



29 Making the Sabbath The Happiest Day of Your Week

The keynote of Jesus' message to the world is joy: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15:11). "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16:22). Who can resist a message like that?

There is a joy that perhaps you have missed all your life—the joy of keeping the Lord's Day in the happiest way. Sometimes when a man and woman discover each other and in love unite their hearts in marriage, one says to the other, "Where have you been all my life? I didn't know what life is until I met you! It seems as if you were made for me." When you begin to enjoy the sabbath as the Lord intends you to, it will be like a perfect wedding. Jesus says, "The sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27). The same Lord who made you, made the sabbath. You and the sabbath were made for each other. If you haven't known it, you've missed what is vital to your happiness.

This study will help you discover how perfectly complementary you and the sabbath are. When you see what the Bible says and choose to follow Christ in the way He kept the sabbath, it will become for you the happiest day of your week. You will find yourself living from one sabbath to another. And that will make the six working days more enjoyable, too.

Why God Made the Sabbath For the Good of Man

1. *What does Jesus give to all who are tired of carrying the world's heavy loads? Matthew 11:28,29.*

ANSWER: "I will give you _____."

2. *What is this gift of rest connected with? Hebrews 4:4,9,10.*

YOUR ANSWER: _____.

The word "sabbath" means rest. The New English Bible translates verse 9, "A sabbath rest still awaits the people of God." What is more refreshing to a tired body and soul than to rest after a long toilsome week? But the weariness Jesus spoke of is not merely physical fatigue. He is talking about the heavy loads of anxiety, the worry syndrome of "keeping up with the Joneses," and our daily tension. These rub our souls raw, like sandpaper.

3. *What did the Lord make for the good of man? Mark 2:27.*

ANSWER: " _____ was made for man "

Some have mistakenly thought that because the Lord made the sabbath "for man," man can do away with it if he desires. They reason, "If a friend baked me a pie, I could thankfully eat it or throw it in the garbage, as I wish!" But when the Lord makes something for our good, it is because He knows we need it. The sabbath is not something to be kicked about at our convenience, kept if we want it, or discarded. To refuse it is like a dying patient refusing medicine the doctor knows can alone heal him. Sabbath-keeping is exactly what modern man needs to relieve his life-destroying tensions.

4. *When does the sabbath begin and end? Leviticus 23:32, last part.*

ANSWER: "From even unto _____." What does "even" mean? Mark 1:32. " _____."

The Bible day begins at sundown. Therefore the Bible sabbath begins at sundown Friday, and ends at sundown Saturday. Friday is called the "preparation day" (Luke 23:54). Jesus was crucified about 3 p.m. on Friday afternoon, and as the sun sank in the sky "the sabbath drew on," beginning at sunset.

Our Example: How Did Jesus Keep the Sabbath?

5. *Mark gives us the story of a typical sabbath in the life of Jesus. Mark 1:21-35. Read it and then try to answer these questions:*

(a) *What was Jesus' main activity on the sabbath?* _____

(b) *As the need arose, what else was He ready to do on the sabbath?* _____

(c) *After the sabbath was over at sunset, what work did He find to do?* _____

(d) *Although He probably did not get to bed until midnight that Saturday night, how early was He up the next morning?*

"And in the morning, rising up a _____ before day, he went out, . . . into a _____ place, and there _____."

6. *Read the story of another typical sabbath in the life of Jesus. Matthew 12:1-14. Try to find an answer to these questions:*

(a) *Do you think the disciples really broke God's law about the sabbath or did they break only the man-made traditions of the Jews?* _____.

(b) *Did Jesus say His disciples were guilty, or not guilty?*

(c) *What does God's law tell us to do on the sabbath?*

(d) *How did the Pharisees really break the sabbath? "Then the Pharisees went out, and held a _____, how they might _____"*

7. *How did Jesus set the sabbath free from these burdensome traditions of the Jews? John 5:5, 6, 8-10,16.*

YOUR ANSWER: _____.

8. *When Jesus was arrested and arraigned before the court, how did He answer His accusers? John 5:17,18.*

ANSWER: "My Father _____ hitherto, and _____"

What Jesus meant by "work" is not worldly employment for a livelihood, but the work of relieving human suffering. The Jews falsely charged Him both with blasphemy and with sabbath-breaking. Some who do not yet understand the full truth think that Jesus really did break the sabbath, and they use this as an excuse for their not keeping the sabbath. But if the Jews were right in accusing Him of breaking the sabbath, they were also right in accusing Him of blasphemy. But this cannot be true (compare John 10:33).

How the Lord Has Made It a Joy To Keep the Sabbath

9. *What organization has the Lord raised up for the joyful fellowship of all who keep the sabbath? Acts 2:44, 46, 47; Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:27, 28.*

ANSWER: _____.

10. *What regular habit should we not forsake? Hebrews 10:22-25.*

ANSWER: "Not forsaking the _____ of _____"

The church is the "body of Christ" where each member finds his greatest pleasure in fellowship and service. The church "assembles together" and provides the fellowship that helps us grow up into Christ. There, we can attain our potential in character and personality development. In the church, our individual "gifts" and abilities are set free. The Sabbath School (or church study hour) is the time when the Lord Jesus, by His Spirit, is present to teach more truths from His Word. In the worship service we attain to the highest point any human being can attain to—kneeling at the throne of God in worship with others of God's people. Here we meet friends who encourage us, and we in turn encourage others. All this is possible through the sabbath.

11. *Where did Jesus go every sabbath? Luke 4:16.*

ANSWER: "... And as _____, he went into the _____ on the _____"

12. *How should we prepare for the sabbath before it begins? Exodus 20:8; Exodus 16:22,23.*

ANSWER: "Bake _____ which ye will _____, and _____ (boil) that ye will _____"

We remember the sabbath all through the week, planning ahead so as not to break its sacred hours. On Friday we make all possible preparations so that the house can be ready, basic food preparation is done, clothes are in readiness, etc. Sabbath meals should be tasty and well prepared, but not at the expense of heavy cooking duties on the sabbath. The sabbath is the clasp that binds the week together. The week exists for the sabbath.

13. *What about buying and selling on the sabbath? Nehemiah 10:31.*

ANSWER: "We would not _____ on the sabbath."

14. *Does participation in worldly business and worldly conversation, and worldly pleasures make for happy sabbath-keeping? Isaiah 58:13, 14.*

ANSWER: "Honor him, not _____, nor finding _____, nor _____ own words: Then shalt thou _____ thyself _____"

15. *As the sabbath is the world's birthday to commemorate creation, what other great work of creation does it commemorate? Ephesians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

ANSWER: "We are created in Christ Jesus unto _____"
"A new _____"

When Jesus finished His work of redeeming us on that last Friday afternoon before sabbath, He cried out, "It is finished" (John 19:30). So we see that the sabbath is the true sign of the cross, the memorial both of creation and of redemption from sin. In Christ we find rest; in Him we keep the sabbath, in Him we find rest from sin and self.

16. *Do you say "yes" to Jesus' invitation to spend each holy sabbath day with Him? _____*

'Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.' 1 Peter 5:7 "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17