INTRO. Early on in our Ten Commandments series we acknowledged how the first four commands deal with our relationship to God. These are the God-ward commands, commands 1 through 4.

- Have no other gods before Me.
- Do not make any idols.
- Do not take the Lord’s name in vain.
- Remember the Sabbath.

But commands 5 through 10 address our relationships with one another as human beings. These are the man-ward, or interpersonal commands that involve our relationships with one another.

- Honor your father and mother.
- Do not murder.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not steal.
- Do not lie.
- Do not covet.

This framework provides a very real picture of what Jesus called the two most important commands of all in the Gospels (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27).

1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength…
2. Love your neighbor as you would yourself…

Let us love God well, and let us love others well → this is a summary statement of the call to discipleship in the Bible.

Over the first few weeks of this series we have learned that loving God well really does mean submitting to the first four of the 10 Commandments.

- Commandment 1 – No other gods before me → worship God only.
- Commandment 2 – Don’t make idols → worship God correctly.
- Commandment 3 – Don’t take the Lord’s name in vain → worship God honorably.

And now today we come to Commandment 4 – “Remember the Sabbath” → which seems at the very least to be teaching that we should worship God regularly, faithfully, consistently.

Interestingly enough, commandment four is not only the longest of the commandments, Sabbath observance is mentioned more often than any of the other Ten Commandments.

- It is mentioned 11 times in the Torah (first five books of the Bible).
- It is mentioned over 100 times in the Old Testament.
• The fourth commandment is the ONLY one of the ten which the Lord clearly taught Israel even before they reached Mount Sinai (see Exodus 16, where God provided manna and quail, but on the seventh day he told them to rest and he would take care of their needs).

The Gospels tell us that even Jesus had the personal habit of attending Sabbath in the synagogues.
• Luke 4:16. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

Here’s what I’m saying:
• The Seven Days of Creation – and we see the importance of Sabbath rest/reflection.
• Before the Giving of the Law – there’s the principle of Sabbath rest.
• Sabbath rest is mentioned frequently across the Old Testament…
• And even Jesus himself attends to Sabbath rest and worship.

LESSON. We are foolish to simply dismiss this commandment! We are mistaken if we think God is indifferent about how we treat this day…how we treat the church gathering…and how we treat our hearts/souls in the weekly rhythm of this thing called life!

LESSON. The principle of “Sabbath” is rooted in the order of Creation…it is taught in the Ten Commandments…and it is reasserted by the habit of Jesus → so if we ignore it, disobey it, or break it, we do so to our own demise!

Question – have you ever thought about how we measure time? I’m talking about the scientific and historical precedent for a day, a week, a month, and a year.

Note. It’s amazing how orderly and organized our God is! God is a God of method and neatness! And we see this in the first pages of our Bible!
• Day and night…the sun rises and sets…there is light and darkness – one day!
• Months are more or less gauged by the lunar cycle.
• The year is measured according to the time it takes the earth to fully orbit the sun.

Q: But why weeks? What’s with a seven-day week?
A: A week is special because it’s the God-ordained measurement of days given to us by God himself.
• God made the week!
• God accomplished His work in six days, and he rested/reflected on the seventh.
• Every time we cycle through S, M, T, W, Th, F, S → it comes from the nature and heart of God himself!

The annual Church calendar of Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas is good! But the weekly pattern of six and one came first and foremost.
Here are some interesting observations about Commandment 4 that come straight out of the text, which is located in Exodus 20:8-11.

- This is the longest of the ten commands. More is said here than of any of the others.
- It addresses the value of hard work.
- It acknowledges one day of the week is not like all the other days.
- It points out that there is in fact one day a week God himself observed (Sabbath).
  - And to honor God we must follow this pattern he laid out for us.
  - It literally mentions this twice – at the beginning and end of the command.
  - It is redundant on purpose – God is saying don’t miss this.
- This day not only has value for people…but for all of civilization as well.
  - Everything is better if it takes appropriate rest.
  - Servants…livestock…travel…business…literally everything under the sun functions better when it remembers its creator, it’s mission and rests!
  - It literally mentions this twice – at the beginning and end of the command.
- The Sabbath is personal with God – multiples times in 20:11 it says, “The Lord…”
  - The Lord made everything in six days.
  - The Lord rested on the seventh day.
  - The Lord blessed the seventh day.
- The Sabbath is personal with God – multiples times in 20:11 it says, “The Lord…”
  - The Lord made everything in six days.
  - The Lord rested on the seventh day.
  - The Lord blessed the seventh day.
- The Lord declared it to be a holy day.

Maybe it’s redundant…maybe it’s personal with God…maybe it’s the longest commandment…because God knew this would be the one his people would need the most…honor the least…and break most frequently.

In other words – I know about my idols…I know when I’ve used profanity…or dishonored my parents…I know when I’ve murdered someone…I know about adultery…I know about stealing, lying, and greed…but for whatever reason…“Remember the Sabbath” just escapes my attention and causes me to live a life of stress, anxiety, and overload…instead of rest, worship, reflection, and honor!

- Something’s got to give!
- Maybe we’ve let our busy, hectic lives spin out of control – and we’ve failed miserably on commandment four.
- Maybe we’ve made a mockery of the Sabbath!

Exod 20:8, “Remember…” Remember = bring back to your mind something from before…something previously occurred but recall it for a purpose.

- Remember is more than a mental word in the Bible.
- It means to recollect and to put into practice.

Sabbath = from a Hebrew word that means “to cease” or “to stop.”

Put together, we might say it like this.

Q: What is the fourth commandment? What is the Sabbath all about?
A: Remember to stop! Recall that you are to cease…take a break from looking all around…and look up and remember the Lord who made all and is over all!
In the Ten Commandments parallel passage in Deuteronomy 5, we are told the word “Remember” is used in the context of remembering that the Israelites were formerly slaves in Egypt (5:15).

- You were in slavery…but you won’t always be!
- Sabbath is about remembering God’s original design…and how he will redeem us and restore us through Christ!

**Let me be clear in this message** → we are not worshiping on the Sabbath day today. Today is not the Sabbath day. Yesterday, Saturday, was the Sabbath day. Today is Sunday…the first day of the week. Many of us call it the Lord’s Day. We are here worshiping on Sunday, not the Sabbath day.

- I will say more about this transition from Sabbath to Sunday in just a moment.

**There are generally two unhealthy extremes when it comes to this whole matter of a Sabbath day of rest and worship.**

There are some historically…and even some in this present time…that have made the Sabbath rest and worship a day of gloom, burden, and misery.

ILLUS: one of my favorite episodes on the Andy Griffith Show is called, “Man in a Hurry” – a businessman’s car breaks down on a Sunday two miles outside of Mayberry. He has to be in Charlotte the next day. The man grows furious at how sleepy/relaxed Mayberry is because hardly anyone will lift a finger to help him because it’s Sunday.

ILLUS: when I was growing up, there were two things my Dad was committed to on Sundays: church, and a nap. He didn’t miss church, period. And he didn’t miss his nap, period.

- One Sunday afternoon when I was a kid my brother and I wanted to ride four-wheelers. Dad lectured us, “If I even hear those four-wheelers crank I’m going to whip y’all.”
- My brother and I pushed the four-wheelers several hundred yards from the house before we cranked them.

Then there are others who have made the Lord’s Day just like all the other days. There’s nothing different about it. They are clueless or indifferent about Sabbath rest or worship. They treat Sunday like every other day of the week.

- Go shopping…do chores…work in the yard…play sports.
- Many are about profit and pleasure as much on Sunday as they are any other day.

I recently read where four generations ago in America Sunday was called “The Holy Sabbath.” Our grandfathers called it, “The Sabbath.” Our fathers called it “Sunday.” And now we call it “the weekend” – the day is getting weaker and weaker all the time, and we are not better for it.

**My point:** somewhere between these two extremes, I believe with all my heart, there is a place where God can take the day of worship/rest and make it a day of tremendous blessing and benefit in your life.
NT Sabbath – Let you think the Sabbath principle is confined to the Old Testament, let me briefly touch on how important the Sabbath principle is to New Testament Christianity as well.

Luke 24:52-53. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising God.

Acts 2:46. Day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts.

Acts 3:1. Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer…

Hebrews 10:25. Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Q: So if the Jewish Sabbath was Saturday, why do we worship now as Christians on Sunday?
A: A transformation occurred from Saturday to Sunday, primarily, because Jesus was said to have been resurrected on Sunday, or on the first day of the week.

- Sunday – this day commemorates the resurrection of Christ.

However, do note that in Romans 14:5-6 and Colossians 2:16-17, Paul says under the new covenant we necessarily elevate one day above another.

Paul, “Let every person be persuaded in his own mind” about foods, dates, ceremonies, etc.

The point is this, God wants us to view Sabbath/Sunday worship as:

1) Theological – God has given us Christ and redeemed us.
2) Historical – Since Genesis, saints of God have been gathering to worship for centuries.
3) Missional – We remind ourselves of the huge tasks to make disciples in the world!
4) Spiritual – We pledge our allegiance. We remind Satan our loyalty is to Christ, not him.
5) Eternal – We are practicing for heaven…worship time is never wasted time.

Application

First, it is appropriate that Christians set aside one day out of seven for corporate worship. We’ve already seen this from the Old and New Testaments. The first Christians inherited this tradition from their Jewish ancestors.

- It was Saturday under Moses.
- But it became Sunday in the early church in celebration of Christ’s resurrection.

The Sabbath day shows us “WHEN” God’s people paused to rest and worship.

The House of God shows us “WHERE” God’s people gathered to rest and worship.

- Temple, Synagogue, Church.
In other words, there should be a time and place...a when/where...the people of God, the chosen, the redeemed, the called, the body of Christ → when we prioritize the mission, and we do it together with all our hearts for the glory of God!

FACT. You need a weekly Sunday experience! Something should happen in your heart on Sunday!

You need one day, every week, when you gather with like-minded people for encouragement, training, and remembering!

- We work every other day, but not today.
- We live burning at both ends every other day, but not today.
- We are so busy we can’t focus on the Lord all day every other day, but we will today!

Sunday is when we come together to be reminded –

- God made the world!
- Sin broke the world!
- Jesus rose from the dead to save the world!
- Christians love the world and serve the world...but NOT as people who are of the world!

Sunday means –

- We have a different Master! We have a different Mission!
- You should come expectant, ready, and prepared to meet with the Lord.
- The other six days I tend to my work, business, responsibility, etc. But Sunday I tend to my soul! Resting can be hard work!!! Do you trust Christ enough to rest???

LESSON. Somehow, we’ve gotten the idea that gathering with God’s people to worship God, encourage one another, and to hear from God’s Word is something that’s fine to do when it fits our schedule. But this is not the teaching or the pattern of the Bible.

LESSON. There’s something beautiful about trusting Christ enough to stop and rest!

- (ILLUS: Chickfila, and Hobby Lobby...what a great business model!)

Second, it is amazing how much better Sunday is when you have prepared on Saturday night.

- Make the decision to be faithful to church!
  - Parents: be the adults! Be the leaders! Be mature! Be disciplined!
- Lay out your clothes and iron them the night before.
- Know where you put your car keys, your wallet, and your Bible the night before.
- Know what time you will rise the night before.
- Know what you will eat for breakfast the night before.
- Be disciplined to get out of the bed.
- Prepare your own heart first.
  - It’s amazing how much more you’ll enjoy the preaching/singing when you’ve prepared your heart the night before.
LESSON. Sunday morning church is a Saturday night decision! Great Sunday experiences usually begin on Saturday night!

Third, it is amazing how much better your Sunday is when your “heart is present” while you are here.

- Be on time. Be punctual to church!
  - Would your employer/school tolerate such tardiness?
  - Especially if you are a leader or have responsibility – be on time!
- Be around for the whole worship service!
  - (ILLUS: no getting up and moving around; Dad and me in Athens)
- Sing the songs. Think of the words you are singing.
- Read the Scriptures…follow along, take notes.
- Speak to people while you’re here.
- Come prepared to give your financial offering.
- Think about the personal way you should respond – the invitation.
- Pick up your trash, don’t make the place nasty.

Fourth, it is amazing how much better Sunday is when you live it out during the week.

- What did you learn at church?
  - Don’t just show up and leave.
  - Let the message marinate! Talk it over with friends/family.
- Pay attention at church –
  - Does the church have a need I can help meet?
  - Did the church call for more volunteers? How can you help?
  - Is there a way for me to use my spiritual gifts here?
- Want to know what the church needs more than anything?
  - A group of servants!!!!

Sunday is the day that fills you and fuels you to be on mission for Christ the other six days!

CONCL. The Sabbath was sacred. The House of the Lord was sacred. We should take this day and this place seriously/sacredly as the people of God.

Heb 4:9-11. Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God’s people. For the person who has entered his rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from his. Let us then make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

The point of Sabbath in the Bible? We trust in Christ…we believe in Christ…we rely on Christ instead of our own strength.

- We rest in Christ and we rest from our labors – from all efforts to be saved by our works!

Matt 11:28. Come unto Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.