

How to Keep the Sabbath

Pastor John Grosbol

The Blessings of Sabbath Keeping

I consider myself to be one of the most fortunate people in the world, because before I was born, both my father and my mother had learned, studied and believed, and were keeping the Sabbath. I know from personal experience what the Sabbath can do for a family. I know what it can do for a marriage. I know what it can do for children. I know what it can do for any Christian. And I hope, by the grace of God, that you can see from the Bible, as we study, the marvelous blessings that God wants to give to you through the Sabbath. Great blessings are in store for each one who keeps the Sabbath holy.

There was great joy when the Sabbath was instituted. In Job 38, God gave Job a science quiz. He said to Job, *"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Who determined its measurements? Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone?"* God is referring here to the time when the Sabbath was instituted. Notice verse 7: *"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."* When the Sabbath was made, all the sons of God from the entire universe were looking on. The Bible says, *"They shouted for joy."* This is one of the verses in the Bible that makes plain that there are many intelligences in the universe beside those in this world. Revelation also gives reference to the intelligences in other worlds: *"Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them!"* (Revelation 12:12).

When you look up at the stars, tonight, think of the many other intelligences living in different worlds. This world is the only one in God's creation that has fallen, that has sinned. Right now, because of sin, we are quarantined from the rest of the universe. God has put a wall of separation between us so that we cannot go and visit unfallen worlds. But if you are a Christian, if you follow Jesus, the day is coming when you are going to be able to travel all over the universe and visit unfallen worlds. You will be able to visit with people who have been alive for thousands of years and who have never been disobedient. It will be exciting!

God's Creative Power

At the conclusion of creation week, *"God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, [that is He made it holy] because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made"* (Genesis 1: 3 1, 2:1-3). God Himself marked the beginning of the first Sabbath. It came at the end of the first week of creation. The Bible does not teach that this world came into existence through long ages of time. It came into existence in seven days, through the literal creation of God. Psalm 33 tells how the world was created: *"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."* How did it happen? *"For He spoke, and it was done,- He commanded, and it stood fast"* (verses 6, 9). That is the God we worship.

Jesus demonstrated that same creative power when He was here on earth. At the tomb of Lazarus when Jesus spoke, it did not take a long time for Lazarus to come back to life. Jesus lifted up His voice and said, *"Lazarus, come forth"* (John 11:43). The Bible says that, he who was dead, came forth.

I have tried to think through what had to happen when Lazarus was raised, what had to happen chemically, physically, and electrically when Jesus said, *"Lazarus, come forth."* We each have approximately one trillion cells in our body. Each one of these cells has a spark of life, an electrical charge. The electrical charge changes in every one of these cells when a person dies. But when Jesus *said, "Lazarus, come forth,"* a trillion cells came to life. That same power was involved in the creation of the world, which the Sabbath commemorated.

Friend, the wonderful thing about the Christian religion is that it is a miracle religion. The Sabbath is a sign, first of all, that you worship God as the Creator. If there was ever a time when we needed a God who

is a creator it is today because our world is marred by sin. Sin has fractured our relationships, not only with God but also with each other. People are living in broken homes with broken hearts and with broken relationships. If there ever was a time when the human family needed a Creator, one who can speak and change people's lives, it is today. The Sabbath is a sign, a sign of relationship. It is a sign that you are worshipping God as the Creator. We will look at a few texts that speak of it as this sign.

All of the patriarchs kept the Sabbath-Adam, Noah, Abraham. The Bible specifically mentions in Genesis 26:5 that Abraham kept God's commandments. 'The Sabbath commandment begins with the word, "Remember. " The Lord did not institute the Sabbath at Sinai, rather it was a reminder of something established at creation. Thus the fourth commandment says: "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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. " "Remember. "*

There is a time to work, but God has placed a limit on human work. When my grandparents, on my father's side, immigrated to the United States from Denmark, they did not know about the Sabbath, though they were Christians. In Denmark they attended the Lutheran church. They loved the Lord and were trying to follow Him, but they did not know anything about the Sabbath. My grandfather was an ambitious man who settled in Illinois. I never knew him, but my father told me that my grandfather always worked "eight" days a week; and he expected the same of his children. That compulsion affects the family.

God knew that some of us would have a tendency to work all the time, because the more we work the more we gain and the more profit we make. God knew that we could never be happy if we spent all our lives working. He, therefore, placed a limit on work and said, there is some time that I want you not to work. You can do all of your work in six days, but on the seventh day you are not to do any work; you need to rest.

It was during the time when my grandparents were in Illinois that they first learned about the Sabbath. My grandfather fought it for a long time, but finally accepted it. He rested on the Sabbath instead of working at farming, or buying and selling cattle and coal.

I want to tell you, friends, the Sabbath can change homes. It can also change marriages. There are many people today who are married and have a home, but they never spend much time together. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence. He placed a check on the separation that selfishness would bring into families. In many families, the husband and father is gone from home all week. The Lord Himself placed a check on this separation and said, There is one day a week that you are not to be out doing your work, gaining your livelihood-you are to rest.

What are we to do on this day when we rest? In Exodus 31:13-18, we read, "*Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel- shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed. 'And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. "*

The Sabbath is a sign of relationship. It is a sign that we worship God as the Creator. It is a sign that we honor His law and government. It is also a sign that God will sanctify and make us holy and obedient. In the book of Numbers we see some of the blessings that God has promised to those that keep the Sabbath. If we are keeping the Sabbath, we can claim this promise for ourselves, and it is one of the most wonderful promises that God has ever laid in record in His holy book. "*This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.'* So they shall put My

name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them. " That promise, friend, is only for Sabbathkeepers. Here is another promise that is given to those who keep the Sabbath. "The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. And the Lord will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. The Lord will open to u His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail,- you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you todoy, and are careful to observe them " (Deuteronomy 28:9-13). Isn't that a wonderful promise? Of course, that promise is given on condition that we are obedient to God's law.

In Psalm 95:1-7, we find a call to worship on the Sabbath. *"Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with alms. For the Lord is the great God, and the great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth; the heights of the hills are His also. The sea is His, for He made it,- and His hand formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. "* (If you are interested, you can compare verses 7-11 with Hebrews 3 and 4. The apostle Paul draws from this passage and teaches the meaning of the Sabbath in Hebrews.) Oh friend, if you keep the Sabbath, God is your Shepherd and you are the sheep of His pasture, He has promised to take care of you. Some of the most wonderful promises found in the Bible are given to those who keep the Sabbath.

The world has sought to tear the Sabbath from its place in God's law. It has been replaced by a common working day placed there by the man of sin. A breach has been made in God's law, as was foreseen in Bible prophecy. Daniel 7, 8 and I 1 make it very clear that the Roman power made a breach in God's law. The Bible also predicts that there will be some people in the last days who will repair this breach. *"Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In (Isaiah 58:12). Who is going to be the repairer of the breach? "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your own 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, 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. "* (verses 13-14). Those who keep the Sabbath and call it a delight will be the repairers of the breach. God wants the Sabbath to be a delight to you and me. We can never get out of the Sabbath what He wants us to receive from it if we are trampling on it; if we are doing our own ways, finding our own pleasure, or speaking our own words.

We have a problem in our society today with not paying attention to each other. Sometimes we pay very little attention to the people who love us the most. Have you seen a home like that? Members of the family go on living their own lives, each one individually.

Sometimes we do that to the Lord. The Lord has said, "There is one day in seven I would like for you to spend with Me."

What happens when you spend time with the Lord? Do you know what the Bible says? Do you know where pleasure comes from? Do you know where happiness comes from? Do you know where joy comes from? Do you know where love comes from? *"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy "* (Psalm 16: 1 1). Do you have joy in your life? The Bible says that in God's presence there is *'fullness of joy. "* Look at the last part of verse II: *"At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. "* Would you like to have some of that joy in your life? Would like to have some of that pleasure in your life? Then you need to spend time with the Lord. There is fullness of joy in His presence.

Have you ever seen people, when they are courting, who go out on a date and start talking to a third person? They hardly talk to each other because of the third person. That isn't the way to have a pleasurable evening. How do you think the Lord feels if, on the Sabbath, we talk about our own business and cares, and our own pleasures? If we do so we are not spending time with the Lord. This neglect is what Isaiah 58:13 is speaking of We need to honor God on the Sabbath by not doing our own way, because it is a

special time to be with the Lord. If we spend this time with the Lord, we will receive from Him fullness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

The Sabbath is going to be the issue in the great conflict soon to take place in our world. God has set His seal upon His royal requirement. In the end of the world, the sign of obedience to God's government will be whether or not a person keeps the Sabbath holy. The sign of rebellion, the mark of the beast, will be Sunday observance. The Bible predicted thousands of years ago that Sabbathkeeping will be the issue at the end of the world. We, therefore, need to know *how* to keep the Sabbath. 'Mere is great blessing and great joy involved in proper Sabbath observance.

Blessing for Home and Family

We would like to study how the Sabbath can be a blessing to your home and family. We have already studied one of the main principles, as listed in the fourth commandment. It is not to be a time for us to carry on our temporal work. That was a test for my grandfather when he first accepted the Sabbath. Oftentimes we men think that if we don't work seven days a week, we will not be successful financially. We think that we will not be able to earn a living and support our family. We may lose our job because it requires Sabbath employment, and then we will go hungry. Surely, we will not be able to survive. The devil tells people that all of these things will happen if they begin to keep the Sabbath. Thus, the Sabbath is a test of faith. Do you know what Jesus said about it? *"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow,- they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. "* (Matthew 6:25-33).

If you keep the Sabbath and put God first, you do not need to worry about your needs. God has promised to supply your every need. When my grandfather started keeping the Sabbath, he found this promise to be true. (God has not, however, promised to supply all of your wants in *this* life. There are times when what we want might cause us to lose eternal life.)

Many people have lost their jobs because of keeping the Sabbath. My father was threatened with the loss of his job. We lived up north where, in the winter, the Sabbath begins before five o'clock. His employer insisted that he work until five o'clock or lose his job. My father replied that he would have to lose his job if he had to work until five o'clock on Friday. My father did not know what would happen if he lost his job, but he decided that God's requirements came first. It was more important to obey God than to have a job. My father knew that God had promised to supply the needs of those who honored Him, and He did. The Lord worked it out for my father to have the Sabbath hours off and keep his job, too. Friend, God has access, not only to the resources of this world, but also to all the resources of the universe, and more. God can create resources to supply your need if necessary. God fed millions of Israelites in the desert for forty years with Moses leading them. There were no gardens, no supermarkets, no stores, no orchards, no grain fields, no farms, nothing but desert, yet none of God's people went hungry. When you decide to obey God and acknowledge the Creator by keeping the Sabbath, He promises to provide all your needs; and remember, God stands behind every promise that He has made. It is impossible for Him to lie (Hebrews 6:18).

When does the Sabbath begin? *"The evening and the morning were the first day"* (Genesis 1:5). *"From evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath "* (Leviticus 23:32, last part). When does the Bible say that the evening occurs? *"At evening, when the sun had set"* (Mark 1:32). When is evening? At sunset. You can keep the Sabbath even if you don't have a watch. If you have any vision you can tell when it starts to get dark, and that is when the Sabbath begins. The idea that the day begins at midnight came from the pagan Roman Empire. It is a Roman idea, and is not biblical. The Sabbath begins at sunset on what we call Friday evening.

How do we get ready for the Sabbath? *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"* (Exodus 20:8). The only person who can keep the Sabbath holy is a person who is holy. We do not have holy flesh, but we can develop a holy character that is in harmony with God's law. If we break any part of God's law we cannot keep the Sabbath holy. We can quit working, but we cannot keep the Sabbath holy. Thus a spiritual preparation is involved in getting ready for the Sabbath, for we cannot keep the Sabbath holy if we have any sin on our conscience.

A long time ago a man related to me this story about his mother, that on Friday evening, before the sun set, their family made preparation for the Sabbath. Before the Sabbath began, his mother gathered her children together. She had some problems in her character development as we all do. Sometimes, she would say to them with tears in her eyes, "Children, as I review my life this past week, I realize there have been times when I have been impatient. The Sabbath is coming and I want to confess to you that I've been impatient and I'm sorry. I don't want to be that way anymore." At times when she was talking, the children would start to think of their own shortcomings, and they would realize the things that they had done that week that were not right. We cannot keep the Sabbath holy, friends, if we are not holy. All sin must be confessed before the sun goes down on Friday night.

In this family, as they gathered together, the children confessed to each other what they had done or said that was wrong. Then on their knees, they confessed to their heavenly Father. They asked for forgiveness for their sins, that their record might be made clean and white with the blood of Jesus. When the Sabbath began, all sin had been put away. Friend, you cannot keep the Sabbath holy if you are bearing a grudge against someone in your family, or if you have bitterness or hatred in your heart. If you have no love in your heart, you cannot keep the Sabbath holy. But if you have chosen to obey God, to do His will, and you say, "Lord, I'm choosing to follow You and to obey You-I'm confessing my sins," there is One in heaven, friends, who will be your Advocate. *"These things I write unto you,"* John said, *"that you sin not, and if any man sin we have an Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous"* (1 John 2:1).

He will cleanse your record. He will forgive you and make it clean and then you will be able to keep the Sabbath holy. There are many homes today where, before another Sabbath begins, the family members need to get together and confess to each other. We need to confess what we have said that is wrong. Have we said something that is untrue? Have we said something that is unkind? Have we lost patience with one another? Friends, if we have, we need to confess it, asking the others in our family to forgive us and then asking our heavenly Father to forgive us also. *"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much"* (James 5:16).

In many of our families today healing is needed because hearts are broken and relationships are fractured. The Sabbath was given, friends, as a sign that God is our Sanctifier, that He is going to re-create our lives and make us holy. It is when we are made holy that we become happy. I consider myself to be one of the most fortunate people in the world because I grew up in a home where my parents believed in really keeping the Sabbath-not just in form, but in reality. If my mother or father said something to the children that they felt was not right, they were not too proud to confess it. I want to tell you, when you do that before the Sabbath comes, it changes everything. We need to get on our knees and pray for each other that the Lord will heal. Friends, we need healing today. Everywhere I go in my travels, I find fractured relationships, bitterness and animosity, even in Christian homes. God wants to heal our homes and He wants to heal our hearts. The Sabbath is a sign that God is going to re-create in us that holiness and happiness that He first created in the human race.

That, to my understanding, is the most important preparation for the Sabbath. We must be sanctified. If we are going to keep the Sabbath holy, we must prepare for it by confessing our sins and praying for one another that we may be healed.

Friday, the sixth day of the week, is the special preparation day for the Sabbath. Let us read what the Bible says: *"Then he said to them, 'This is what the Lord has said: 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning''"* (Exodus 16:23). This preparation was commanded before God gave His law on Mount Sinai, and the children of Israel were already keeping the Sabbath. Friday is the day when we prepare for the Sabbath. Our food is to be prepared the day before, so that there is no need to spend all Sabbath cooking or preparing food. This requirement does not mean that we cannot eat warm food on the Sabbath. Food can be warmed up, but the Sabbath is not a day for cooking. Many men do not realize how important this counsel is. There are some men who are so fortunate that they never have to

cook a meal. Their wives cook it for them. They, therefore, don't realize what is involved in the preparation of a good meal. God not only placed a check on the amount of work that a man would have to do, but also on the amount of work that a woman would have to do. It is not His desire that any woman should have to spend the Sabbath cooking food. He said, Whatever you want to cook for the Sabbath, you should cook on Friday.

Sabbath, as we read in Psalm 95, is the day that God ordained that we should come into His presence for worship. This is an area where we are going to get into the "nitty-gritty." If you had an appointment to talk to President Bush at 9:30 in the morning, what kind of clothes would you wear? Would you wear the same clothes that you wore when you changed the oil in your car? Would you? Now, friends, is God any less important than the President of the United States? The President of the United States is a human being, a created being who was born and will die in this world unless the Lord comes before that time. When we come into God's presence to worship, it is a special event. We should not wear the same clothes that we wear for our ordinary work during the week. We should have Sabbath clothing to be worn in attending God's service. We should be neat and trim, pure within and without. In *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 355, we read, "On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness and that all cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked and the baths be taken. It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule you can do it. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment., Before the setting of the sun let all secular work be laid aside and all secular papers be put out of sight." The Lord knows what He is talking about. He knows that we will be distracted by all of our worldly business if it is in sight.

On this day, Friday, all differences between brethren, whether in the family or in the church, should be put away. Let all bitterness and wrath and malice be expelled from the soul before the Sabbath begins. The mind as well as the body should be withdrawn from worldly business. Oh friends, it means eternal salvation to keep the Sabbath holy. When we put away from ourselves all bitterness and malice and are reconciled to our brethren, either in the church or at home, we are coming into harmony with the God of creation. We are getting ready for that eternal home. Do you know, friend, in heaven there will be no strife, or bitterness or malice. There will be no hatred, animosity, or cold, hard-hearted feelings. I want to go live there, don't you? I want the joy and happiness of that place.

The Sabbath was given even to sinful man to remind us of what heaven is like and to encourage us to prepare to be ready for that place. That is why all malice, all sin, must be put away. We should examine our hearts, especially on Friday, to see whether there is anything that has come between us and our spouses. Is there any sin that is not made right? We need to pray for each other that we will be healed. The Lord says to those who keep the Sabbath holy. *"Therefore the Lord God of Israel says: 'I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever; but now the Lord says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed' "* (I Samuel 2:30). This is a wonderful promise. Oh friend, if you are in trouble, if you have chosen to keep the Sabbath, you can claim this promise. I have claimed it, and I want to tell you God honors it. Have you ever been in trouble and had a problem in your home, in your marriage or with your children? Did you ever have a problem that seemed to be totally unworkable unless a miracle should happen? When it seemed that everything was going to be ruined, have you ever claimed this promise, *"Those who honor Me, I will honor?"* When you get into trouble that you can't solve or answer and there is no one else who can, and you need divine power to come to your rescue and heal your life, the Lord says, *"Those who honor Me, I will honor. "* That promise is for the Sabbathkeepers.

The Sabbath was designed to be a family day, a time we spend with the Lord and with each other at home. I want to share in some detail how to begin and how to keep the Sabbath at home. Before the sun sets, we need to assemble in our homes and do three things. Of course, as I mentioned, if we have sinned, we need to confess to each other. But we need to do more than simply confess, we need to do three specific things. We are going to do these things, even in Heaven.

These three things are done in family worship. You need to begin the Sabbath with family worship. I have done this ever since I can remember. Worship can be one of the happiest times in your family. I can still remember worships from when I was a child. There are three things you need to do during family worship.

One, you need to read from God's Word. Don't spend an hour reading, especially if you have small children, but spend some time reading from God's Word in family worship.

Second, you sing a song. If you are a Christian, if you are worshiping the Lord of glory, you should have something to sing about. Jesus sang when He was here on earth, and if you are a Christian, at the beginning of the Sabbath you should not only read from the Bible, but also sing. God's children praised Him. That is a part of worship. It is helpful, of course, if some member in your family can play a musical instrument. My wife, son and daughter all like for me to play the piano when we have family worship so that we have accompaniment for our singing. I am not a professional pianist, but I can play the simple tunes or hymns.

Third, you need to pray. These are the three things you do to have family worship. You read from the Bible, you sing, and you pray.

On Friday night, do not go to bed late. Why? Because the Sabbath is a special day and you will want to get up early Sabbath morning. If you get up too late there will be confusion. There will be a hustle and bustle to get ready to go to church and you might become impatient. Go to bed at an early hour on Friday night, so that on Sabbath morning you can get up early. Thus you will not be in a hurry and not be tempted to become impatient, perhaps with someone who doesn't finish breakfast as soon as you wish he or she would. Unholy feelings can come into the home and desecrate the Sabbath and it can become a weariness.

As mentioned, the food for Sabbath has already been prepared on Friday. You do not need to have more food or a greater variety of food on Sabbath than on any other day. In fact, on Sabbath you generally need to eat less than on other days. You are not going to work ' If you eat the same amount of food on Sabbath that you eat on a day when you are doing some kind of physical labor, you will have a tendency to go to sleep in church, so don't eat as much on Sabbath.

Have you ever thought about who is present when you come to worship the Lord on the Sabbath day? The Lord of glory is present along with the angels. What does God want to do for you when you worship Him on His holy day? He wants to bless you. Blessings come from the Lord.

No human preacher, teacher or person can bless you. But God can bless you, and He has promised that He will, when you come to worship Him' it would be too bad to miss out on something that God had for you because you were drowsy and went to sleep in church

The Children

We need to help our children keep the Sabbath with enjoyment. Let us look at several points that will be helpful for the children. First of all, in family worship, be sure that it is not too long. Children cannot endure long worship services. Let them bring their Bibles to worship, and if they can read, let them read one, two or three verses. Sing a song that is familiar and have prayer. If you are by yourself, you can pray as long as you please, but if you have a family and children, you cannot pray as long as you please, because you must not weary your children. How long should your prayer be if you have children? The Lord has given us an example. if you would like to have an idea about how long to pray, study the model prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. Jesus gave us what is called the Lord's prayer. It is not many words. if you have children, it would be helpful for you to study that prayer and to pattern your prayer after it.

The Sabbath is a time for us to spend with our children, our families, or if we do not have a family of our own, it is a time for us to spend with the family of God and with friends. It can be one of the happiest and most blessed times of the week.

The Sabbath in Heaven

One of my favorite topics to think about is what Sabbath will be like in heaven. I have a number of relatives and friends whom I cannot visit on Sabbath because they have died. When I get to heaven I am going to be with all of these people every Sabbath. It is going to be a most exciting experience. In Isaiah 66:22-23, the Bible says that in heaven we are all going to come together, every Sabbath, to worship the Lord. We are going to be organized there as families. It is going to be a wonderfully happy and blessed time.

I can remember when I was a child growing up that on Friday night my father would pray for our family. He would pray that we would all be saved without the loss of one. God wants to save your family, too, without the loss of one. Have you ever thought about that? God cannot save your family without the loss of one unless you are there. If everybody else in your family were saved and you were not, your family would miss you. That is one of the reasons, friends, that it is important for you to be saved, so that in heaven your family will not miss you, because the Sabbath is a family time. It is a time for you to be together with those you love best and those who love you best.

Nature Study

God created the Sabbath after creation. It was a time for the study of what He had made. If we have children, it is still a wonderful occupation for the Sabbath, especially in pleasant weather. The Sabbath is a wonderful time to study creation.

Different people enjoy the study of different aspects of nature. When I was a young person, the nature study that I enjoyed the most was observing birds. When I became older and was living in North Dakota, a hobby that I enjoyed very much was studying the stars. I had to discontinue it when I moved to southern California because one cannot see the stars there. The study of the stars is a very, very interesting study to do on Sabbath night.

I have known people who enjoy studying flowers. You can take your children out in nature on the Sabbath and describe to them God's great work of creation, that when God first created the world everything was holy and beautiful and that He created this world for our enjoyment. Some people like to study shrubs, some trees, other people like to study other things in the natural world. The Sabbath is a time when we can take our children into the fields or the groves and study what God has made.

The Sabbath is also a time when we can explain to our children the plan of salvation. Tell them that God so loved the world, that when sin entered the world He had a plan already prepared so that we could be redeemed. He sent His only begotten Son because He loved the world so much. The Sabbath is a time when we can tell our children the story of Bethlehem, the story of the child Jesus and how He lived—that He, by the way, was obedient to His parents. The Bible tells us this in Luke 2:51. If our children are going to be saved in the kingdom of heaven, they need to live a life like Jesus. They need to be obedient to their parents. We can teach our children about Jesus and how He knows about their trials and temptations and struggles. Children have temptations. Some adults have forgotten that. Children have trials, temptations and struggles.

Sabbath is a time when we can read stories.

My daughter loves to have me tell her stories. Children like stories and the Sabbath is a time for such enjoyment. I am not talking about secular stories, but sacred stories, stories of Bible history and what God has done for His people.

God wants to make the Sabbath the most enjoyable day of the week for us and our family, a time of delight. He wants to heal our homes and our hearts and bring to us the joy that He gave to the first human family.

In Isaiah 65 we read about a time when God is going to re-create the world. At the end of the millennium God is going to purify the earth by destroying all sin and sinners in a fiery flood that will envelop the world. Then He is going to create this world again: *"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind"* (Isaiah 65:17).

You know, friends, when you really think about it, this world is a nightmare. When you look at what has been and what is happening in this world, it is horrible. Sin has brought disaster and unbelievable unhappiness. It has ruined everything. But God has a plan to remake this world the way He originally designed it to be. Notice what Isaiah 65:18-22 says: *"But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed."*

These next verses refer to the new earth. *"They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit, - they shall not plant and another eat, - for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands"* (verses 21-22). Do you want to be in that place? *"They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," says the Lord*" (verses 23-25).

Do you want to be there?

The Sabbath is a foretaste of what heaven is going to be like. Notice what Isaiah 66:22-23 says: "*For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,*" says the Lord, *'so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,'* says the Lord." I want to challenge you today to make a decision and say, "Lord, I am going to follow- I am going to obey You and I am going to be there."

Sometime ago I was visiting a man in prison whose mother had died when he was very young. This man was not a Christian. I asked him a question, "Would you like to see your mother again?"

He said, "I would."

I said to him, "Was your mother a Christian?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Someday Jesus is going to come. He is going to come in the sky, the Bible says in clouds, the same way He left. When He comes, He is going to look down on this world with His hands outstretched. Then He is going to say the following words: 'Awake, Awake, Awake, you that sleep in the dust and arise.' I want to tell you, friend, when He speaks those words every child of God who has died in this world is going to come to life. Millions and millions of people, from all generations all over the world, are instantly going to come to life. It's going to be one of the greatest demonstrations of divine power that there has ever been in all eternal ages. Jesus demonstrated already that He could do it; He raised Lazarus."

I told this man, "When Jesus speaks those words, your mother is going to wake up. She is going to look for you. Friend, I want to appeal to you, make the decision now and say, 'Lord, whatever happens to me, I am going to follow You in the way of obedience,' because someday, there is going to be somebody, maybe several people, looking for you. They are going to look for you and be so happy if you are there. You will be able to spend eternity together. You will keep the Sabbath forever with all of God's children. But if you are not there, they will be sad."

You know, friends, all of us are tied together. We just don't exist as separate little atoms. Some people go through life living as if they are on an island - "You go your way, I'll go my way." "You do your thing, and I'll do mine." But, friends, that is not the way the human family is. We are all in the common web of humanity, and every one of us is related to other people.

When you choose to follow God in the way of obedience by keeping His Sabbath, do you know what is going to happen? It will have an effect on other people in your family. It will have an effect on your friends and you will influence other people to be obedient to God and to be ready for His soon appearing. Are your friends and family going to be looking for you? Are you going to be looking for them? Remember, eternal salvation is involved in keeping the Sabbath holy, and God wants to make this day a time of great delight throughout eternity.