

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

LESSON 8

The third commandment is REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.

Read the following statements about going to church. Which of the situations below bring honor to God by remembering the Sabbath Day to Keep It Holy. Write "yes" or "no" in the blank before each statement.

No 1. My old friend, Jerry, from back East came to visit last week. We hadn't seen him in five years. He's not big on going to church so we just stayed home and visited. Besides, it's hard to entertain out-of-town company and get a big Sunday dinner cooked for them when we go to church. God doesn't mind. He knows how hard it is to juggle all of the things you have to do when you have company.

No 2. Oh! I don't need to go to church. I watch all of those evangelists on television. I hear God's Word. That's all that's important anyway, isn't it?

No 3. There was a great party Saturday night. Live music and fabulous food. We danced and ate until late – very late. We just couldn't get up in time to get to church. God understands. We wouldn't have gotten much out of a sermon anyhow as tired as we were.

No 4. The biggest game of the whole pro-football season (at least the biggest game as far as I'm concerned) started early-- 11:00 Sunday morning. It didn't seem worthwhile to go to church for just half of the service. I only missed one service because of it. God's not that strict, is He?

Yes 5. I love going to church each week. I enjoy learning more about God. And I enjoy worshipping the Lord with others who love Him.

No 6. My wife and I retired three years ago. We went to church rather regularly before that. But now I don't want any of the hassles and headaches that go along with being involved in a church. I've put in my time. Now I get to do what I want. And I want some peace and no responsibilities.

No 7. We just can't get our children to sit still and be quiet during church. People give us dirty looks. It is so embarrassing. Even if the kids are halfway quiet, they keep wanting to get up and get a drink of water or go to the bathroom. People don't like all of the interruptions. We feel like we're being criticized (non-verbally) for our children's behavior. When they get older, we'll try it again. We're sure God understands. He doesn't want our kids causing all those distractions for the people who are seriously trying to worship Him.

No 8. I look forward to going to church on Sunday. It is such a great time to catch up on everything – who's in the hospital, who died, who had a baby. I can see who has the latest

fashions and who is still wearing old, out-of-date clothes.

Yes 9. I have back problems. The doctors say I must stay in bed and not walk any more than is absolutely necessary. Getting from bed to the bathroom is a major undertaking--very painful. My daughter does my shopping and cooking for me. I eagerly look forward to the day when my back will be stronger, and I'll be able to go to church. Until then, I will continue to set time aside to worship God and study His word.

No 10. Say! I work hard all week. I put in fifty to sixty hours at my job so I can make ends meet and provide for my family. I need a day to sleep in and get some rest. Sunday is the only day I can count on to catch up on my sleep. God wants me to work hard for my family, doesn't He? I can't do that and get to church, too. I think I've made the right choice.

No 11. My husband isn't a Christian, and I think husbands and wives should attend church together. I'll wait until Charlie becomes a Christian. Then we'll come to church.

Why do you think people go to church?

1. Parents make them
2. Makes them feel good
3. Want to learn about God

Webster's Dictionary and Webster's Bible Dictionary define "Sabbath" as "The seventh day of the week, Sunday, Lord's day, rest day."

What does "holy" mean? Sanctified, made righteous - set apart

The third commandment says we are to observe a Sabbath day. Look up Exodus 20:10.

What is the seventh day? a Sabbath to the Lord

What was not to happen on the Sabbath? Work

In the Old Testament, people who worked on the Sabbath or people who fragrantly disregarded (desecrated) the Sabbath were dealt with severely. Read Exodus 31:12-17.

What was the punishment for not observing the Sabbath? Death

The Sabbath is to be more than merely a time to "do no work." Read Exodus 35:2.

What are we to do for six days? Work

What is the seventh day? _____ *a holy day, a Sabbath* _____

How is the Sabbath described? _____ *A day of rest to the Lord* _____

Now read Leviticus 23:3

What additional information does this verse contain about the Sabbath?

_____ *It is a day of sacred assembly* _____

What is an “assembly”? _____ *a gathering together* _____

On the Sabbath two things are to happen. From the reading above, what are these?

1. _____ *rest* _____ 2. _____ *Sacred assembly* _____

By New Testament times, the keeping of the Sabbath had become a point of law. The Pharisees and Sadducees had put together burdensome rules governing activity on the Sabbath. They had even designated the exact maximum number of steps that could be taken! They had lost sight of what was important about the Sabbath.

This strict observing of the Sabbath was well as strict observation of the Old Testament holy days came to an end in one sense when Jesus came as our Lord and Savior.

We are still to rest, and we are still to have sacred assemblies. But instead of being points of law, they are now points of gospel.

Read Matthew 11:28. Who is our rest? _____ *Jesus* _____

Read Colossians 2:16,17. What are the Sabbath and other celebrations called?

_____ *shadow of things that were to come* _____

These were the shadows. Who is the “reality”? _____ *Jesus* _____

Now read Matthew 12:8. Jesus is Lord (or master) of what? _____ *The Sabbath* _____

Finally, read Hebrews 4:9,10.

How do we rest from work? _____ *By entering God’s rest* _____

The New Testament also makes it clear that we are to come together for worship.

Read Hebrews 10:25.

What warning is given? Don't give up meeting together

No specific day of worship is designated in the New Testament. Sunday (the first day of the week) is usually observed. Can you think of why?

it is the day Jesus rose from the dead

It seems this has been the custom from the earliest days of the church. Read Acts 20:7.

What day was it that they came together? The first day of the week

Let us consider how we break this commandment. Luther tells us we break this commandment when we “despise preaching and the Word of God.” There are three ways in which preaching and the Word of God are despised. Look in *Luther's Small Catechism* on page 68. What are the three ways.

1. not attending public worship
2. not using the Word of God and the sacraments
3. using the Word of God and the sacraments carelessly

What are we then to do to keep this commandment? It has to do with holding sacred the Word of God and preaching. Look up I Thessalonians 2:13.

Whose word is it? God's

In whom does it work? Those who believe

Not only should we hold God's Word as sacred but we should also have a good attitude toward it. Read Luke 11:28.

Who are blessed? Those who hear God's Word and obey it

Read Colossians 3:16. What is to dwell in us? Word of Christ

What should be in our hearts? Gratitude to God

Think of ways God's Word gets into us to dwell there. By learning it, by reading it, by studying it

Read Joshua 1:8. What are we to do? _____ *Meditate on the Book of the Law* _____

Finally, what should be our attitude toward the house of God? Read Psalm 26:8.

_____ *We should love it* _____

There are two further actions we can take in keeping this commandment. Read Galatians 6:6,7.

What must we share with our instructors? _____ *All good things* _____

This has to do with supporting preaching and teaching. Think of ways we can give this support.

1. _____ *finances* _____

2. _____ *prayer* _____

3. _____ *encouragement* _____

4. _____ *et cetera* _____

Lastly, read Mark 16:15

What are we to do? _____ *Preach the good news to all creation* _____

Setting aside time each week to meet with other believers, to worship God to hear and study His Word – this is what God desires for us to do. This is how we grow in faith and in knowledge of our God. This is what the third commandment is about.

