

The Fourth Commandment

You may have already observed that the first three commandments deal strictly with our relationship to God. Many erroneously believe that the Ten Commandments are strictly civil laws governing our relationships with one another. But they encompass the whole of a person's life and place the highest priority on our relationship with the LORD, for He is the foundation of all moral, ethical and civil laws.

The Fourth Commandment is the pivotal law which bridges the commandments dealing with God and the remainder which deal with Man. Viewed in its historical context, it was revolutionary, for its purpose was the physical and spiritual refreshment of the working population, freeing them from their bondage to labor in order to rest one day each week, no matter their station in life. And its basis and model was God Himself! Observe it below.

- 8 "Remember the sabbath day,
to keep it holy.
- 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God;
in it you shall not do any work,
you or your son or your daughter,
your male or your female servant
or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.
- 11 "For in six days
the LORD made the heavens and the 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.



MEMORIZE!

Exodus 20:8-11

- Underline what we are to remember. (v 8)
- Circle how we should keep it. (v 8)
- Circle how many days we are to labor. (v 9)
- Circle which day is the sabbath. (v 10)
- Underline for Whom it is a sabbath. (v 10)
- Circle what shall not be done on the sabbath. (v 10)
- Underline who is commanded not to work. (v 10)
- Circle how many days it took God to make all of Creation. (v 11)
- Circle what God did on the seventh day. (v 11)
- Underline what God did with the seventh day. (v 11)

The commandment, simply stated, is to 'remember the sabbath day' and 'to keep it holy'. The word 'sabbath' means 'to rest; to cease; to cause to cease'. It is imperative to always observe the context of a word in order to determine its specific meaning. In this context, 'sabbath' embraces all facets of the meanings: being a day of 'rest' as God rested after six days of creation, being a day when our labors 'cease', and being the seventh day, it causes the week to cease.

Observe the Sabbath
or Die

Exodus 31:13-14

The penalty for violating the Sabbath was death. So serious was it in God's eyes. For the Sabbath was a sign of the covenant God established between Himself and His people. To violate the Sabbath was to violate God's covenant as well!

The Basis for This Commandment

Interestingly, God appeals to **the creation account** as the basis for this commandment. By so doing, He is establishing the historical truthfulness of the first chapter of Genesis. Current thinking believes that the universe and all living creatures were established by purely naturalistic processes, and regards the creation account as a simple explanation by a primitive society. **God has trumped that kind of thinking!**

As a non-Christian zoology major, I too believed that the Theory of Evolution, which states that all living things evolved from simple life forms, which themselves emerged millions of years ago from the non-living ooze of the primordial earth, was the best explanation for the existence of the variety of living things around us. But after examining the evidence, it became clear that **the Theory of Evolution** is in fact **the most deceptive 'bait and switch' scheme ever foisted upon the minds of students.**

After presenting evidence of **micro changes** which are observed in nature, scientists unethically and erroneously conclude that such evidence proves the **macro changes** that must occur for Evolution to be true, changes that have **not** been observed in nature nor in the fossil record. No need to mention the complete lack of evidence for the emergence of life forms from inanimate material. Yet educators around the world continue to preach this theory, some of them admitting, because the alternative is unacceptable to them.

For more information on this subject, visit the following websites:

<http://www.origin-of-life.net/>

<http://www.scienceministries.org/>

<http://www.drdino.com/index.jsp>

A Day for Rest

This commandment may be the easiest to do, but deceptively difficult to obey. How many times have we used this God given gift to squeeze in an extra day of work? (Note that God is not against work, for He expected us to be so involved for six days.) Observe the following passage which foreshadows the fourth commandment.

- 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed,
and all their hosts.
- 2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done,
and He rested on the seventh day
from all His work which He had done.
- 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it,
because in it He rested from all His work
which God had created and made.

Genesis 2:1-3

Why did God rest on the seventh day? _____

Why does He want us to rest on the seventh day? _____

God knows, if we do not, that our minds and bodies need regular rest in order to operate at peak efficiency. Our physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual welfare depends on periods of refreshment which God has commanded us to take.

For sure, this imperative was revolutionary in a time when masters required their servants to work 7 days a week, and most working people did the same. The fourth commandment supplants that work schedule with one that values the worker more than the work. However, we have reverted back to viewing people, not for who they are, but for what they can do for us. Today, we don't seem to have enough time to get everything done that needs to be done ... or at least that's what we think. **Work has become a god to many**, and the source of their significance, security and self-worth. This commandment seeks to guard us from that mistake.

God is saying through this commandment that if we can't complete our work in six days, then **we're too busy** because we're busier than God Himself! There is something wrong and we need to rethink whether we are taking on too much or whether we are doing too many nonessentials. One thing is true, and that is that God values us more than what we can do for Him. If we will obey His command and place Him first in our lives, He will ensure that all our needs will be added unto us.

A Day for Spiritual Renewal

It is not enough to 'remember' the sabbath, we must also **'keep it holy'**. The word 'holy' means to set aside for sacred purposes. God did not intend the sabbath to be a day for carnal pursuits, entertainment and revelry, but to devote ourselves to things sacred rather than secular things which monopolize our time during the week. It is to be a day when we can focus on the Creator in order to gain the proper perspective and foundation for the dizzying things that encompass our lives during the other six days.

God specified precisely what He had in mind for the Israelites as He applied this command for them.

- 1 The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying,
- 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them,
'The LORD'S appointed times
which you shall proclaim as holy convocations--
My appointed times are these:
- 3 'For six days work may be done,
but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest,
a holy convocation.
You shall not do any work;
it is a sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.

Leviticus 23:1-3

- Underline what the seventh day is. (v 3)
- Circle what sacred thing the sabbath is defined as.
- Circle to whom the sabbath is.
- Underline where the sabbath is to be celebrated.

A 'convocation' is a meeting called for a sacred purpose. The Israelites celebrated the Sabbath in the Temple, in the synagogues and in their houses. Friday afternoons were spent cleaning their homes in preparation for the Shabbat service when, as a family, they shared a special meal as the setting sun signaled the start of the Sabbath day.

Christians have partially kept that tradition, though on the first day of the week instead of the seventh. But we must always be careful of turning that day into a string of busy church activities that distract from God. Otherwise, like Martha, we will have allowed the good things to keep us from the best! (Luke 10:38-42)

‘Remember ... to keep it holy!’

There are various explanations as to why the Christian Church chose to transfer the day of 'holy convocation' to **Sunday**, ranging from celebrating the day of Christ's resurrection to the decision to separate the Church's identity from her Judaistic roots. There are, however, no Scriptures specifically explaining nor endorsing this change.