

## Introduction

A PDF version of this sermon is available [here](#)

This is a sermon I created to, first, give a basic and practical overview of what the Sabbath is and how it is kept. Secondly, explain what dishonoring ("breaking") the Sabbath looks like. And, finally, discuss why Sabbath keeping is something we should do now as well as why it is important in our walks with God.

The Sabbath is not just a time of rest, but a declaration of who we hold as the provider and controller of our lives. Will you let the world and its whims control you?

Hope You are Blessed!

## What is Sabbath

So what is the Sabbath? The Sabbath, succinctly, is a time that God set apart every week for rest. It is not only a time set apart, but a commandment He gave to humankind to rest. As we see in:

### Exodus 20:8-11 (NKJV)

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 the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

We know the Jews considered a day to be the evening of one weekday to the evening of the next weekday. So the Sabbath has been kept from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday by people since God created the world. We see scriptural evidence for this when God talks about a particular Sabbath being from one evening to another (**Leviticus 23:32 (NIV)**).

For a (semi) comprehensive treatment of why we should still be keeping the Sabbath, look at my Sabbath article!

## The Spirit of the Sabbath

So then what do you spend your time doing on the Sabbath? How do you "keep Sabbath holy" as the commandment states.

The Sabbath is a time to have your mind occupied by God. Isaiah 58 gives a good definition of what the spirit of the Sabbath looks like:

**Isaiah 58:13-14 (NKJV)**

13 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The **holy day of the Lord** honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, 14 Then **you shall delight yourself in the Lord**; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken."

So the Sabbath is a day to "delight yourself in the Lord". (*Note: in particular this verse may be saying a result of following Sabbath is us delighting in the Lord, but the point still stands with other things mentioned in this verse*)

You can define this, as what I already mentioned, as "having your mind occupied by God and resting in God". Some ways of doing this include:

- Bible study
- Walking with God in nature
- Prayer/meditation
- Sabbath naps
- Watching the Chosen or any other God-centered programming

Another way to keep the Sabbath holy is to spend time in Godly community, for example:

- Group fellowship
  - "Breaking Bread" (eating) together.
- Group discussions and studies on things related to God
- Group naps (I'm still trying to sell this idea to my friends)

The way you keep Sabbath is by making it a *different* (that's what holy means) day from all other days in the week. The things you do every moment ought to bring you closer in communion with God and be restful.

If you spend every moment of every day resting, people don't call you holy, they call you lazy!

## Things that break the spirit of the Sabbath

God is also clear on what dishonors Him on the Sabbath.

- We should not work

The first part of Exodus 20:10 says:

### **Exodus 20:10a (NKJV)**

10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work

- We should not make other people work (for us, or in general)

The second part of Exodus 20:10 says

### **Exodus 20:10b (NKJV)**

10 nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, **nor your cattle**, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

even the COWS get to rest.

Thirdly:

- We should not spend money

### **Nehemiah 10:31a (NKJV)**

31 if the peoples of the land brought wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath

The Sabbath isn't a day to do our shopping or be a consumer.

Those are the three main things God talks about people abstaining from on the include: Sabbath. So to make it practical, some things that break the spirit of the Sabbath include:

- Doing your homework (you're doing work)
- Making your kids do homework (you're making your kids work)
- Going to work (you're doing work)
- Going to a restaurant or eatery (you're making the restaurant workers work)
- Getting a haircut (you're making the hairdresser work)
- Studying on Sabbath for a test or exam (you're doing work)

Those are a few, but the general idea is already laid out in **Isaiah 58:13 (NKJV)**

### **Isaiah 58:13 (NKJV)**

13 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing **your pleasure** on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the Lord honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing **your own ways**, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words,

Turn from doing what pleases you and do what pleases God. Honor Him and have your mind set on Him. And you can't have your mind set on Him at a basketball game, while attending a tennis tournament, or anything in between.

## **Is it actually wrong to**

So then the question may be raised, is it actually that wrong to do this or that?

So let's talk about a few common examples

### **Spend money on the Sabbath**

The Sabbath is a time to say NO to consumerism. We have six days in the week to buy, be capitalists and drive that pig forward, but the Sabbath is a day to say NO, I will not derive my meaning from purchasing.

It helps you recognize that God is the provider for all things you need, not your money or Walmart.

### **Eat out on the Sabbath**

When you go out to eat, get a haircut, or receive any kind of these services, you are treating that person less than a cow.

As we read in **Exodus 20:10 (NKJV)**, God says to give your cattle, cows, rest on the Sabbath. You going to a restaurant or receiving work is the equivalent of saying "This person doesn't even deserve the rest that God says a cow deserves".

And that is highly offensive to the worth that God ascribes to each person He created.

### **Me to personally work on the Sabbath**

As mentioned in the previous point, you would be treating yourself less than a cow. But if calling yourself a cow doesn't do it, you would also be doing two things.

### 1. Saying you don't have time for God

Sabbath is a time for you to spend time with God.

You may be saying "I don't have time for God this week", sadly. To say that you don't have time for God is dishonest because He is the one that provides you with the time. It's not your time in the first place! He's the one that's given you life, and he gives you freedom to use your time, but just asks you give back to Him a 1/7 of it.

He specifically made the Sabbath so you don't have to worry about not having time, he's already scheduled it for you.

If you find yourself seemingly not having enough time for God, including the time He already set apart during the Sabbath, it's very likely you either have to change how you manage your time or change what you spend your vocation or time doing. God will not lead you down a path where you can't spend time with Him.

Every situation He leads us in life will not require us to break His law.

So whenever we make that excuse, we're cheating God out of the time He wants to spend with us.

### 1. Spitting on the sacrifice Christ made for you

Keeping the Sabbath is a time to recognize that God is your savior. You are not saved by your works, but by the work God did through Christ to set you free, that's what saves you. The moment you disobey the Sabbath, you spit on that sacrifice Christ made to make you free. The sacrifice to give you an avenue of freedom away from the world.

God decided to give up the comforts of heaven to come down and die on the cross for you. The least you can do is sacrifice a bit of homework. Sacrifice a single paycheck. Sacrifice wanting to go out to chick-fil-a.

He wants you to be free, and you choosing to enslave yourself to the world, to your work, to your own desires, to your university, or anything else that demands your attention is spitting on the sacrifice and pain that Christ went through to set you free from those things.

We need to sit up one day and say NO. I'm DONE neglecting my faith anymore. I'm DONE living for the world. I'm DONE with playing games with God.

This stuff is no joke this is life or death. Your whole being is in danger of being lost forever because of disobedience.

And for those of you who are ready to make that step toward God, I want to give some practical ways to keep the Sabbath.

## How do I practically keep Sabbath

### How will I eat

This one is easy, if you're in a dorm, buy all your food from your dining hall you'll need for the next day before sunset. Thankfully many churches have potlucks so you won't be stuck eating dining hall food for a day.

During covid, I would buy a **lot** of food a few hours before sunset Friday so that I wouldn't have to make the dining staff work to give me food. It was a good time for me since I stayed in my room napping to music, watching the Bible Project videos and eating multiple (in my opinion) good meals.

If you don't have a refrigerator in your dorm building, buy nonperishable foods to eat, or ask someone from church to have you over.

- Peanut butter, bread, jelly (you can do wonders with that)
- Minute rice with canned beans, vegetables, anything
- Be resourceful!

If all else fails, you will very likely not die from not eating for one day. Whenever I forgot to buy my food during my freshmen year, in the days of covid while potlucks were banned, I would "declare the day a fast to God".

### How will I get my schoolwork done

The Sabbath is a time to say that God is the most important in your life. What you cannot deny controls you. **What you cannot deny, controls you.** And do you want your university, your high school, to be the one controlling you?

For those of you concerned about completing schoolwork, think about how you spend your time in a day. Often the reason why we don't find time in the day is that we didn't spend our time wisely.

Look at your screen time, how much of your time is spent on Youtube, Instagram, and Tiktok? Playing any kind of video game? What if you converted that time into time spent doing homework, you very likely will find that you complete a lot more work in the six days than previously.

The Sabbath gives you a push on being intentional with your time. I encourage all of you to look at how you spend your time.

### Ephesians 5:15-17 (ESV)

15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

The days are not easy, it is difficult.

If you don't wake up every day and decide what you're going to be doing with your time that day, you will find yourself wasting your time and then making excuses on why you have to make it up on Sabbath.

You don't want to get to the end of your life and regret wasting your college years on Youtube and Netflix, deteriorating your relationship with God because you never kept the Sabbath since you wanted to catch up on your work.

And if you tell me that you spend all day every day working, never looking at your phone, then it may be time to have a conversation with your professors, or accept you may not do as well in this class as everyone else, but that it is a worthy sacrifice to obey God's commandments and grow your relationship with Him.

Decide to not do your schoolwork on Sabbath, and then from there find a solution to get all your schoolwork done or lower your expectations in certain classes.

### **But I'll lose my job**

It's much, much better to lose your job and get another one than for you to lose your life in the lake of fire (hell).

Your job does not care about you, they will fire you in a heartbeat. They will lay you off without a second notice. Why break Sabbath for people that don't even care if you can pay your bills.

God, however, will **never** abandon you. Jesus says:

#### **Matthew 28:20 (NKJV)**

lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Why leave this God for a paycheck? You'll get many, many times more in heaven.

### **But my family or friends do XYZ**

- "My parents always made me do homework on the Sabbath"
- "An elder at my church always took us out to eat after service."
- "My friends and peers would be so much more ahead of me in class"

- "My Adventist friends always did this"

**Matthew 15:14 (NKJV)**

14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

Don't let those who don't obey God's word lead you to sin. You cannot, in the final judgment, use your friends as an excuse for your own wilful sin.

**2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV)**

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that **each one** may receive the things done in the body, according to what **he has done**, whether good or bad.

We will face the judgment seat with none of our family, friends, or peers around us. God will judge us based on what we did. You cannot tell God that the reason why you willfully sinned is that you saw other people doing it.

Don't let the pressure from those around you dictate your life. In general, but especially in your faith.

God made you so you could live the life He gave you. Allowing others to guide your life in a direction you know God does not want you to go down is dishonoring Christ in one of the most extreme ways. God created you to be who He created you to be, don't let others lead you astray.

If you know something is not Sabbath-appropriate, whether it's with your friends or with people you go to church with, do not participate. Tell your friends "I can't do this on Saturday" or church folk "I don't believe this is right to do on Sabbath". And if they have a problem with you, fine, you are honoring God and it brings joy to His heart to see that you love Him above your friends, family, and even church members.

**Exceptions to the Sabbath**

Now, some of you may have been wondering, aren't there any exceptions to this? And I want to tell you no since then you'll be prone to say you're always the exception to the Sabbath rule. But there are cases, few and far between, where doing something not typically Sabbath-appropriate may be encouraged.

- If someone is at the point of death, please bring them to the hospital or find somehow to get them some food if that's what they need.
- If you're about to pass out, please service yourself and get some help.



- If someone is in danger, don't hesitate to call the police for help.

This concept is outlined in Mark

#### **Mark 3:4 (NKJV)**

4 Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

The danger we often find ourselves in when keeping Sabbath is that we always try to make our cases the exception. "I **have** to study". "I **have** to go to work". No. The world does not have to control you, you can allow God to be first in your life.

Don't make yourself promises saying, "I'll break Sabbath for these 2 years, and then after I graduate I will be faithful to God". "When I get promoted or a new job I will be faithful to God."

Although it is grim to say, you don't know when **your** end is coming, you should not want to perish in a state of disobedience to God.

### **My Basketball testimony**

I want to close out with a story.

I'm sure none of you will be surprised to find out that I used to play basketball.

I was on the high school varsity basketball team from my sophomore year to my senior year.

I would wake up early in the morning to do pushups or be working out while watching basketball. I'd come to school before 7 am to practice in the morning, and often wouldn't get back home until 8 or 9 pm because of practice after school.

I was on the grind, and all of it was worth it for me. I wanted to play basketball in college. It was my dream to play D1 basketball at Duke university, and I was willing to do anything to get there.

And part of that required me to stop going to church. I read my bible and I understood God, but I wanted something more than God. It doesn't matter what "it" exactly was, but I wanted something more than God. SOMETHING about playing basketball in college appealed to me more than God.

Instead of going to church, I would be at basketball practice or a basketball game. And this went on for years.

In high school, we were pretty good. In my junior year, we were ranked as one of the top schools in our division for the entire state of Virginia.

It was supposed to be my year, entirely.

And then, at the start of my junior year. I hurt my knee. I was supposed to be in the starting five, but was immediately taken out.

In my mind, what I expected from my team was sympathy, love, and reassurance. But my team all but forgot me while I was recovering. I received no texts asking how I was doing or how I was dealing with the pain. I would just sit on the sidelines and they'd only acknowledge me before I left.

That started making me think and that's when I started realizing that I was missing something in my life. No one around me seemed to value me outside of what I could provide on the basketball court.

A few weeks after the injury I was fully recovered and worked my way back into the starting lineup.

We did very well that year and ended up making it to the state finals.

This was the moment high school basketball players dreamed of, this was the stage in which people found hundreds of college coaches looking at them, all desiring to find someone to bring to their college basketball program. During our run to the state finals my coach had told me of multiple colleges that wanted to come to see me.

So we get on the court for the championship game, fight and push and bleed like we usually did, and win. For the first time in our school's history, we won the basketball state championship. For the first time in over 20 years, a school from our city won the basketball championship. We go back to the locker room, and the blood, sweat, and tears for the moment we had been working so hard for finally arrived.

### **And we felt nothing.**

As crazy as it might sound, we felt nothing.

We sat around in the locker room saying "I'm still waiting for it to set in". All we felt was tired.

Over the coming weeks all of us, even the coach, would repeat those words, "I'm still waiting for it to set in". And it never did.

This was my breaking point. For the next two months, I spent time reflecting on my life. I fell into a depression and eventually decided to try to find a solution to this deep loss of purpose in my heart. And as is the case for many people who are broken by the world, I decided to go to church.

And it was when I involved myself wholly, and devoted myself to God and the things of the church that I found purpose. I found that God forgives and that God is in the business of loving people. That His love is so strong that He gave away his life so that I could live.

A God who could forgive even me who only came to Him when I wanted to win a basketball game. And after that summer, I realized I needed to make a change in my life.

So before the season started, I went to my coach and told Him that I would not play basketball on Sabbath. From sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, I would not practice or play in a basketball game.

It took me weeks to build up that courage, it wasn't until I heard a preacher I was listening to say "Some of us find a baseball game more important than God" that I gained the courage to have that conversation.

This was my senior year of high school, I was supposed to be the captain of the team. And now I was saying I couldn't attend half of the games we were supposed to be playing because they were on the Sabbath.

The amount of hate I received for this could have broken me if it weren't for God sustaining me. I would have my friends stop me in the halls and ask me why I wasn't at the game or why I was giving up on the team. I had one of the school staff pull me aside and tell me that I was abandoning the team. I'd have my professors ask me questions. Everyone seemed to have an opinion on the decision I made to follow God.

Soon after I made another decision, that I wouldn't play basketball in college. This decision was met with more adversity than my decision not to play on Sabbath. My parents are immigrants. Neither of them as of then had attended a 4-year university, nor would be able to afford to send me to one.

I had everyone from family to friends to teachers tell me I was making a mistake. My coach would always come to me and tell me about the schools that contacted him and wanted to talk to me. My answer was always the same.

I made this second decision because I believed God was calling me to a greater purpose, to ministry. He was calling me to witness to my friends in college, be someone to give bible studies, and help people on their faith walks. I wanted to do ministry and devote my time to growing in God and growing others in God.

And people would always nag me, didn't you want to go to Duke? Be a D1 athlete, be something special.

Since I was no longer going to play basketball in college and decided to apply for college the normal way. A man from church sat down with me and showed me how to find and apply to colleges. I was starting to learn about what colleges were 3 months before applications were due. I took the SAT twice during my senior year of high school, I did take it once before that summer and did relatively poorly.

I spent every moment applying for college and scholarships. I wrote over 50 essays, applied to around 100 scholarships, and because of my family's financial situation was allowed to apply to 20 colleges for free. I did all of this on top of taking 4 AP classes, still being the captain of the basketball team, and holding 3 positions in my church including being a Sabbath school teacher and preparing a lesson nearly every week.

I say all of this to show you that it is possible. The year before my conversion I spent my free time outside of basketball practice playing video games, roughly 8 hours a day. God was able to kill that addiction so I had more time for the difficult year ahead.

God had changed my heart so that even though I was only getting 5 to 6 hours of sleep a night and was working tirelessly every single day, I felt joy in my heart. I was obeying Him, and when you choose to obey God you start to grow, and it feels *good*.

Time passed, and eventually, I got into Duke University, the college where I wanted to play basketball at. Another few weeks passed, and I was accepted into a scholarship that would pay for my entire schooling.

## Follow God

Let me tell you, as I close. Choose to follow God. Don't wait. I used to tell myself before I was convicted, "after I play basketball and spend these years breaking Sabbath, I'd go back to God".

I would tell myself I would break God's law and if I made it to the NBA, after retiring I would devote myself to God, give my money away, and bring honor to God by being successful. And here's the thing

### **God is more interested in you being His child than you being successful**

Your sacrifice may not end in you getting what you originally wanted, you may end up not being able to get into school or fulfilling your dream. But let me assure you, **An eternity with God is more satisfying than a life without Him.**

Some of us will have to be making a difficult decision **today**. We will have to choose to reject friends, family, coworkers, and the hardest of all ourselves to follow God.

You don't know when Christ is coming back, don't play that game. Choose to follow Him *now*. He wants to give you more joy, more satisfaction, and more Godly success (Godly, not worldly success) than you could ever plan for your life.

He loved you so much that He decided to come down to the cross, and be crucified painfully for your sins. Because you chose and continue to choose to break the Sabbath he died on the cross. Because of your sins, He came down to suffer pain and torture.

Choose to follow God. People will leave you in life. Your job will lay you off, your university doesn't care about you, and your friends may abandon you no matter how close you feel to them. I saw it when my basketball team practically threw me aside while I was hurt, I had no longer become convenient to them, I had no use. But God finds you beautiful, You are His son or daughter, and He asks you to follow Him.

You don't know when Christ will return, do you want Him to find you disobeying Him when returns, so make the decision now to follow God, make it now.

Make the decision now to follow God.