

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
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### “THE SABBATH: A DAY OF REST AND GLADNESS”

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: February 05, 2023

SPEAKER: Frank/Wil

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 5:12-15

## Family Dinner Table

While in Egypt, the Israelites were oppressed and overworked by their Egyptian taskmasters. In their restless condition as slaves, the people cried out to God for deliverance. Yahweh answered by bringing his people out of slavery and into his Sabbath. In Deuteronomy 5:12-15, the fourth commandment calls God’s people to *a day for rest and gladness, bringing us into a new way of thinking about time, a changed perspective on work, worship, and rest, and a deeper understanding of our past, present, and future.*

#### A New Way of Thinking About Time (vv. 12-14a)

Genesis 2:2-3 tells us that when God finished his creative work, he rested on the seventh day and made it holy. Tim Keller explains how God’s example grants us a new way of thinking about time with the Sabbath: *“Since God rested after his creation, we must also rest after ours. This rhythm of work and rest is not only for believers; it is for everyone, as part of our created nature. Overwork or underwork violates that nature and leads to breakdown. To rest is actually a way to enjoy and honor the goodness of God’s creation and our own. To violate the rhythm of work and rest (in either direction) leads to chaos in our life and in the world around us. Sabbath is therefore a celebration of our design.”*<sup>1</sup> God’s command to observe the Sabbath indicates to us that our time is not our own, and that through the Sabbath, he has given specific directives for our joy and well-being. Keller explains that the fourth commandment gives us the freedom to take time off and truly unplug without feeling guilty about external or cultural expectations.<sup>2</sup>

- If God never grows tired (Isaiah 40:28), why did he rest? (Ezekiel 20:19-20)
- According to Isaiah 58:13-14, what does God promise to those who delight in keeping the Sabbath?

#### A Changed Perspective on Worship, Work, and Rest (v. 14)

We often think of the first four commandments as laws outlining our duty to God and the other six as outlining our duties to our fellowman. But the fourth commandment offers a changed perspective on how we relate to God, as well as our neighbor, in our worship, work, and rest: *No one within the boundaries of the ancient land of Israel was to work on the seventh and final day of the week, not even the servants and animals. Giving a day of rest to one’s servants and working beasts was a profound act of love that found its source in the Lord and its mediation through faithful, Sabbath-keeping Israelites.*<sup>3</sup>

- Sabbath rest brings clarity to our roles as God’s image bearers (Genesis 1:27). How is the Sabbath a reminder that life depends not on our work but God’s provision and grace (Exodus 16:1-36)?
- What does it look like for you to practice the Sabbath in the context of community (Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:42)?

#### A Deepening Understanding of Our Past, Present, and Future (v. 15)

In Exodus 20, the Sabbath is established on God’s creative work (vv. 8-11). But as we read Deuteronomy 5:15, the emphasis is on God’s redemptive work. The Deuteronomy passage reminds us to bring rest to our neighbors, just as God brought rest to us. Remembering our redemption changes the rhythms of our lives. With the gift of Sabbath rest comes renewal, not only physically but spiritually (Isaiah 56:1-8).

- What are practices in your life that stir up your affections for Jesus and should become a regular part of your Sabbath rhythm?
- Read Mark 2:23-28. What does Jesus mean when he says, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”? How intentional have you been at taking one day to focus on worshipping God? How does Sabbath rest bring you renewal, both physically and spiritually?

#### Theology of Work

The Sabbath rejects the notion that we are the sum total of our bank accounts. More often than not, the patterns of producing and consuming dictate the rhythm of our lives. The fourth commandment rescues us from the cycles of workaholism or materialism, freeing us to weekly depend upon God’s provision and grace in our lives.

- Are there other things you’d rather be doing on Sunday? How can the fourth commandment reveal the breaking of the second commandment?
- Read the [Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A 60](#). Explain how the Sabbath is “sanctified.”
- Matthew 12:1-14 warns us of slipping into legalism. What does Jesus teach is at the heart of the Sabbath?
- Have you ever heard of the term, “Blue Law”? Blue Laws are commonly referred to as state ordinances that prohibit alcohol sales on Sundays. Before the 1990s, Blue Laws also encompassed extensive restrictions of work and activity on Sundays in order to support religious Sabbath observances. Did you know that Bergen County, New Jersey, is one of the few jurisdictions in the U.S. that still restricts Sunday commerce?<sup>4</sup>

#### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Widows Harvest Ministries,  
*strategic partner ministry*

#### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Tsendee, *supported national partner serving in a sensitive region*

<sup>1</sup> Keller, Tim. *The Power of Deep Rest*. November 25, 2012. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-power-of-deep-rest/> January 31, 2023

<sup>2</sup> Ligonier Ministries. *The Fourth Commandment*. August 9, 2010. <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/fourth-commandment> January 31, 2023

<sup>4</sup> MacKinnon, J.B. *America’s Last Ban on Sunday Shopping*. February 7, 2015. <https://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/americas-last-ban-sunday-shopping> February 1, 2023