



## Lesson Text

Exodus 31:12-18 (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, <sup>13</sup> “Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy.’

<sup>14</sup> “Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. <sup>15</sup> For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. <sup>16</sup> The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. <sup>17</sup> It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

<sup>18</sup> When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

Power Hour Lesson

Summary for  
September 17, 2017

### **“Sabbath Observance”**

Lesson Text:  
Exodus 31:12-18

Background Scripture:  
Genesis 2:1-3;  
Exodus 31:12-18;  
Isaiah 56:1-8

Devotional Reading:  
Psalm 92

#### Today's Lesson Aims

- **Learning Fact:** To summarize the early instructions to the Israelites regarding the Sabbath regulations of the Mosaic covenant.
- **Biblical Principle:** To understand the Sabbath principle of regular, periodic rest.
- **Daily Application:** To set aside a time for rest and to be refreshed.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Dark Side of Achievement

The term burnout was popularized in the 1970s by American psychologist Herbert Freudenberger. In working with those who devoted themselves to serving others in free clinics, Freudenberger found that many clinic workers became exhausted, listless, and unable to cope over time. Doctors, nurses, and social workers exhibited burnout when their idealism gave way to cynicism as they felt increasingly ineffective and helpless. Today the word burnout is applied to those who are stressed-out in many other professions as well.



The negative effects of burnout at work spill over into home and social life. When that happens, relationships do not get the full focus they deserve, prioritizing becomes difficult, and busyness replaces true accomplishment. Over the long run, burnout can make people vulnerable to illness.

Our bodies have limitations. Overwork paired with insufficient rest is a poisonous recipe for burnout. The lesson looks at God's antidote.

#### LESSON BACKGROUND

**Time:** 1445 BC

**Place:** Mount Sinai

The subject of our lesson is early instruction to the Israelites regarding the Sabbath. But this instruction was not the first on this subject. The first mention of the word Sabbath as a noun was when God provided manna as the Israelites sojourned toward Mount Sinai. Two days' worth was to be gathered on the sixth day of the week so the people could rest on the seventh—the Sabbath (Exodus 16:21-30). On any other day, gathering more than one day's worth resulted in spoilage (16:20). But manna gathered on the sixth day and saved for the Sabbath did not spoil (16:24).

In the third month after leaving Egypt, the Israelites assembled in front of Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1). There God spoke to them and gave them the Ten Commandments (20:1-17). The requirement to keep the Sabbath was the fourth of those and was the longest (20:8-11). Further instructions regarding the Sabbath followed. These required land to be left fallow one year in seven; a weekly Sabbath rest for every person and beast of burden was mandatory (23:10-12).

Moses confirmed the covenant with the people in Exodus 24; then God called him again to the top of the mountain to receive more instructions (24:12). A break of sorts occurs with Exodus 24:18 when Moses "stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights." The section that follows (Exodus 25-31) records God's commands about the construction of the tabernacle and how to furnish it. The current lesson text comes at the conclusion of this section.

#### What Do You Think?

- What helps you most to guard your sanctification in and for Christ? Why?
- How would you respond to a fellow believer who insists that worship, rest, and essential functions are the only allowable activities for Christians on Sunday?

Power Hour Lesson  
Summary for  
September 17, 2017  
**"Sabbath Observance"**

Lesson Text:  
Exodus 31:12-18  
  
Background Scripture:  
Genesis 2:1-3;  
Exodus 31:12-18;  
Isaiah 56:1-8

Devotional Reading:  
Psalm 92



- How have you seen Christian observance of a day off influence culture?

#### POINTS TO PONDER

- God established the Sabbath as a sign between Him and Israel – a sign that His people were holy (Exodus 31:12-14).
- Rest was the key to keeping the Sabbath as God intended. It is hard to keep one's spiritual defenses up when the body is continually exhausted (vs. 15-16).
- The observance of the Sabbath was linked to the day God rested from His work of creation (v. 17).
- Now through Jesus, God writes His law in the heart, by His Spirit (see 2 Corinthians 3:3).

#### CONCLUSION

##### Why Sabbath Observance Is Obsolete

Examining the Ten Commandments alongside Christian practice, we reach a conclusion that is uncomfortable to many: it seems that nine of the Ten Commandments still apply, but one—the command to keep the Sabbath (Saturday)—does not. A close look at each of the Ten Commandments in light of other Scripture reveals why this conclusion is valid. Nine of the commandments are based on the nature of God; and since His nature never changes (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17), neither does the application of those nine. The Sabbath commandment, however, is based on works of God. His works of the old creation (Genesis 2:2, 3) and deliverance under the old covenant (Deuteronomy 5:15) are now superseded by His work of deliverance under the new covenant that results in new creation (Romans 8:19-23; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Since the new covenant is bound intrinsically with Christ's resurrection from the dead, we honor Him on the day He won that victory (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1, 2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). This is the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10), the day we call Sunday.

##### Why the Sabbath Principle Still Stands

Although Sabbath requirements are no longer in force, are there benefits in the Sabbath principle of regular, periodic rest? Matthew Sleeth thinks so. A former emergency room doctor, Sleeth is the author of 24/6: A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life. The book calls for making one day a week a work-free day. In an interview with CNN, he said, "I don't try to define what rest is for a person, but I ask you to figure out what work is for you, and don't do it one day out of the week."

Power Hour Lesson  
Summary for  
September 17, 2017

#### "Sabbath Observance"

Lesson Text:  
Exodus 31:12-18

Background Scripture:  
Genesis 2:1-3;  
Exodus 31:12-18;  
Isaiah 56:1-8

Devotional Reading:  
Psalm 92



Taking a day off has been associated with a variety of health benefits, including stress management. No doubt, that is one reason God gave the Sabbath to His old covenant people—to provide rest and relief. But even if keeping the Sabbath principle as a day of rest is legitimate for one's personal health and devotion, it is not something to be demanded of others or made a test of fellowship (again, Romans 14:5, 6; Colossians 2:16).

The Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27), and each man (and woman) is free to apply the principle of Sabbath rest as seems best. But the fulfillment, the substance, is Christ (compare Hebrews 4:1-13).

#### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the eternal rest promised to Your people. May we live faithful to Your Son, Jesus, using our time, our work, and our rest to honor Him. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

#### THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

God did not design us to be 24/7/365 machines!

#### ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is "**Spirit-Filled Heart**" and summarizes the Prophet Ezekiel's message of hope for the exiles in Babylon. Study Ezekiel 36 and 37 and Titus 3:1-11.

Power Hour Lesson  
Summary for  
September 17, 2017

#### **"Sabbath Observance"**

Lesson Text:  
Exodus 31:12-18

Background Scripture:  
Genesis 2:1-3;  
Exodus 31:12-18;  
Isaiah 56:1-8

Devotional Reading:  
Psalm 92