

Living With Hope
Presentation 9: The Sabbath
Rechargeable Hope
Metaphor: Rechargeable Batteries
Last Revision: 6/12/2009



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Quickaholics

A New York City subway token booth attendant spends most of her day watching the passengers. "They like to run," she says. "They don't feel right if they don't run. This is what I watch—the rat race. I watch them run to work, and I watch them run home."

"The trouble with the rat race," Lily Tomlin quips, "is that even if you win, you're still a rat."

How many of you are too busy? (expect 90% of the audience to raise their hands)

Quickaholics. We want food. Quickly. We want entertainment. Quickly. We want this lecture to end. Quickly.

The story is told of a man phoning an airline and asking, "How long does it take to fly from Montreal to Vancouver? Just a minute," the clerk replied. "Thank you," said the man, and hung up.

CDs were too slow so we invented iPod. Email was too slow so we invented instant messaging. Blogs were too slow so we invented twitter.

Never before have we been able to instantly retrieve the collective knowledgebase of the world through our pocket devices. Never in history have we been instantly connected and accessible to so many people.

We are wired 24/7: Music...Podcasts...Chat...Text Messages...Sports...news...Voice Mail...What are you doing right now...Stock market reports...Weather...traffic...We are overloaded in a matrix of sensory stimulation and can't seem to find the 'off' button on our own remote control. Our body is giving us the 'low on battery' warning signs, but how do we power down? How do we recharge?

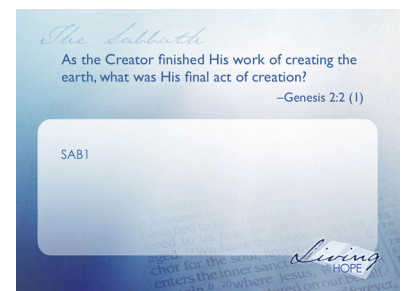
In fact the human body is like a battery powered electronic device. For example, I use my cell phone a lot--Its one of those fancy gadgets with all the bells and whistles. Unfortunately all my usage takes its toll on the battery. If I use it too much it will eventually die and I won't be able to use it all (I know, because its happened and I've missed important calls). In order to keep it operating I've gotten into a little habit that has two parts: First I take it out of my pocket to give it a rest, and second, I plug it into the battery charger. As long as I continue with that regular habit my phone seems to work great.

Like my phone, the human body needs to rest and recharge. There is such a way and the Bible gives it a name--Sabbath. The word Sabbath literally means rest. It has two components: First is getting unplugged, and second is getting recharged. Today we'll take a look at this Bible concept of the Sabbath where we unplug and get recharged.

Unplugged

You may have just heard about this concept of the Sabbath. It may be brand new to you. However it's been around since the beginning of this planet. For a few minutes today I would like to trace the history of this wonderful resting and recharging tool that the Bible calls "The Sabbath."

▶▶**SAB1** As the Creator finished His work of creating the earth, what was His final act of creation? **Genesis 2:2 (1)**



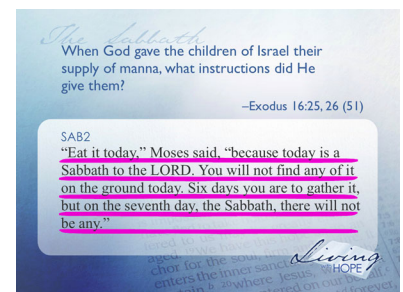
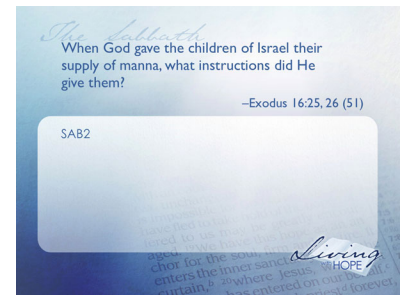
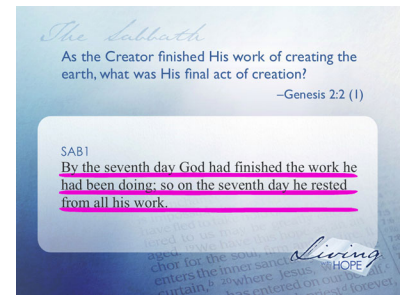
▶ *By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work...*

Unlike the pink bunny, no one keeps going and going and going forever. Even God needs to unplug once in awhile. And in order to make sure it happened, He created a weekly cycle. By the way, have you ever wondered where the week came from? Some of our other units of time are obvious. Where does a year come from? --One rotation of the earth around the sun. Where does the month come from? --One rotation of the moon around the earth. Where does the day come from? --One rotation of the earth. Where does the week come from? There is nothing in astronomy that indicates a week. Historians trace the week back through many cultures and places and keep coming back to the verse that we just read. God invented the week.

▶ **SAB2** When God gave the children of Israel their supply of manna, what instructions did He give them? **Exodus 16:25, 26 (51)**

▶ *"Eat it today," Moses said, "because today is a Sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on the ground today. Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any."*

Not only did God need to unplug, he knew that mankind also needed a weekly rest from work. Even before the Ten Commandments were given, the seventh day of the weekly cycle was a part of God's plan for rest. The Jews escaping Egypt on their way to the Promised Land were given a break from their work once a week. Picking up manna off the ground may not have taken a great deal of effort but unplugging from work was so significant that God gave them an extra supply on Friday so they could rest on Sabbath.

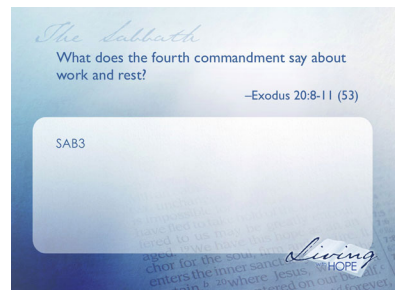


If they went out to look for manna on the Sabbath they were out of luck—the ground was empty.

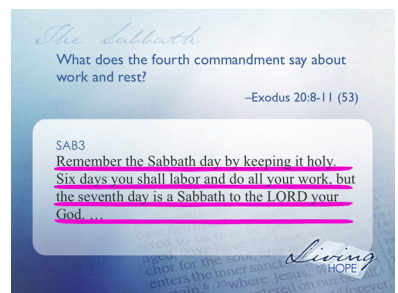
In modern times societies have found themselves out of luck as well. Since there is no foundation for the seven day weekly cycle other than the Bible, modern secular societies have tried to abandon it for a more scientific week. During the French revolution the seven day week was replaced with a ten day week. The experiment failed miserably, and the seven day weekly cycle was reinstated. In the early days of Stalin and the Soviet Union there was an elaborate rotating five day work pattern that would seek to optimize the working potential of the masses. This too failed miserably and the seven day week was restored. In the 1970s tech giant Hewlett Packard experimented with a ten day weekly cycle but abandoned the innovation when they discovered that production actually decline. To be productive, workers need to unplug once a week.

Perhaps the most well known description of the Sabbath is found in the Ten Commandments.

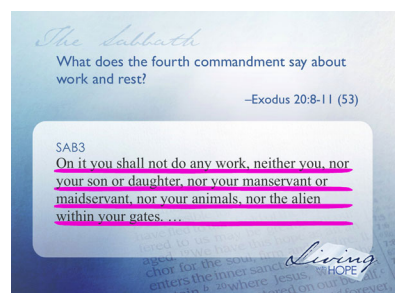
▶▶**SAB3** What does the fourth commandment say about work and rest? **Exodus 20:8-11 (53)**



▶▶*"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.*



▶▶*On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates.*



▶▶ *For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day.*

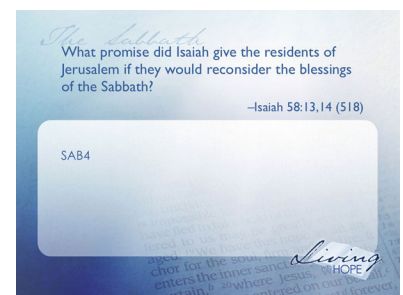
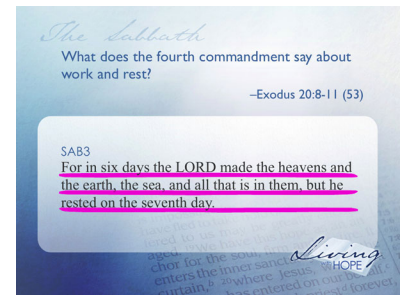
God knows we need to unplug once a week. Those who don't enjoy the rest of the Sabbath may wish to learn a lesson from the lowly grasshopper. Until 1921 no one knew the secret of where locusts came from. The mystery was solved when a Russian naturalist named Uvarov determined that locusts are ordinary grasshoppers "gone berserk." When placed in glass jars...

"...They literally and physically change from Jekyll to Hyde before your eyes. They will even change, all alone in their jars, if you stimulate them by a rapid succession of artificial touches. Imperceptibly at first, their wings and wingcovers elongate. Their drab color heightens, then saturates more and more, until it locks a the hysterical locust yellows and pinks. Stripes and dots appear on the wingcovers; these deepen to a glittering black. They lay more eggpods than grasshoppers. They are restless, excitable, voracious. You now have jars full of plague." --Uvarov¹

Does that describe you and me? Stimulated by unending electronic transmissions? Wouldn't it be nice to return to the state of the lowly grasshopper: peaceful, satisfied, centered?

Those who ignore the blessings of the Sabbath do so at their own peril. Such was the case of the residents of Jerusalem back in the days of Isaiah. The Sabbath had lost its meaning and the market hustled and bustled as on any other day.

▶▶ **SAB4** What promise did Isaiah give the residents of Jerusalem if they would reconsider the blessings of the Sabbath? **Isaiah 58:13,14 (518)**



▶▶ *"If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight*

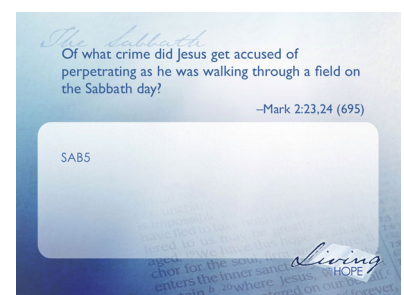
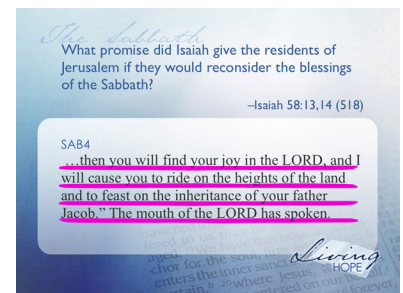
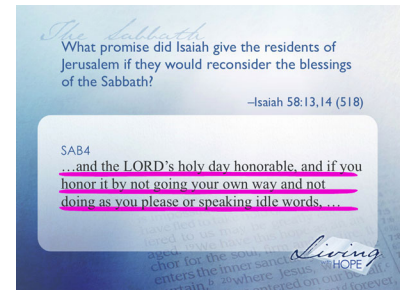
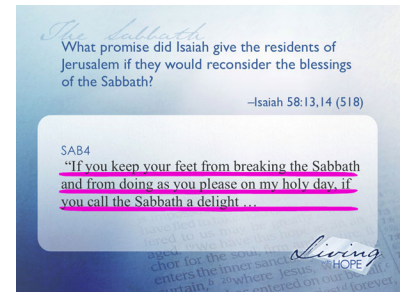
▶▶ *and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,*

▶▶ *then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob."*
The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

The Sabbath is a realm of time where the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord. Life goes wrong when the control of space, the acquisition of things of space, becomes our sole concern."—Abraham Heschel.

About five centuries later, after the Jews had resettled Jerusalem, Jesus discovered one of the greatest ironies of history; The Sabbath had become so codified that instead of going unplugged the people were wired into complex Sabbath regulations.

▶▶ **SAB5** Of what crime did Jesus get accused of perpetrating as he was walking through a field on the Sabbath day? **Mark 2:23, 24 (695)**



▶▶ One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain.

The Sabbath
Of what crime did Jesus get accused of perpetrating as he was walking through a field on the Sabbath day?
—Mark 2:23,24 (695)

SAB5
One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. . . .

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▶▶ The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

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SAB5
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Living Hope

▶▶ **SAB6** What was Jesus' response? **Mark 2:27 (695)**

The Sabbath
What was Jesus' response?
—Mark 2:27 (695)

SAB6

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▶▶ Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

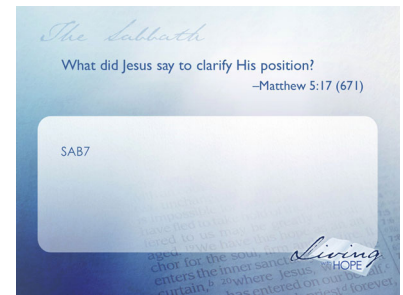
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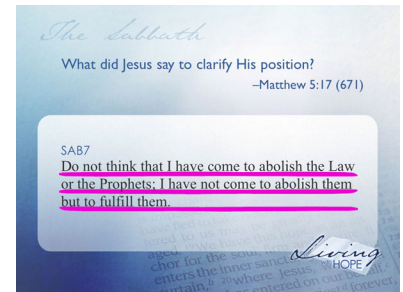
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Jesus was returning to the original unplugged joy of the Sabbath. He tried to strip off centuries of manmade varnish of 'do's' and 'don'ts' that encrusted the Sabbath. Some at the time misunderstood Jesus and thought that he was trying to do away with all of the Old Testament laws and regulations.

▶▶**SAB7** What did Jesus say to clarify His position? **Matthew 5:17**
(671)



▶▶*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*

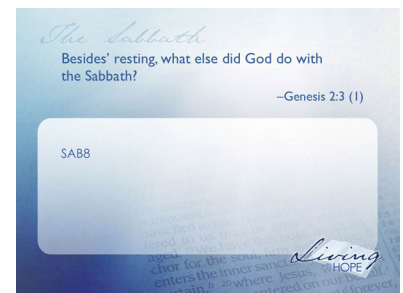


He then goes on with samples of some of the Ten Commandments, showing how they have relevance far beyond just cursory external behavior. The commandments are a description of an inner heart changed by Jesus. In fact the Ten Commandments including the Sabbath, were not abolished by Jesus. As we will see a little later He saw a time in the future when the Sabbath still carried significance.

Recharge

To keep my cell phone alive I've gotten into the habit of taking it out of my pocket and giving it a rest. However if that's all I do with my phone it's not enough. I've got to recharge it. The Sabbath is far more than just a day off work. There is also the recharging element of the Sabbath. Let's go back to that very first verse where we can see both the rest and the recharging concept.

▶▶**SAB8** Besides' resting, what else did God do with the Sabbath? **Genesis 2:3 (1)**



▶▶ *And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.*

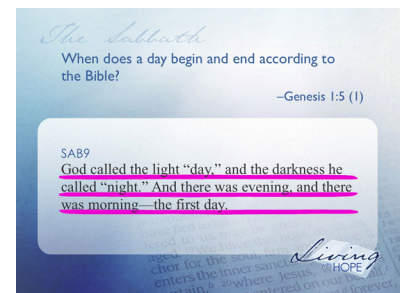
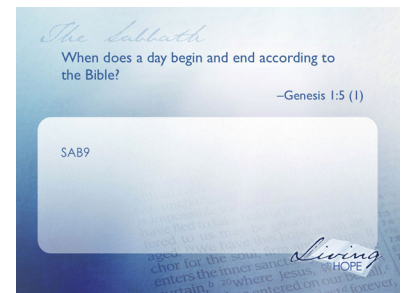
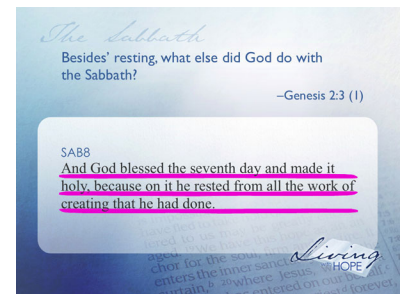
The seventh day of creation was unique. On every other day God worked. On the seventh day He rested. On other days God was satisfied with His creation but he did not bless the day. Only the seventh-day received a blessing. The Sabbath is a unique 24 hour time slot designed by God for resting and recharging.

Did you notice something else in that creation story?

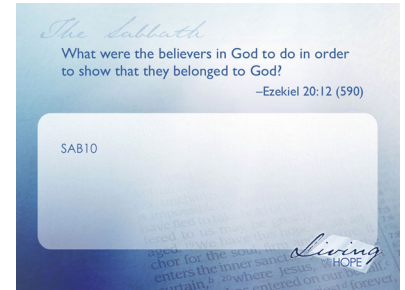
▶▶ **SAB9** When does a day begin and end according to the Bible?
Genesis 1:5 (1)

▶▶ *God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.*

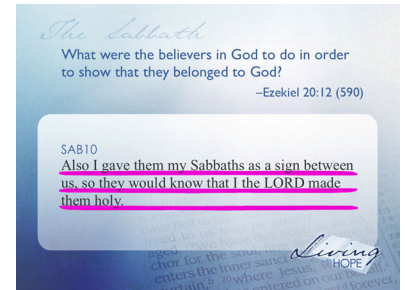
In our modern culture the day begins at midnight and most of us sleep through the transition between one day and the next. Many are turning back to this ancient way of marking the daily cycle, especially when it comes to the Sabbath. This gives the advantage of celebrating the entrance of the Sabbath at sundown on Friday night. Some have developed creative little ways to mark the beginning of the rest and recharging experience, whether it be lighting a candle or simply stopping to have a prayer or moment of worship welcoming in the Sabbath. In fact there is a direct connection between the Sabbath and the Creator.



▶▶ **SAB10** What were the believers in God to do in order to show that they belonged to God? **Ezekiel 20:12 (590)**

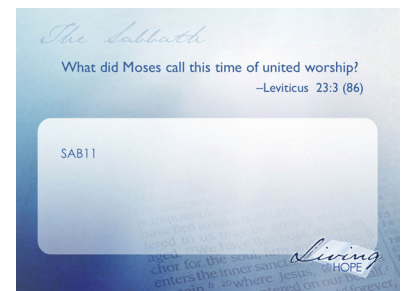


▶▶ *Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy.*

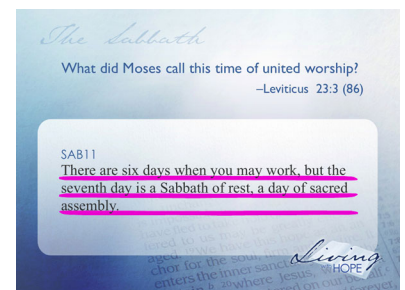


Even though God is present 24/7 the Sabbath can be a special intimate time with God because we have set aside the distractions of employment and are opening up our hearts to be spiritually recharged. Sabbath can also be a time where we unite our hearts together with other believers. Here we can collectively connect with God and let heaven's power regenerate our souls.

▶▶ **SAB11** What did Moses call this time of united worship? **Leviticus 23:3 (86)**

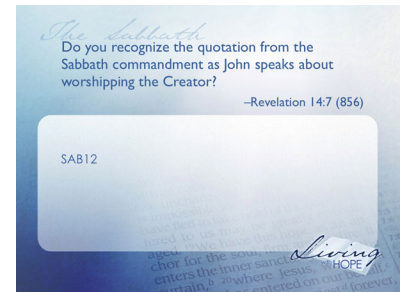


▶▶ *"There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly.*



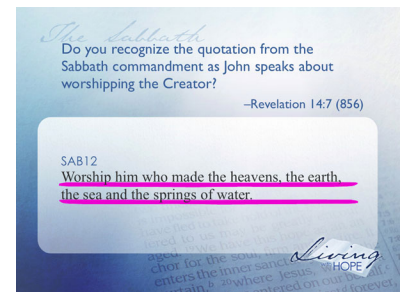
The Sabbath is a perfect time to get together with other believers and worship our Creator. Unfortunately most middle class Americans tend to worship their work, work at their play, and play at their worship.² Yet if we take worshipping our Creator seriously it can indeed recharge our spiritual batteries. Since He created us, He is the one who can recharge us.

▶▶**SAB 12** Do you recognize what words John quotes from the Sabbath commandment when he speaks about worshipping the Creator? **Revelation 14:7 (856)**

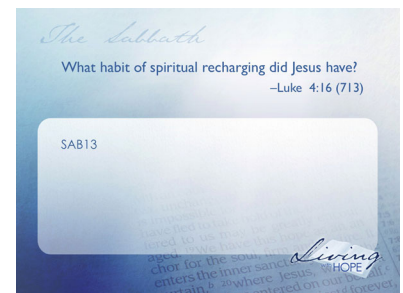


▶▶*Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."*

The Sabbath is a memorial of the creation of planet earth by Jesus. The Sabbath is a weekly reminder of this wonderful gift of the planet earth and how we need to take care of it on behalf of our Creator.

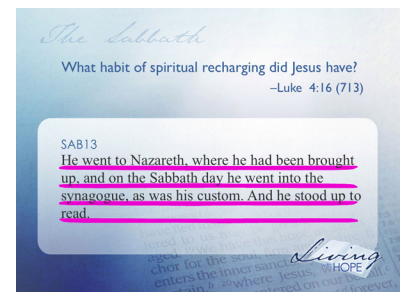


▶▶**SAB13** What habit of spiritual recharging did Jesus have? **Luke 4:16 (713)**

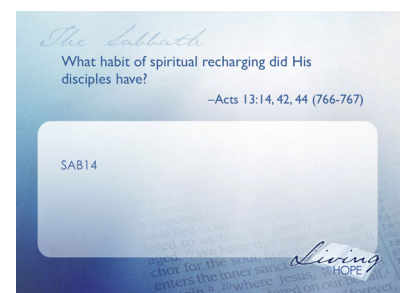


▶▶*He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.*

Jesus fulfilled the Sabbath in his own life through a weekly Sabbath worship. As we continue in scripture we see that the blessing of the Sabbath continues long after the resurrection.



▶▶**SAB 14** What habit of spiritual recharging did His disciples have? **Acts 13:14, 42, 44 (766-767)**



▶▶ *On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down.*

The Sabbath
What habit of spiritual recharging did His disciples have?
—Acts 13:14, 42, 44 (766-767)

SAB14
On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down . . .

Living HOPE

▶▶ *As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath.*

The Sabbath
What habit of spiritual recharging did His disciples have?
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SAB14
As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath . . .

Living HOPE

▶▶ *On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.*

The Sabbath
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—Acts 13:14, 42, 44 (766-767)

SAB14
On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.

Living HOPE

▶▶ **SAB15** What was his advice for those who were preparing for the impending destruction of Jerusalem? **Matthew 24:20 (688)**

The Sabbath
What was Jesus' advice in preparation for the impending destruction of Jerusalem?
—Matthew 24:20 (688)

SAB15

Living HOPE

▶▶ *Pray that your flight³ will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.*

The Sabbath
What was Jesus' advice in preparation for the impending destruction of Jerusalem?
—Matthew 24:20 (688)

SAB15
Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.

Living HOPE

Notice that Jesus taught that the blessings of the Sabbath were to continue far into the future. The temple wasn't destroyed until AD 70, long after Jesus had ascended into heaven.⁴

A Sabbath For All Peoples

All three monotheistic world religions follow the seven day weekly cycle and experience some of the benefits of the Sabbath. Judaism has continued to worship from Friday night sunset to Saturday night sunset in an unbroken weekly cycle since the beginning of time (which means we can be assured that the days of the week have never changed).

As we can see from the New Testament, Christianity continued the Friday night to Saturday night Sabbath. However within the first few centuries Christians gradually migrated to Sunday, the first day of the week, as the day of worship.

Islam's prime worship experience happens on the sixth day of the week, Friday. Each of these mighty world religions partakes of some of the blessings of the Sabbath.

It is interesting to note that both Christianity and Islam have lost some of the blessings of the Sabbath when they moved away from the seventh-day Sabbath. In the creation week God only blessed the 7th day, not the 1st day nor the 6th day.

For Christians, the transition from the 7th day to the 1st day was gradual. The change didn't occur in Jerusalem but rather in Rome. The pagan holidays centered on the first day of the week. To avoid persecution Christians in the Roman Empire would continue to rest from work on Saturday but assemble on Sunday. Eventually most Christians dropped the Sabbath rest entirely. Today's Christians are only receiving a portion of the resting/recharging blessing of the Sabbath. It's difficult to recharge unless you rest!

For Islam, the newest world religion, Friday worship began as a convenient day of worship because Friday was the market day. Since everyone was in town anyway it

made it easy to assemble. Muslims too only enjoy a portion of the resting/recharging of the Sabbath.

However there is a growing movement today in both the Muslim and Christian world to return to the Bible Sabbath concept of resting and recharging from Friday night to Saturday night. By now many of you (whether you have thought about it or not) have already begun to unplug from work and recharge in this Sabbath worship service. Some of you have been here for five Sabbaths. You have already begun to reap the rewards. And you're not alone.

Musician Michael Card, along with millions of others, is now keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.

▶▶“We started out of this desire for simplicity and this appreciation for rest, “ he explains. “But I think, really, the thing that pushed me over the edge was a Seventh-day Adventist brother who said,

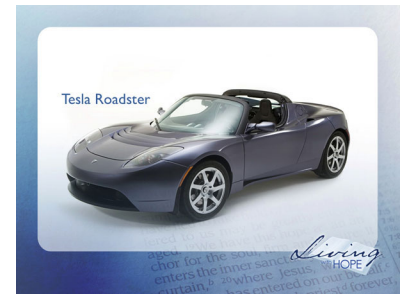
▶▶‘God didn’t change any of the other commandments, so he hasn’t changed that one. ‘The rationale behind that argument, I thought, was pretty airtight.’⁵

But what if your boss wants you to work? How can you enjoy the Sabbath if you are punching in on the time clock? The answer is, you can’t. So what can you do? Pray for your boss and tell him or her that you need to take off from Friday night sunset to Saturday night sunset. If your boss refuses to let you off, tell them that your religious conviction needs to be accommodated. It is against the law in North America for your boss to discriminate against your religion. If your boss refuses, seek advice from your small group leader on the next step.



Fast and Furious

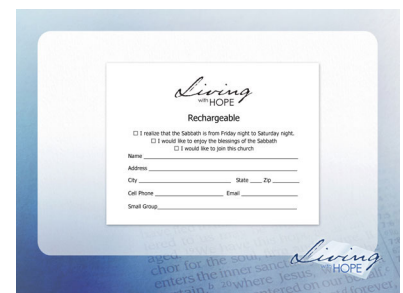
▶▶ In 2009 Tesla Motors introduced the world's fastest electric production roadster. How fast is it? It will go from zero to 60 in 3.7 seconds with a top speed of 125 mph. With its custom tuned suspension, anti-roll bars, 200 kW of electrical power and flaming orange paint job you can be fast and furious and environmentally friendly at the same time. Would you like to own one? You can. Just drop by your Tesla dealer and hand over \$109,000 and you too can drive around in the world's fastest electric car. Or, if there is no dealer nearby, you can simply order it online. However before you order one there is one thing you need to know. If you drive it for more than about 200 miles you will no longer be fast and furious. You will be slow and furious. And if you don't let your roadster rest and recharge you will eventually come to a complete stop.



Are you feeling slow and furious? Maybe, like the Tesla, your highly sophisticated body needs rest and recharging. By the way, on what day of the week do you finally reach maximum speed in your life? Thursday? Wednesday? Tuesday? Or do you step on the accelerator right out of the gate on Monday morning and speed around at 125 mph all week? Good News! Friday is coming...Sabbath is approaching...decelerate, slow it down, take a deep breath and exhale...the rest day of the week is here and this church has a place waiting for you to sit, relax, and recharge. But if all else fails CRASH-in, and collapse if needed, and plug in to a place where we know what you are going through because this is a community of faith, life, and new hope.



- I realize that the Sabbath is from Friday night to Saturday night.
- I would like to enjoy the blessings of the Sabbath
- I would like to join this church



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¹ As quoted by Chris Blake in *Searching for a God to Love*

² Gordon Dahl as quoted by Chris Blake

³ The word 'flight' is not referring to flying on an airplane since there were no airplanes in those days. The word flight refers to the escape from Jerusalem before the Roman siege of AD 70.

⁴ Here is the teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the Sabbath:

“ The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts. (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Luke 4:16; Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Matt. 12:1-12; Ex. 31:13-17; Eze. 20:12, 20; Deut. 5:12-15; Heb. 4:1-11; Lev. 23:32; Mark 1:32.)”

⁵ Chris Blake, *Searching for a God to Love*, 222