

THE SPIRIT OF THE SABBATH

Mark 2:27 ... “And he [Jesus] said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man [Jesus] is also Lord of the Sabbath.’”

God instituted the Sabbath when he rested on the seventh day of creation, but not because he was tired. He established the Sabbath – a one day rest each week – as something WE are in need of to rejuvenate our bodies and to worship God. The original Jewish Sabbath is the seventh day of the week (Saturday) and the Ten Commandments instruct us to keep the Sabbath holy. That means we should evaluate how we spend our day of rest. Are we using it as just another day of work, or to honor God? Jesus – who is God – worked on the Sabbath when he healed people and allowed his followers to gather grain to eat.

To this day, Jews and some Christians honor Saturday as their sabbath. I respect their beliefs and devotion. Most Christians consider Sunday their sabbath. Neither is wrong because what Jesus demonstrated to us in his own ministry is the importance of the “spirit” of the sabbath, not necessarily a day on the calendar. Though the Bible says God rested on the seventh day after creation, it also shows us that God works today – 24/7 – on our behalf, and we are instructed to imitate God. Creation was a one-time event that ended in six days. Redemption is a continuing process that will not end until Christ returns. But, that does not mean you should plow your fields on your sabbath. You should, instead, rest from your work, worship and serve God on your sabbath.

You may be a store employee, police officer, restaurant cook, bus driver, or soldier who is expected to work on the day you prefer for your sabbath. You can certainly refuse to take a job that requires you to do that. But, if you are that strict, then you should also not require other people to work for you on your sabbath, such as expecting people to serve you in restaurants, fill your tank with gas, repair a flat tire, or do other things you believe are a violation of the sabbath.

The answer is not to rigidly adhere to a specific day of the week, but to find a day in which you can honor God and rest from your labors. If you are a store cashier or barber with Tuesday as your designated day-off, make that your sabbath. If you are a farmer and your buyer comes on Sunday, find another day in the week when you can worship God and rest (or find a Godly buyer who does not work on Sunday). I, myself, try to adhere to Sunday as my day of rest, worship and teaching about Christ. But, if there is an emergency that I need to respond to, such as driving a person to the hospital, pulling a stuck vehicle out of the mud, or feeding animals, we follow the example of Christ, who was also responsive to the needs of others on his sabbath.

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