success and results gain a foothold. In this we see people pleasing, competitiveness, immorality, authoritarianism, and so on.

Many of these problems were seen in the Corinthian Church. (See 1 Corinthians)

This is why many of even those who have begun strongly with the Lord have fallen away. They have slipped into the worldliness born of self effort and have lost the overcoming power of faith.¹

John 5:4

*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.
And this is the victory that has overcome the world;
our faith.*

Legalism

This is the third of the life principles that offends the life of faith. Legalism is the belief that rules, regulations and religious observances can produce righteousness. They cannot. Not even God's laws can do this. True righteousness can only come from faith that abides in Christ and is at peace in Him and knows the His grace. Legalism is often one of the first traps into which people fall when they begin to trust themselves instead of God. Many who come to Christ soon fall into this trap. Often out of a desire to please and do things right they become bound by rules and regulations and believe that they have to maintain some sort of external performance to be accepted by God. Doing this, they have failed to realise that it is only a life that is at rest in God that can grow into the daily practical living out of the goodness and the wholeness that comes from a God pleasing life.

Galatians 3:1-5

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have you suffered so many things in vain; if indeed it was in vain? 5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?;

In this Paul is striking out at self dependence to gain righteousness. He points out that the legal self righteousness of the Galatians is no more than dead works.

He also speaks of this to the Colossians.

Colossians 2:16-22

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations; 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using; according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

RESULT

The result of disobedience to this commandment is that we become unable to depend upon, or trust anything other than self. This is the fullness of unbelief. Israel is our example and warning in this.

Hebrews 3:10-12

Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

The lack of rest, through dependence upon self, is expressed in anxiety. Symptoms of this anxious and troubled state are restlessness, moodiness, depression, irritability, frustration and so on.

Consider the example of Martha.

Luke 10:40-41

But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy. These are rod, revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

Rod

God's judgement upon any form of self dependence is to frustrate such effort by rendering it fruitless.

Those who neglect worship are given over to darkened and futile thinking. This results in their being further given over by a God to a life of sin. This then makes them subject to His wrath and eternal damnation (Rom 1:21). The hypocrite will experience the resistance of God. In Job 8:13 it says that "*the hypocrite's hope shall perish*. The worldly are overcome and taken captive by that which they sought to conquer. The legalistic come under the curse of the law (Galatians 3:10). This curse is found in Deuteronomy 28 where it is seen largely to be the rendering fruitless of all effort.

Disappointment in life is often therefore the result of God's hand upon us in judgement.

Revelation

What we must see to be free from all forms of self dependence is simply the revelation that without Jesus we can do nothing.

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

This brings us into the worshipful and faith filled life that is the life goal of this commandment. Jesus is our example here.

John 5:19

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

Release

The release is into a life of fellowship, authenticity, freedom and grace.