



Four

The Fourth Commandment

Family Study Guides • The Ten Commandments Series

Four

The Fourth Commandment

“Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.”

We suggest that as you use this Family Study Guide, select and focus on a main portion or two that you feel will help your family’s study into the commandment. You do not need to cover every aspect, discussion or scripture presented in this guide. Select the aspects or principles most relevant or helpful to your family.



Objectives:

- Define with your family God’s commands and expectations for how to remember the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is a day to honor God, rest and do good.
- List and discuss the rewards God offers to those who keep His Sabbath and call it a delight.
- Discuss how God taught the Israelites about the Sabbath through the giving of manna.
- Analyze what the Bible says about how Jesus kept and observed the Sabbath.

Memory Verse

“So the people rested on the seventh day” (Exodus 16:30, New King James Version).

1. What is different about the Sabbath day from the other days of the week?

- a. How many of you were tired last night after a hard week of school and/or work? Did you get to sleep in on the Sabbath? How did it feel?
- b. During the seven days of creation, one day was different than the rest and was very special.
 - Which day was it and why was it special? What does God call this day?
 - What different and special thing did God do on the seventh day of creation, that first Sabbath? (He rested and enjoyed His creation.)
 - What is different about the Sabbath day from the other days of the week and what does God want us to do on it? Possible answers: (It is holy. We attend Sabbath services. We don’t do normal work. We spend time with our families. We rest. We learn about and worship God.)

2. How is the Sabbath a Gift?

- a. We are told that “the Sabbath is the Lord’s gift to you” (Exodus 16:29, New Living Translation).
- b. We can think about and use this gift in the following ways:
 - “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week

for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God” (Exodus 20:8-11).

- “Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don’t pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the Lord’s holy day. Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day, and don’t follow your own desires or talk idly. Then the Lord will be your delight. I will give you great honor and satisfy you with the inheritance I promised to your ancestor Jacob. I, the Lord, have spoken!” (Isaiah 58:13-14 NLT).
- “Blessed are all those who are careful to do this. Blessed are those who honor my Sabbath days of rest and keep themselves from doing wrong” (Isaiah 56:2).

3. A Old Testament Example

Remember back to when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. They belonged to the Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and had to do exactly what he said. They could not worship God because the Pharaoh would not let them. They could not keep the Sabbath day as God wanted, because Pharaoh made them work every day. They had even forgotten which day the Sabbath was!

They cried to God for help and God heard their prayers. He told Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt into the desert where they could worship God. They did not understand about the Sabbath and needed to learn how to keep it the way God wanted them to.

a. Read the story in Exodus 16:1-31. Especially emphasize that they were to gather extra manna on the sixth day as preparation for the Sabbath so they would not be working on the Sabbath gathering food.

b. God used the manna as a teaching tool.

- What did God do when the Israelites complained about not having food?
- Did the people have to work to get their food?
- What day could the people gather twice as much manna?
- Why could they save the manna only on this day?
- Have your family count how many miracles were involved in Exodus 16.

4. New Testament Scriptures and Principles

a. Why do you think God made the Sabbath day?

- What do you think it would do to your health if you never stopped and rested a day?
- Notice that even God himself was somehow refreshed from resting on the Sabbath day!

Explain the purpose of the Sabbath in your own words.

The Sabbath is our special “appointment with God,” a time to rest and learn about Him, and a time to serve. Discuss what God means when He says “Remember the Sabbath” and how to properly keep the Sabbath.

- Give some examples of what might be appropriate on the Sabbath.
- Give some examples of what might be inappropriate on the Sabbath.
- Have each family member say what he or she likes about keeping the Sabbath day.
- Discuss how you might improve the way you observe the Sabbath day.

What benefits will you gain from doing these things because you love God and the Sabbath?

- “In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:17).

b. If the all-powerful God was refreshed from the Sabbath—how much more does this principle and law apply to mere humans?

- “And Jesus concluded, “The Sabbath was made for the good of man; man was not made for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27, TEV).
- God gave us the Sabbath because it is good for us! How many ways you can think of that the Sabbath is good for us?

What can we learn about keeping the Sabbath from Jesus’ example?

Let’s take a look some of the things that Jesus did on the Sabbath. He was a human being and lived on this earth the same as we all do. He faced that question every seventh day.

The Grain Field

Luke 6:1-5 One Sabbath Jesus and His disciples walked through a grain field and broke off some grains for wheat, rubbed the husk off in their hands and ate it. The Pharisees saw it and said, “They can’t do that, it’s illegal because they are working on the Sabbath.”

Jesus answered them, “Haven’t you even read where King David and his men were hungry and at the show-bread (a special bread that is required by the law to be placed before God) in the Temple?”

Jesus was showing that human needs and relationships must be taken into account to understand the intent of the law.

“Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27-28).

The Bible plainly shows that we are not to do our normal work on the Sabbath, but Jesus also shows us that we can do good on the Sabbath. Sometimes helping people with their needs can help make their Sabbath better!

The Withered Hand

On another Sabbath, Jesus was in the synagogue teaching and a man with a deformed hand was present. Again, the Pharisees were watching to see if Jesus would heal this man of this deformity on the Sabbath. They were eager to find some fault in Jesus. (Luke 6:6-11).

Jesus had a question for the Pharisees and teachers of the law. “Is it right to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do harm? To save life or to destroy it?” Jesus looked each one in them straight in the eye. Then He asked the man to stretch out his hand. He did, and it became a completely normal hand. The Pharisees were not very happy that Jesus was more concerned about taking care of human needs than about their opinions about keeping the Sabbath.

How do you think this man felt after having his hand healed? Do you think it might have made his Sabbath better that day?

Ask yourself, “What would Jesus do?” A good rule of thumb is not to do anything that Jesus wouldn’t do on the Sabbath.

Family Discussion

Story Time

As a parent, share with your child how you learned about the Sabbath and how to observe it.

Sabbath Guidelines

As a family, discuss the guidelines in Isaiah 58:13-14.

What to do on the Sabbath

Review the following scriptures and principles:

1. It is good to do good on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9-13).
2. It is good to assemble on the Sabbath (Hebrews 10:25).
3. Emergencies can be attended to on the Sabbath (Luke 14:5).
4. You may do what is necessary to meet basic needs (Mark 2:23-27).

Preparing for the Sabbath

In Exodus 16:1-31, the Israelites were expected to prepare for the Sabbath by gathering twice the amount of manna on the sixth day. Discuss the ways your family prepares for the Sabbath.

Making the Sabbath a Delight

Do you consider the Sabbath to be the best day of the week, or does it seem to go on forever? What kinds of things would you like to see changed about the way you keep the Sabbath? Talk about things your family does/could do to make the Sabbath a delight.

Life Without the Sabbath?

Discuss what would life might be like if God had not set aside a day of worship for His people?

Sabbath Traditions

Discuss some possible family Sabbath traditions. Some ideas are:

1. Bring a Proverb to dinner. Each family member and guest writes a proverb on a card. During Sabbath dinner each person reads and explains their proverb.
2. Take a nature walk. Take a sketch book or make a scrapbook of leaves.
3. Play charades of people and stories from the Bible.
4. Pick a story or parable from the Bible and decorate your Sabbath table with ideas from the story. Turn the lights low and perhaps act out the story Sabbath evening or have someone read or tell the story.
5. Invite friends, family, or someone from church who keeps the Sabbath to share a special meal with you. Share stories of how God has blessed you for keeping the Sabbath.

Scenarios

Discuss what God would want in both of these situations:

- Bobby enjoys playing video games or other quiet games before going to church services.
- John's friend offered him \$5 to help him mow the lawn last Sabbath. John said "Sure!" because he really needed the money.

Family Discussion (continued)

Sabbath Values

With a larger group of students, divide into teams to look up and discuss each of the points below. With a smaller group, lead the students through a discussion of each.

a. Now that we can see the big picture of God's Sabbath, let's look at some applications of its true values. Here are two principles we can learn from why God created the Sabbath.

1. Healing and doing good works is appropriate for the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9-13).
2. Assembling congregationally—going to church—is important for the Sabbath (Hebrews 10:25).

b. There are two more categories that may be necessary for the Sabbath because we are human:

1. Emergencies (Luke 14:5).
2. Necessities (Mark 2:23).

c. Remember that Jesus Christ hasn't changed (Hebrews 13:8)! If Jesus Christ thought it was a good idea at creation, He still thinks it is a good idea today (Malachi 3:6). Consider Isaiah 58:13-14 for a discussion on how God wants us to keep the Sabbath.

1. Not having your own fun. We need to learn that what God says is fun, what is true fun. This comes by practice.

2. Not doing your own business or work. This is talking about our daily jobs. (Discuss what children do as work. Schoolwork is sometimes their job six days a week. No homework on the Sabbath.)

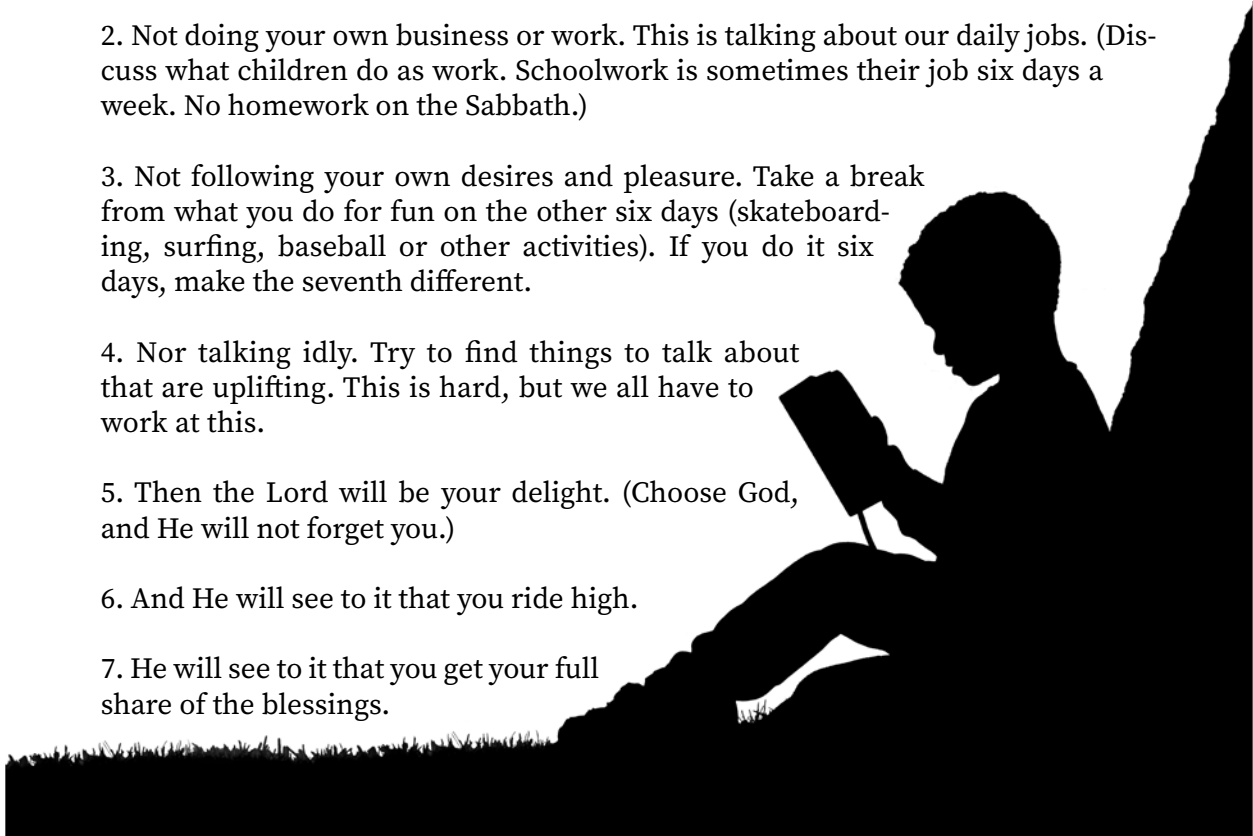
3. Not following your own desires and pleasure. Take a break from what you do for fun on the other six days (skateboarding, surfing, baseball or other activities). If you do it six days, make the seventh different.

4. Nor talking idly. Try to find things to talk about that are uplifting. This is hard, but we all have to work at this.

5. Then the Lord will be your delight. (Choose God, and He will not forget you.)

6. And He will see to it that you ride high.

7. He will see to it that you get your full share of the blessings.



Poster Activity

What do you feel are the pros and cons for keeping the Sabbath? On one side of the whiteboard/poster paper write “Pros” and write “Cons” on the other side. List the points as students give them under the appropriate side.

How do you know what is appropriate to do or not do on the Sabbath? Discuss *why*. Have the students search in their Bibles to see what it says.

- Exodus 20:8, (six days to do daily duties and regular work, but the seventh day of the week is a day of Sabbath rest.
- Jesus adds understanding to that scripture by showing that we can do good on the Sabbath. Taking care of human needs by relieving suffering or hunger is good to do on the Sabbath. You don’t have your regular work and duties to do, so you can get extra sleep and rest.
- Your greatest desire should be to know God better. You do this by attending Church services and Youth Instruction class. Spend extra time praying and studying. Spend extra time looking at nature and appreciating the things God created. It helps us understand how good and great God is.)



Additional Resources for Your Family Studies

UCG Study Aid “The Ten Commandments”

<https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/the-ten-commandments>

UCG Study Aid “Sunset to Sunset: God’s Sabbath Rest”

<https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/sunset-to-sunset-gods-sabbath-rest>

UCG Beyond Today TV Program “Is the Sabbath Relevant for Christians?”

<https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-television-program/is-the-sabbath-relevant-for-christians>

UCG Beyond Today TV Program “Benefits of the Sabbath”

<https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-television-program/benefits-of-the-sabbath>

UCG Bible Study Guide “The Fourth Commandment: Keep the Sabbath Holy”

<https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-3-ten-commandments/fourth-commandment-keep-sabbath-holy>

UCG Short Film: Jelly Loves the Sabbath (Sing-along)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YM2aZ2NMmNI>

Manna Activity

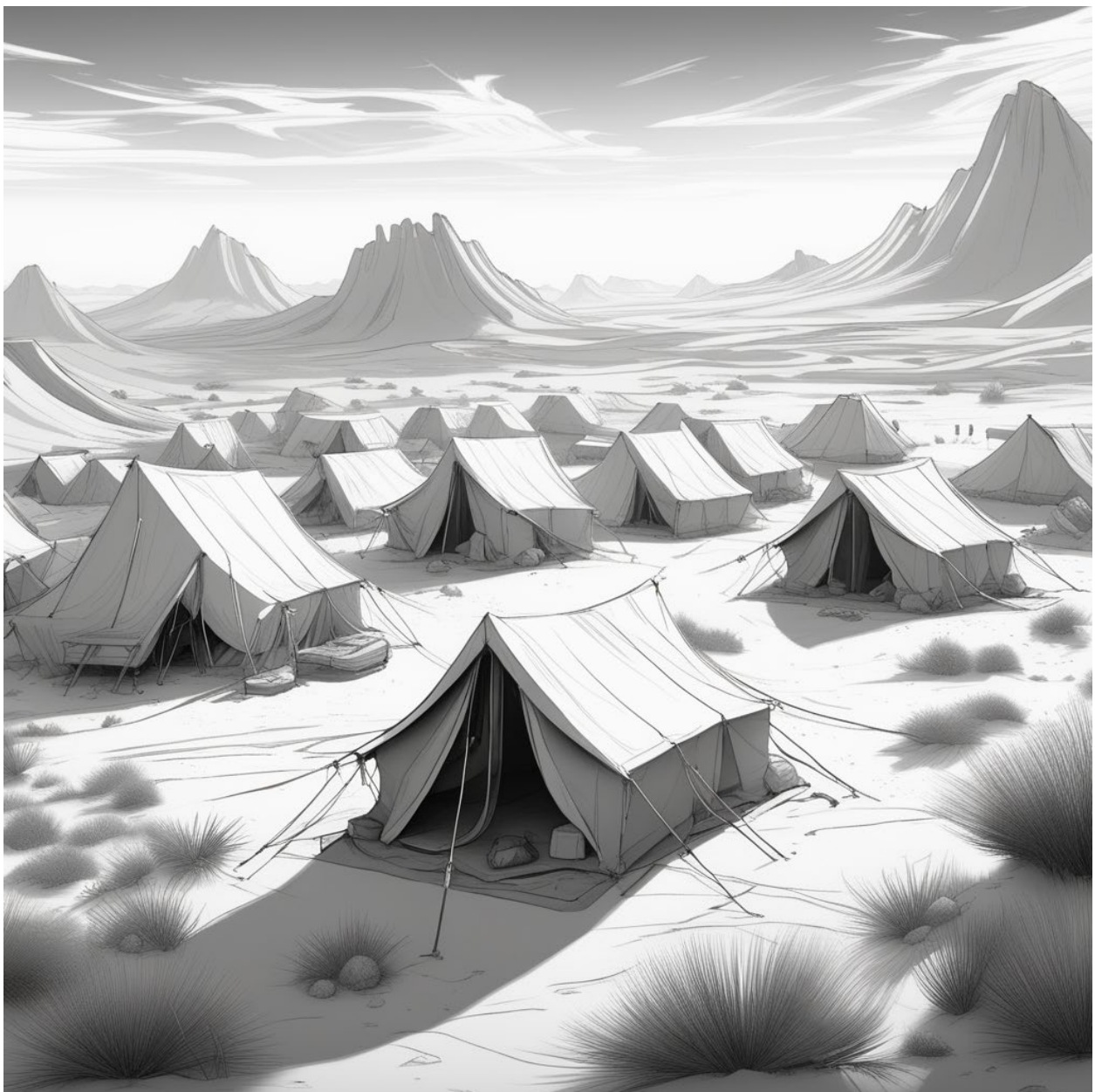
Materials

Bible, a copy of the picture below, puffed rice cereal, glue, pencils or crayons

Directions

Have children color the picture and glue a small amount of puffed rice cereal to the picture to represent the manna. Next, have children draw people gathering the manna.

Discuss that the Israelites gathered manna every day, but not on the Sabbath. It was a sign.



The 5 W's and H of God's Sabbath Day

Who

- should observe the Sabbath? _____
 - is “Lord of the Sabbath” and what does that mean? _____
 - observed the Sabbath in the Old Testament? New Testament? _____
-

What

- makes the Sabbath different from other days? _____
 - did Christ do to model observance of the Sabbath Day? _____
 - are the benefits of observing the Sabbath? _____
-

When

- is the Sabbath day? _____
- was the Sabbath created? _____

Where

- can instructions for Sabbath observance be found in the Bible? _____
-

Why

- is it important to observe the Sabbath day? _____

How

- did God establish the Sabbath day? _____
- do we “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy?” _____
- is the Sabbath a “sign?” _____

Fill in the Missing Words

Use your Bible to look up the scriptures and complete the statements.

Mark 2:27-28 “And He [Jesus] said to them, “The _____ was made for _____, and not _____ for the _____. Therefore the Son of Man is also _____ of the _____.””

Luke 11:46 “And He said, ‘Woe to you also, lawyers! For you _____ men with _____ hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your _____.’”

Mark 3:1-2 “And He entered the _____ again, and a man was there who had a _____ hand. So they _____ Him closely, whether He would heal him on the _____, so that they might _____ Him.”

