

Q&A: Do you “remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy”?

Anonymous asks: *G'day Will, Do you “remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy”? If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why. God bless you my friend*

God bless you too.

You are of course quoting the fourth of the ten commandments.

To answer your question...

In short: Yes I do, because it is a life-giving command from the One who made me.

In long:

There is something essential to sabbath that inheres to who God is and who we are, made in his image. In the exposition of the 10 commandments in the Old Testament the sabbath commandment is given an explanation

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

The seventh day is set apart to not labour but to *rest*.

Jesus of course sets the example for what this rest is – it's *not* about legalistically doing nothing. Consider Matthew 12:1-14 from among the many examples.

1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some

heads of grain and eat them. 2 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath." 3 He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? 4 He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. 5 Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? 6 I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. 7 If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

9 Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, 10 and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? 11 He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? 12 How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." 13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

In simple practical terms, then, it is appropriate to worship God, do good, uphold one another, and, generally speaking, participate re-creation on that day – these things are not "labour"! For this reason, even as someone who "works" on a Sunday, I would count that time as part of my sabbath-keeping as well as my "Day Off" (Monday!)

The truth that undergirds all this, of course, is that "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." The joy of salvation can be described in many ways – from darkness to light, sickness to health, separation to restoration etc. – but it also includes

a sense of from *toil to rest*. Perhaps we might consider it a reversal of the curse of Adam who went from the joyous work of the garden to the hard toil outside. Whatever the correlation, the truth is that Jesus is the Prince of Peace – he is our *shalom*, our wholeness, our easy-yoke, our lightened-burden, our rest, our *sabbath*.

Indeed, the culmination of this Christ-won sabbath is our big-picture hope – the goal of our eschatology. Many commentators look to the seven-fold structures of Revelation to demonstrate it's goal in (eternal/millennial?) sabbath.

It is therefore very appropriate for Christians to not set aside Friday/Saturday – the seventh day of the week – but Sunday, the first day of the *new* week – as a sabbath day to refresh one another and worship God corporately.

But the truth remains that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, and my “remembering the sabbath” therefore also includes my seeking him every day of the week. I would therefore include my times of quiet, prayer, contemplation etc. – and my day off – in the mix of what it means for me, as a Christian, to remember the Sabbath.

Thanks for the question.