

**Exodus 20: 8-11 – The Ten Commandments, part 4:
“Remember the Sabbath.”¹**



Main point: Don't be a slave to work or anything else. God provides what you need.

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: Moses and the people of Israel have just escaped from hundreds of years of slavery in Egypt. *How did they escape? What miracle did God do to get them out and over the Red Sea?*

Exodus 20:1-4

- The first commandment: “Thou shalt have no other God before me.” God says: You're my number one, because I saved you from slavery and made you my special people. Therefore, make ME number one for you!
- The second commandment: Don't make an image of me. Don't try to create me in YOUR image, to do what YOU want. Trust me and follow me as I am.
- The third commandment: Don't use my name in vain. Wear my name well, reflecting Me.

Study: Exodus 20: 8-11

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 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.¹¹ For 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.”

1. *So: What is the fourth commandment?*
 - a. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”
 - i. *I wonder what that means? How would you rephrase it?*
 - 1) Take a day of rest. *Do you think this is often followed?*
 - 2) Probably this is the least observed commandment of all – we are a busy people
2. *What kind of work have you done in your life?*
 - a. Nursing, construction, ranching, mothering, teaching, researching, coaching ...
3. *How hard was it? What kind of hours did you keep? Did you ever get tired? Why?*
 - a. Frail bodies; weak; work too hard; responsibilities; duty
4. *Tell me about something you use that has a battery.*
 - a. Oxygen pack, hearing aid, phone, flashlight, clock, medication reminder
 - i. *What is it like when the battery runs out of juice and stops working?*
 - 1) It's an emergency! The thing doesn't work anymore; need to get it fixed right away.
5. *How are human beings similar to batteries?*
 - a. We wear out! We need to be recharged regularly.
6. *What kind of work do you suppose the Hebrews did when they were enslaved in Egypt? (Pyramids...)
How do you think the Hebrew slaves felt at the end of the day?*
 - a. Exhausted! With no end in sight.

¹ Some material gratefully borrowed from Fellowship Monrovia: <https://madeforfellowship.com/>

7. *And what did God do for his people?*
 - a. Recall the beginning of the Ten Commandments: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."
 - b. God FREED his people. *When the Hebrew people were freed from slavery by God, how do you think that affected their future work? How would being free affect feelings/attitudes about work?*
 - i. "Oh, right, we are no longer slaves! God is taking care of us! We no longer work for Pharaoh; we belong to GOD."
8. God tells the people to remember to keep the Sabbath day "holy." *I wonder what you think "holy" means?*
 - a. Special, set apart, different, unique.
 - b. *When you think back to your line of work, what did it mean for you to relax? Did you do the same things as you did while you were working?*
 - c. *What would be good to do, then, on the Sabbath?*
 - i. Something different, unique, delightful, refreshing
9. Over time, the Hebrew people, God's people, made this commandment into a law to do "no work" – but it's really about not being enslaved. If you don't intentionally stop and remember, it's easy to forget! *What can our thoughts become enslaved by?*
 - a. Worries, pains, money ...
10. *But who promises to take care of us?*
 - a. "I want to connect with you as your God; you are FREE in me. You are not a slave to anything."

Jesus had some things to say about the Sabbath too....

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

11. *What were the religious rulers focused on?*

a) The letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law. They cared more that the rules were followed than that someone was healed.

The fourth commandment, as with all the others, is about LOVE. God's love for us and promise to provide for us, and our love for God in trusting that promise.

Summary of The Ten Commandments: A love letter! An invitation to *love*, not a burden of law. It's a beautiful invitation to relationship with another.

- Ask for any prayer requests for today.
- Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
- End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

The Ten Commandments

Exodus 20: 1-17: And God spoke all these words, saying,

² “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

³ “You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath ...

⁷ “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain

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 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....

¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

¹³ “You shall not murder.

¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ “You shall not steal.

¹⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Mark 3: 1-6

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