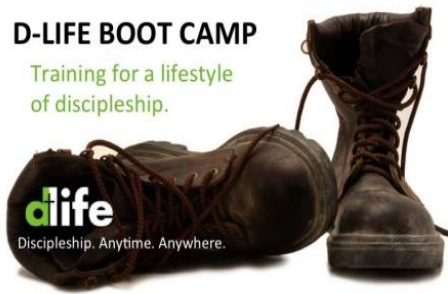


D-LIFE BOOT CAMP

Training for a lifestyle
of discipleship.



Keeping it Real

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Pastor Dale L. Crawley Sr.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

Rev. Dr. Deborah Crawley, Teacher
Sis. Tammi Brown, Asst. Teacher

The Sabbath Commandment

Why did the day of worship change from Saturday to Sunday?

Is it wrong to work on Sundays?

The fourth commandment reads:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 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. 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. (Ex. 20:8-11)

The Meaning of The Fourth Commandment

A Day of Rest Was a Gift from God. For the Israelites, an agrarian (farmers) people who had to work to get food "by the sweat of your face" (Gen. 3:19), this commandment announced a welcome gift from God: a day of rest from their labor at which they worked during the rest of the week. This day was also a time in which they could draw near to God in worship, a day that God "blessed" (Ex. 20:11). The commandment was not intended to impose onerous restrictions on human activity, such that obedience would come to be viewed as a dreadful burden, and even the ordinary conduct of life would result in harsh accusations and fearful guilt. Jesus understood this, for he said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

Later Jewish Tradition Added Many Oppressive Rules. Jewish tradition that developed after the Old Testament books were written added numerous detailed legalistic rules about what was considered forbidden “work” on the Sabbath day and what kinds of activities were permitted. Here are some examples of such detailed rules from the Mishnah (*a topically arranged collection of recognized rabbinic teachings about all the details of Jewish life*):

- a) If a kettle [holding hot water] was taken off [from the stove], cold water may not be put in it to be made hot; but enough may be put therein....to make [the hot water] lukewarm.
- b) If a gentile lighted a lamp an Israelite may make use of the light, but if he lighted it for the sake of the Israelite it is forbidden. If he filled [a trough] with water to give his cattle to drink, an Israelite may give his own cattle to drink after him, but if the gentile did it for the Israelite, it is forbidden.

Therefore, while Jesus never actually violated the fourth commandment in its original intention, his Jewish adversaries were assuming the validity of many such additional rules when they accused him and his disciples of “doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath” (Matt. 12:2; Luke 14:3; John 5:10). When he healed on the Sabbath day (John 9:14) or when his disciples plucked heads of grain on the Sabbath and ate them (Mark 2:23) they were accused of violating the Sabbath, but Jesus and his disciples were in fact obeying the true sense of this commandment.

The Sabbatarian Position: Sunday Should Be Treated Like The Sabbath Day In The Old Testament

There is a long and highly respected tradition within the Christian church that sees Sunday as the New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament Sabbath day, and therefore subject to many of its requirements.

Those who argue for this alternative position often call their position a “Sabbatarian” view, because it argues for keeping the Old Testament Sabbath, but doing it on Sunday instead of Saturday.

The arguments in favor of this position are:

1. God established a pattern of Sabbath keeping at creation: Gen. 2:2-3
2. The fourth commandment is part of the Ten Commandments, and all of the Ten Commandments represent moral requirements from God that apply to all human life on earth for all periods of history. Therefore, we should not disregard the fourth commandment.

3. There is nothing in the New Testament that convincingly indicates the abrogation of the Old Testament Sabbath commandment. Therefore, it is still morally binding on people today.

Unlike the Other Nine Commandments, This One Is Never Reaffirmed for Christians in the New Covenant. The absence of any affirmation of the Sabbath commandment for new covenant Christians apparently indicates that the early apostles, guided by the teaching of Jesus while he was on earth and by the work of the Holy Spirit after that (John 14:26; 16:13), realized that the Sabbath commandment did not express God's moral standards for all humanity for all time, but established specific requirements for the people of Israel as a nation while they lived under the Mosaic covenant.

The Sabbath commandment looked forward to the coming of Christ and was fulfilled by His life and ministry. It promised physical rest to laborers, but Jesus offered a deeper, spiritual rest from our struggling to make ourselves right before God. Jesus said:

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matt. 11:28-30)

According to the author of Hebrews, to trust in Christ is to enter the true "Sabbath rest" (Heb. 4:9) that the Jewish people failed to attain (Hebrews 4:1;3;9).

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it..... For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,' " although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.....There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

Paul explicitly says that the Sabbath commandment was a "shadow", but that the shadow is fulfilled in Christ:

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. (Col. 2:16-17)

We Should Still Gain Wisdom from The Fourth Commandment

- 1. It is Wise to Observe Regular Time of Prayer, Worship, Learning, and Fellowship with Other Believers.** From the very first days after Jesus ascended into heaven, the early Christians “were continually in the temple blessing God” (Luke 24:53). Christians throughout the world and throughout history have naturally desired to gather together to pray, worship God, learn from his Word, and fellowship together. After Pentecost, “day by day” the early Christians were “attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes.....praising God and having favor with all the people” (Acts 2:46-47).

- 2. On Which Day Should Christians Worship Together?**
 - a. Any Day Is Acceptable.** Any day is acceptable. In fact, many early Christians worshiped together *every day* (Acts 2:4-6).

 - b. Regular Meeting and Rest Is Wise, but No Particular Day Is Required.** The lack of a specification of any one particular day as the only one acceptable for rest and worship is also important for Christians today. For some Christians (such as pastors and other full-time staff members at churches), Sunday is their primary day of work during the week. Others have various secular jobs that require them periodically or regularly to work on Sundays. It seems appropriate for pastors to take another day than Sunday as a day of rest, and for those whose jobs require them to work on Sundays to take another day for both rest and worship with other believers. The new covenant gives believers this kind of freedom to seek various wise and appropriate ways to fulfill the expectation that they will meet for regular times of worship and take regular times or rest.