

God's Sabbath Part 2: Practical ways to keep it holy.

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All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

KEY WORDS: how to keep sabbath, 7th day, shopping on sabbath, doing good, cooking on sabbath, sabbath with unbelieving mate, sex on sabbath, making sabbath special.

Summary: Part 1 we showed how and when the 7th day sabbath was set apart as holy by God himself. Be sure to watch part 1 first. This part 2, show practical ways to keep this 4th commandment and not sin by breaking it.

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Hello everyone.

Today we'll continue the 2-part discussion on Keeping Sabbath holy. Please be SURE to watch Part 1 first as today is going to be all about practical ways to keep shabbat -- at least the way we practice keeping the sabbath. We're told to set apart and rest on the 7th day each week. It's clearly NOT just "one day out of seven, take your pick".

Our God commands us to stop, rest, assemble, don't work, keep it holy, and a few other things – but then people are still left with a host of questions. Remember Sabbath (shabbat in Hebrew) means to "stop".

Maybe – because God did NOT give us a host of specific ANSWERS – he wants to see our heart more than a specific list of do's and don'ts. He didn't say you can carry this much weight but no more, for example. The LORD of the Sabbath (Jesus/Yeshua) gave some huge guidelines to help us, so keep that in mind as we go through this teaching today. He would have actually been considered very LIBERAL on his sabbath-keeping, if you would have asked the Pharisees.

(Note: The given Hebrew name for Jesus is Yeshua. I use both.)

Some of you will think I'm too tough on sabbath keeping and some of you will think I'm way too liberal. Because God did not give detailed do's and don'ts, Orthodox Judaism came up with the TALMUD – a definitive commentary on the laws and scriptures of Torah. But it's Judaism, remember, and Jesus spoke against their traditions several times.

I'm Philip Shields, host and founder of Light on the Rock.org.

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Anyway, we'll talk about the what to do and not do on sabbath more in this sermon – and specifically sharing what my wife and I do. That might help some of you. I'm just really going to be sharing what WE do on sabbath to keep it holy and special. I feel some reluctance to do this. Where there is no clear scripture on specific issues, you'll have to pray about it and make your OWN decision where you can have a clear conscience. Whatever is not of faith is sin, remember (, OK? You may agree or disagree with what I say WE do, and I'd love to hear from you. However, **let's not judge one another in how each keeps the sabbath**, and what each allow themselves to do or not do, OK?

Last time I hope we established that GOD HIMSELF proclaims **the 7th day** as HIS Holy sabbath in the 4th commandment (Ex. 20:8-11).

- **God made only the 7th day holy for his sabbath. NOT any other day.** Please – **it's not “one day in seven”** but to stop and rest on the right day: the 7th God. It wasn't any other day. It was always the 7th day.
- You'll NOT find in scripture ANY language saying the day God himself set apart -- the 7th day Sabbath, is now changed to the day of the Sun. Some believe Jesus' resurrection warrants changing God's law. (More in the video about this.)
- **God says REMEMBER to keep 7th day holy – and so most of Christianity tells us to FORGET the 7th day Sabbath. Hear God.**
- We make a conscious point to make sabbath special. It's not to be just like every other day of the week.
- **Hebrews 4:9** “Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God's people”. (Holman Bible)

- Genesis 1: After God finished his specific work on each specific day, we read “*and the evening and the morning were the first day*” – or 2nd, 3rd, etc. But we find no such statement after Day 7 in Genesis 2.

God's rest continues for us his people as Hebrews 4:9 states. When we keep God's sabbath, we are also messaging God that we've committed to being finished doing our own works and we are now into HIS day, His rest.

And true, ultimately our rest IS in Messiah who said, “Come to ME all ye who LABOR and are heavily burdened and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28). But we rest from our own works now. But he also said he did not come to destroy the law and not one jot or tittle would be taken away.

- So we make a conscious effort to make God's sabbath SPECIAL. It's not to be just like any other day of the week.

So let's move on. There are so many issues we need to cover, and I'll be giving my view on these and many more points, based on scripture.

What do you do when you have an unbelieving mate?

What can we do and not do within the guidelines?

Can you attend a funeral of a loved one -- or attend a graduation of a loved one that is on the sabbath, or would that be violating sabbath?

Should we be going out to restaurants on sabbath?

Can you make love to your spouse on sabbath? Or is that seeking your own pleasure or ... work?

People seem to want to find a way around keeping God's sabbath. One man spoke to a friend saying, wrongly -- “the sabbath – like the other laws – was added because of transgression” (Gal. 3:19). At the point of Genesis 2, I have to ask WHAT human transgression could he be talking about?

CRUCIAL: Up til the time God instituted the sabbath in Genesis 2:2-3, there had been no human SIN yet – so the sabbath could NOT have been “ADDED because of transgression” (Gal. 3:19). There had been no human transgression yet!

We now also need to cover how Isaiah 58 says to keep sabbath as a DELIGHT, not a big burden. Let's avoid the Amos 8:5 attitude of wishing the sabbath was over so we could do our business and own work.

Isaiah 58:13-14 NKJV

"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,
From doing your pleasure on **MY holy day**,
And call **the Sabbath a delight**, The holy day of YHVH honorable,
And shall honor HIM, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words,

14 Then you shall delight yourself in YHVH;
And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth..."

"not speaking your own words" becomes "**not talking idly**" **ESV/NLT**

Isaiah 58:13 -- International Standard Version

"If you keep your feet from trampling the Sabbath, **from pursuing your own interests on MY holy day**, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable; and if you **honor it by not going your own ways and seeking your own pleasure or speaking merely idle words**,"

Let's continue now by FIRST learning from the LORD OF The SABBATH himself – Jesus Christ!

LEARNING FROM Jesus/Yeshua – the LORD of the sabbath

In John 5, Jesus had just healed a man on the sabbath and told him to pick up his "bed" – a mat probably – and so the Pharisees believed that to be breaking the sabbath command to "do no work" on sabbath.

John 5:18

"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, **because He not only broke the Sabbath**, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

God's word tells us Jesus never sinned. He "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21) and committed no sin (**2 Peter 2:22**). So he could not have broken the sabbath. Breaking sabbath would have been a huge sin. He "broke the sabbath" only according to the Jewish traditions and THEIR laws, not God's laws. ***Jesus could not have been our Savior if he had even one time broken God's holy sabbath or any of God's commandments.***

Very important: what Jesus brought us is some common sense about God's sabbath. Don't make it a JOYLESS BURDEN! So he

purposely DID THINGS that were not allowed in Judaism to show they were making the sabbath a joyless day.

Sabbath was made to serve US

Yeshua/Jesus explained that The sabbath was made for OUR benefit, to serve us. We weren't created to be slaves to the sabbath.

Mark 2:27-28

And He said to them, "**The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.** 28 Therefore *the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.*"

The sabbath was created and given to us to serve US, not we to serve sabbath! Grasping this point is crucial to finding the right balance about sabbath keeping and being able to experience it as a delight. Also note that the Son of God says Sabbath was made "for man/mankind" – not just for Jews.

Remember sin is defined as breaking God's commandments (1 John 3:4). Breaking sabbath has the same force of breaking any other commandment - like idolatry, stealing or adultery. It's that serious. Consciously breaking the sabbath, since it is one of the "Big Ten" commandments, is as bad a sin in God's eyes as killing somebody or robbing or bowing down to worship idols.

Do I have your attention on how important sabbath-keeping IS?

What was the context of that? You can read about the grainfields and David's eating of the showbread in the previous verses, but let's move to Matthew 12 and get more details, same story. Remember the Torah says we are not to plow or harvest on the sabbath (**Exodus 34:21**). So what they saw the 12 disciples doing was – in their eyes – "harvesting" on the sabbath.

But the way Jesus explains this shows us a LOT about how GOD sees having love, having a merciful heart, will help us keep sabbath HIS way.

Matthew 12:1-4

At that time **Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath.** And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

3 But He said to them, "Have you not read **what David did** when he was *hungry*, he and those who were with him: 4 how he entered the house of God **and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat**, nor for those who were with him, **but only for the priests?**

The disciples must have been very hungry. Yeshua/Jesus gave the example of David eating the priests' showbread, which was not lawful – and yet God allowed it. In the story in **1 Sam 21**, David even lied about his mission, on top of everything. *Obviously, The Lord's anointed was famished*, there was bread at the Tabernacle, and breaking that law – *in that circumstance –breaking God's command about showbread -- was OK with God!*

AND David's story likely happened also on the sabbath, when the showbread was replaced (See 1 Samuel 21:1-6; Lev 24:5-9).

Jesus is saying “BE REASONABLE! Of course it was OK for David to break the *law in this case* to keep himself and his men alive!" Family of God: this is a HUGE teaching from Yeshua if we will grasp and see it!

Matthew 12:5-8

"Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?

Be sure you understand that the priests had to keep the fire on the menorah going 24/7. **Priests had to bake** fresh Showbread and exchange it out, every sabbath, on the sabbath (Lev. 24:5-9). They had to sacrifice (can we say "cook") the animal sacrifices offered on sabbath: 2 lambs besides the regular burn offering, as Numbers 28:9-10 show us. A lot of work going on by priests.

6 Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.
 7 But if you had known what this means, '**I desire mercy** and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

You ministers who work hard on sabbath, in your case YOU should take another day of the week off as your REST day. In YOUR case, you can't keep the 7th day as a day of STOPPING AND RESTING. *Keep the principle at least – in your case – of resting one day in seven.*

But be sure to allow lots of time for your brethren, your flock, to stop and rest and not be at church services all day long. Do you really think small children and teens like being at church all day long!? It's to

be a joy and delight for everyone in the family. *Make it a day they can focus on their family, wife and kids, or nap, or even to make love! (more on video)*

Matthew 12:9-14

Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue.

10 And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" — that they might accuse Him.

11 Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has **one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?**

12 Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? **Therefore it is LAWFUL TO DO GOOD on the Sabbath.**"

13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. 14 Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him."

Another great guideline from the Lord of the Sabbath: It's OK to work on sabbath when there's an emergency and you're doing good.

So there will be times when a neighbor, friend, anybody – needs some unanticipated help that is normally work on the sabbath; maybe changing a flat tire, for example. *Yeshua says it's lawful to do good on the sabbath. Do it!*

If there's been a hurricane, tornado or flash flood and helpers are badly needed, I'd BE there, working hard, on God's sabbath. I hope your whole congregation who are able to help will be there too.

We're supposed to prepare for sabbath and be ready. Unforeseen circumstances, Jesus calls “sheep in the pit” or “ox in the ditch”. In those situations, DO what work is necessary without any guilt.

Examples ox in the ditch: a child gets sick and need to go to ER or hospital or buy a thermometer. Do it. Or you've run out of baby formula and didn't know you were all out... plan better next time, but go get the baby formula.

Filling up your car on the way to church services shows not being prepared for sabbath; not an ox in the ditch. Be prepared! Maybe circumstances one time here or there... but surely not a general occurrence.

At another time, after being criticized for healing a woman who had a spirit of infirmity that bowed her right over for 18 years, and watching the head of the synagogue chastise everyone for coming for healing (forbidden by their tradition) on the sabbath day, this came next:

Luke 13:15-17

The Lord then answered him and said, "**Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?** 16 So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound — think of it — for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" 17 And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

So yes, we should do kind things, good things on the sabbath! And **dairy farmers must still milk their cows**, even on the sabbath. And give water as needed. Some plants need water daily or they suffer and die. I give a bit of water in cases like that to 2-3 potted flowers. Again, the sabbath was made for mankind – to help US, to serve us –not that we were created to serve the sabbath! The bigger point: YES, help out, release burdens on sabbath.

What about having a JOB as an RN, police, fireman, EMT?

- **If it's your fulltime job**, I believe you need to use your religious freedom in USA, to ask for sabbath off. Offer to work extra time other days. Explain your religious understanding of the sabbath and your willingness to show up for real emergencies. If you need legal help or advice, **contact ACLJ.org (American Center for Law & Justice)**.
- But, when there's an unforeseen emergency on a sabbath – like hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, disasters – then believers who are cops, nurses and fire fighters should go and be there helping out, without question, yes even on God's Sabbath. And so should the rest of us believers in those kinds of emergencies. Let's help in doing good.

BUYING AND SELLING ON The SABBATH

What about exchanging money – buying and selling – on sabbath? The answer is not in the 4th commandment itself, but given to us by righteous Nehemiah after returning to Jerusalem after Babylonian captivity.

Nehemiah 13:15-22

"In those days I saw people in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions.

16 Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in **fish and all kinds of goods, and SOLD them on the Sabbath** to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? 18 Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

19 So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day. 20 Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice.

21 Then I warned them, and said to them, "Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you!" From that time on they came no more on the Sabbath. 22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day."

So we do our very best to avoid exchanging money on the sabbath.

- **EATING OUT on sabbath: we avoid that when we're home.**

Mr. Armstrong explained that again – especially when we're away from home in obedience to God, like at the Feast of Tabernacles, in "away" situations – that he deemed it OK to go out for lunch or dinner.

Many of you still would prefer to pack a lunch or be prepared ahead of time in your motel without cooking or exchanging money. But on the holidays, most of the brethren I know do go to a restaurant. Don't condemn your brethren who do. If your faith won't allow this, then pack a lunch.

- **Tolls and parking fees.** Again, we have a prepaid pass we bought that allows us to zoom right through Florida's many toll roads. We don't

stop, take out our wallet and pay anyone on sabbath. The pass does, automatically. If that's what it takes to KEEP other laws of the sabbath – like going to church services – so be it. SOME people just drive 50 miles extra to avoid toll roads and having to pay anything. We use the prepaid pass. (more in the video)

Think of it: you don't pay an electricity bill on sabbath, or water bill on sabbath, but you're INCURRING the cost on sabbath as you do on all days. So again – sabbath was made to serve US, not the other way around.

What about having beautiful marital sex on the sabbath?

Is having marital sex on the sabbath breaking the sabbath? Is it doing your own pleasure? Or is it work? (teasing) Might be, for some of you (ha, ha). The marriage bed is honorable (**Hebrews 13:4**). Adam and Eve were created naked and not ashamed. Why should they have been?

Think about Day 6 of creation, six the number of man. But first, land mammals were created. Then Adam was created first before Eve was, outside the garden and brought in. Then he was asked to name the animals. Surely that took a long time. By the end of all that, surely it was getting late afternoon. God was so smart to give Adam a job first.

Imagine expecting Adam to get ANY work done if God had first brought out this beautiful young naked woman for Adam! I could see God, "Adam, hey, I'm talking to you. Look over here, at me..." You understand, right?

Then what happened after Eve was created? God told them that together they would have dominion over the earth and all its creatures. Then our Creator says to them (Genesis 1:26-31), "MULTIPLY and fill the earth". Let me be plain: God says, "I want you to have kids" (v. 28). Let's read it. This was being said late 6th day, late "Friday" afternoon.

Genesis 1:28

Then God blessed them, and **God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; FILL the earth** and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

So here they are, young, strong, beautifully naked man and wife in front of each other, and God is telling them to have children, to multiply. There's more:

Genesis 2:24-25

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and **they shall become one flesh**. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

They were to be JOINED to each other and become one flesh! That was said just moments before sabbath began. Guess what “become one flesh” is saying!? So guess what they probably did that first night of their life into the sabbath? (At least I think so!) I'm sure at this point they wanted to obey God!

Marital sex on the sabbath is wonderful. Do it. And yes, children, teens and young people should see the Bible is all for the right kind of sex. They should hear this too!

Wives, do you want your husband to come to church on sabbath with a big smile and happy face? Then you know what to do – yes even on, especially on, sabbath. And men, - it's the sabbath, so take time and satisfy your wife too, and she will have a happy face as well!

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

“Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

Newer translations leave out “fasting” in verse 5 (NIV, NLT, CJB, ESV, etc.)

Note the “So Satan doesn't tempt you”. Clearly, there's a sexual need that grows over a few days. Don't deprive one another. Don't make him sleep on the couch. Don't weaponize marital sex! That will backfire on you.

How long can you fast? How long can you pray? Usually no more than one day. Maybe 2 or 3 days. And that's usually IT. Here's one translation that just says it as it is!

Here's **Contemporary English Version on 1 Cor. 7:5:**

“So don't refuse sex to each other, unless you agree not to have sex for a little while, in order to spend time in prayer. Then Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

DON'T deprive each other of sex, not even on the sabbath.

Women, if you have an unbelieving husband, I *especially advise you wives to make a point* to have wonderful marital love with him on Friday night or sabbath day. *He might decide he likes your religion after all!* And you men so the same with your unbelieving wife! Let them see this new set of beliefs you have actually are changing you for the better.

So next sabbath, I hope our married couples look happy. Let's move on. When was the last time your pastor went over those verses with you in church?

If you're unable to have sex for physical reasons, find a way to still satisfy each other's needs. I hope you can figure out what I mean!

I hope you're getting the idea. Don't look for an approved list of do's and don'ts. God says sabbath is to serve YOU. Make it a JOY. Just be sure it's a different day than all the rest.

Unbeliever spouse situations

What about those with a mate – husband or wife – who are not converted yet, don't have God's spirit, and won't "keep the sabbath"? How do you handle sabbath situations with an unbelieving mate? Apply the points I've mentioned already – and keep your spouse as happy as possible.

You cannot make another adult do what you think. **Do not wreck your marriage over the sabbath.** Wives are to submit to their husbands (**Eph 5:22-24**) – but you are also to obey God rather than man when there's a conflict. But it's HOW you handle it, that makes the difference.

Ephesians 5:22-24 NIV

"Wives, submit to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands *in everything.*"

And verse 25 – "Husbands, LOVE your wife, as Christ loves the church."

- If your unbelieving husband wants to go out to dinner Friday night or sabbath brunch, and he's paying for it, then that's on him. The believing wife, as I see it, should go. I think if you have a strong marriage, the believing wife could also explain what her preferences would be and why

she believes what she believes. *But don't wreck your marriage over the sabbath!*

1 Peter 3:1-2; 5-6 ESV

"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that **even if some do not obey the word, they may be won** without a word by the **conduct** of their wives— 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct. (jump to verse 5)

5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord."

v. 7 –Husbands, live with your wife with understanding and honor!

SETTING Sabbath DAY APART AS SPECIAL and HOLY

Be ready for sabbath before it starts. Make it special, set-apart, holy, different from the other days of the week. **I like to have “sacred music” playing in the background** as we come to sundown. *If I had an unconverted husband, I'd still try to have a special dinner – maybe his favorite dinners* – and make sabbath special. Again, I'm just saying what I would do, as there's not always a scripture for every question.

- **We do NOT do the Judaism preparation half hour before** sundown– the challah bread, wine and lighting 2 candles and reciting ancient Jewish Hebrew blessings. We just have a lovely dinner and a cleaned up home. But neither do I think it is wrong to welcome in the sabbath with the Jewish method.
- **Make it different**, so **I do not play darts** with the community as I do that on other days. We do not go shopping. WE do not do yard work. Do not do housework – except in our case we usually use paper plates. Or we do rinse off the plates and stack them and wipe off counters after meals. We do not personally do our gym exercises or play pickleball on sabbath.
- In our home I might watch *just part of a newscast* and that's it – or skip the usual newscasts I watch altogether on sabbath. Just turn TV off. Many of you watch a lot of news 7 days a week. But I suggest you make sabbath day very distinctive.

- In our home, we watch **no movies on sabbath** unless it's about creation or a Bible person for the grandkids to watch. Or maybe it's a YouTube video about something to do with the Bible, prophecy, etc. There are table games that are Bible based that you can Google and order.
- **Plan something fun for the children. Trip to the park?** I personally would not let our kids play video games on sabbath or read every-day books. Certainly NOT Harry Potter on sabbath or any time! But that's just us. Sometimes we have gone CAMPING on Thurs-Fri and stayed through the sabbath in God's beautiful creation.

Q & A: Can we do this and that on the sabbath?

Some ministers have told others they should never **attend a FUNERAL or GRADUATION of family loved one** on God's sabbath. Whaaat? Again, be reasonable with sabbath. (Mark 2:27-28) Show LOVE in how you handle sabbath issues. Sabbath was made to HELP us, not have us serve it. **Exodus 16:29 says God gave us sabbath as his gift.** You're going to miss your daughter's graduation because somehow it's work? Not us. We would be there.

What's wrong with that advice? The ill will and hurt feelings is far worse! And at least be there, maybe leave a bit early if it's sabbath, but I don't see that as a problem to attend a funeral and show your respects – in fact I went to a funeral of a beloved neighbor myself LAST sabbath! Scripture was read. Someone was praised. God was sought...how was that breaking the sabbath?

Quick Q& A as I see it from God's word and from principles Jesus gave us. I was baptized in 1972, 50 years ago. I've kept sabbath for longer than 50 years. I was ordained in 1976. So I hope you see I have some background. Remember we base everything on loving God and loving one another, the 2 greatest commandments summarizing the Ten.

Is it a sin to ever skip sabbath services? Meeting with brethren to worship God should be a joy. Hebrews says to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together -- unless you just can't, in your circumstances. (**Hebrews 10:24-25**). Sometimes you can't go to the big meetings. *But even if just 2-3 gather together in his name, Christ is there* (**Matthew 18:20**). That's having the holy convocation! But for the sake of the sermon, having fellowship and more, do try to make it to the regular sabbath services most weeks, of course. Sometimes we can't go to the big meetings. those **who are SICK** or have a bad cold, should not go to services. Or if there's been a **death in the family** –

spend the day with those surviving loved ones! That's what is showing greater love.

And yes, Carole and I also would go to a significant wedding being held on the sabbath. I don't recommend believers planning weddings on the sabbath though, as there is a lot of work and distraction involved in weddings.

When Elijah had to stay out of sight for 3 years of drought, as I'm sure Ahab and his wife wanted him dead -- when he was in hiding, **being fed by ravens**, do you think he went to services every sabbath? I think not. **See the story in 1 Kings 17:1-9.** It's repeated again in **1 Kings 19** when he ran for his life from Jezebel and was in hiding again.

When Yeshua/Jesus fasted for 40 days, did he skip a few services?

Of course. At least 5 or 6. So he showed us *that at times it's OK to stay* home – but do try to pray extra, study extra, or maybe zoom a church service.

IS it OK to FAST on the sabbath? I've heard ministers teach that since sabbath is a FEAST day, we should not fast on sabbath. **Again, quick answer: Follow Christ. Can't fast on sabbath? Go tell that to Jesus, who fasted 40 days – including at least 5-6 sabbaths!** So choose other days to fast when you can, but to fast on the occasional sabbath – sure, go ahead. Yeshua/Jesus certainly did.

How far can you walk on the sabbath? The "sabbath day's journey" is Jewish man-made tradition. It was a short distance (most think 3/4 of a mile, maybe a mile). That's Judaism! But let me ask you: when the armies of Israel walked around the city of Jericho for 7 days, one of those had to be a sabbath, and one day was 7x around the city – were they feeling limited to the short distance of a sabbath day's journey? Of course not. *Neither would we do a long hike on sabbath though.*

Again, the sabbath was made for OUR benefit – not the other way around.

Lighting a fire on the sabbath: Exodus 35:3 “you shall **kindle** no fire throughout your dwellings on the sabbath day”.

And yes, this is referring to a regular fire lit in your own homes. Some ministers try to say this was referring to a furnace for melting metals and gold for the tabernacle. The Hebrew for “fire” is the same thing as Abraham and Isaac carried in their hand for the sacrifice.

Very strict Orthodox Jews won't turn a light on during sabbath.

Even in Judaism, this law is acknowledged as hard to understand. Could you have a fire already going and keep it going, but just don't initially kindle or light the fire on sabbath (which could take some time and work). I tend to go with this understanding.

Remember the fire on the Menorah – 7 of the fires – had to be kept lit all the time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And animal sacrifices were offered on sabbath too. Like Christ said: the priests worked on sabbath.

Back to the kindling a fire on sabbath. **Is God against having heat in winter for those** especially in Alaska, Canada, and anywhere and anytime it gets very cold - like Northern states especially? Would our loving Father really keep us from having heat in our homes?

During the harsh **Spanish Inquisition**, the authorities intent on finding Jews to torture until they changed their religion were able to find Jews by observing the town from a hill in cold winter and marking down the homes that had no smoke coming out their chimneys on Saturdays. Those Jews were trying to obey that little understood law and staying very cold!

Cooking, baking, re-heating, microwaving, frying on sabbath. Certainly sabbath is not a day to be cooking a big roast. That is clear! But what about cooking at ALL on sabbath? We do no baking or big roasts.

This will have to be your decision upon study and prayer. Today “cooking” can take just a few minutes in microwave cooking, for example. Is that really any work?

To tell you honestly, I'm reconsidering this. On sabbath we try mostly to eat **salads pre-prepared, or we make a sandwich from left over chicken or turkey or whatever is on hand – but we try not to do any cooking.** We tend to eat cereal and milk for breakfast with some fruit. *But honestly, we've cooked and had eggs and toast on sabbath too.* But I plan to stop cooking on sabbath altogether. Some of you feel no issue with having BBQ hamburgers or steaks on sabbath. We don't do that ourselves though.

I know many sabbath keepers who cook and prepare their sabbath food on Friday, put it in the fridge, and eat it either cold or quickly warmed up. Many people actually like cold pizza from the fridge, or boiled eggs, and salads. But warming up food in a crockpot or from the fridge – how different is that from cooking it? Anyway, cooking today in 2022 is a lot faster, less hassle, hardly any work if you keep it simple and eat more salads, sandwiches, cereal on sabbath.

The children

Take time on sabbath for the family. There are **sabbath table games** you can order that test Bible knowledge, for example. I see everything right about that. Or going to the park with your children – on the swings, and having a sabbath picnic. Why not?

Sabbath is for US, remember, and what other days can you find the time to go to a park and enjoy your children. Put your mind to figuring out ways that can make sabbath a delight for your children as well. And this is why pastors – you must give TIME for your church brethren to HAVE this time with family, to sleep in, to REST, to make sabbath a delight and not just have to be in all-day services!

CONCLUSION

I HOPE that's been helpful. Use the principles Yeshua gave us – that Sabbath was made to serve US and have a day to worship, to rest, stop, spend time with family and God one-to-one and then you figure out what you need to do to obey God.