

**115.Q. Which is the fourth commandment?**

- a. The fourth commandment is, Remember the Sabbath day, to keep 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, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

**116.Q. What is required in the fourth commandment?**

- a. The fourth commandment requireth of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian Sabbath, and in the New Testament called “The Lord’s Day.”

**1. Is the Sabbath commandment a moral law or a ceremonial law?**

The commandment to observe the weekly Sabbath is a moral law of God.

**2. How can it be shown that the Sabbath commandment is a moral rather than a ceremonial law?**

(a)The Sabbath originated not at the time of Moses but at the creation of the world.

(b)It is found in a context of moral laws, so it too must be regarded as a moral law:

(c)The Sabbath commandment was not written on perishable material but upon tablets of stone, indicating its permanent validity.

**3. On whom is the Sabbath commandment binding?**

Upon all men without exception.

**4. How can claims that this commandment is only to be observed by some be answered?**

(a)If it is a moral law, it must be binding on all people without exception.

**5. What is the principle of the Sabbath?** The principle of the Sabbath is the observance as a holy day of one whole day in seven in regular sequence. Whether it is the first day of the week or the seventh day of the week is not a part of the principle of the Sabbath, but a matter determined by other considerations which are set forth in Scripture.

**6. How has the principle of the Sabbath sometimes been wrongly stated?** It has often been stated that the principle of the Sabbath is that one-seventh of our time Must be consecrated to God.

**7. Does the fourth commandment require the observance of the seventh day of the week, or Saturday, as the Sabbath?** No. It commands diligent labor for six days, but does not specify on what day the week is to begin.

**8. Why was the Old Testament Sabbath the seventh day of the week?**

Apart from providing an appointed day for rest and worship, the Sabbath served as a reminder of **God's work of creation**.

**9. Why is the Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week?** In remembrance of Christ's resurrection from the dead. The Christian Sabbath calls attention to God's **new creation**, his great work of redemption in Jesus Christ.

**10. Who changed the day of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week?** Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the accomplishment of his great redemptive work, brought about the close of the Old Testament dispensation and the opening of the New Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace.

**11. How long is the Sabbath to be observed on the first day of the week?**

Until the end of the world.

**12. Will the Sabbath be observed in heaven?**

While the Bible says nothing directly on this subject, the teachings of Scripture concerning imply that heaven will be **one unending Sabbath**.

**13. Are there differences among Christian people about the obligation of Sabbath observance?** Yes. There are also great differences about how the Sabbath is to be observed. Obviously the question whether the Sabbath ***must*** be observed must be settled before anyone can discuss ***how*** it ought to be observed.

**14. Is it important for the church to teach the obligation to observe the Sabbath?**

The fact that various differences of opinion about the Sabbath exist among Christian people does not mean that the church may **neglect** what it regards as the teaching of God's Word on this subject.

**117.Q. How is the Sabbath or the Lord's day to be sanctified?**

- a. The Sabbath or Lord's day is to be sanctified by a holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship: and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence and moderation, to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.

**1. How does the catechism speak of the negative observance of the Sabbath?** The catechism affirms that the Sabbath is to be observed by a holy resting

- (a) from **sinful works**;
- (b) from **worldly employments**; and
- (c) from **worldly recreations**.

**2. What is meant by a holy resting?**

Not merely resting, or abstaining from work, but resting with a religious motive, as an element of obedience and service to God.

**3. How much of the Sabbath is to be devoted to God by abstinence from work and ordinary recreations? "All the day" is to be so devoted to God.**

**4. Does the Sabbath run from sunset to sunset, or from midnight to midnight?**

This is a matter which is indifferent in itself.

**5. Besides religious duties, what forms of work are legitimate on the Sabbath?**

Besides religious duties, works of necessity and works of mercy are legitimate on the Sabbath.

**6. What is meant by "works of necessity"?**

Works of necessity are works which cannot be avoided, or cannot be postponed until another day. By inference from the teachings of the Bible we may say that a work of necessity is

(a) that which cannot be postponed; or

(b) that work which results in eliminating the greatest possible amount of work on the Sabbath day.

**7. What is meant by "works of mercy"?**

Work done chiefly without any motive of financial gain, but because of sympathy and compassion for human suffering.

**8. What should be our principal occupation on the Sabbath? The public and private exercises of God's worship.**

**9. What are the public exercises of God's worship?**

These are the services of the church, including the regular services at which the Word of God is preached, and also other church meetings, such as Sunday Schools, Bible study classes, and prayer meetings.

**10. What are the private exercises of God's worship?**

The private exercises of God's worship are:

(a) individual, such as personal Bible reading and prayer;

(b) family, including family worship, religious instruction of children, religious conversation, and the like.

**11. In order to observe the Sabbath aright, what preparations must we make?**

(a) We must prepare our hearts,

(b) We must adequately attend to our worldly business beforehand, so that we will be free on the Sabbath day, not only from worldly business itself, but from unnecessary thought and worries about our worldly business.

**118.Q. Why is the charge of keeping the Sabbath more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors?**

- a. The charge of keeping the Sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oft-times to hinder them by employments of their own.

**1. On whom is the Sabbath commandment binding?**

The Sabbath commandment is binding on every individual human being in the world, as well as on all **governments, organizations, corporations, or other associations of human beings**.

**2. What class of people are under an added obligation to obey this commandment?**

**"Governors of families, and other superiors,"** that is, persons whom God has placed in positions of authority in family, church, or state, are under an added obligation to obey this commandment.

**3. How are heads of families to see that the Sabbath is observed by the members of their families?**

(a) By themselves setting a **good example** of Sabbath observance;

(b) by **instructing** those under their authority in the obligation and duties of Sabbath observance;

(c) if necessary, by using their God-given authority and **forbidding** worldly activities which would violate the holiness of the Sabbath day.

**4. Is it possible for heads of families to be too strict in requiring Sabbath observance?** Yes. It is possible to be unreasonably strict about the manner of observing the Sabbath.

**5. What kind of activities should be excluded from family life on the Sabbath?**

While some activities may perhaps be classed as "doubtful," the following are unquestionably wrong on the Sabbath day and should be excluded: studying day-school lessons; reading ordinary books and magazines; reading newspapers; listening to radio broadcasts of any kind (with the exception of orthodox religious broadcasts); playing ordinary games, whether indoors or outdoors; writing ordinary letters to friends or relatives, or other persons; conversations about financial or business matters; ordinary social visiting; common picnicking; attending public amusements or athletic events of whatever type.

**6. If all these activities are forbidden on the Sabbath, will not the day prove to be a burden rather than a joy?**

This depends on whether we **love God or not**.

## **The Fourth Commandment: Part 1 Scripture References**

- Exod. 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15. The Sabbath commandment
- 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7. The first day of the week observed by the apostles and early Christians.
- Matt. 5:17-18 No part of God's law can pass away until all be fulfilled.
- Isa. 56:2,4,6-7. The Old Testament predicts Sabbath observance in the New Testament dispensation.
- Rev. 1:10. The Lord's Day referred to by name.
- Exod. 20:8. The Sabbath to be kept as a holy day.
- Exod. 20:10; 16:25-28; Neh. 13:15-22; Jer. 17:21-22. God requires abstinence from ordinary work on the Sabbath day.
- Matt. 12:1-13. Work of necessity may be performed on the Sabbath day.
- John 9:14; Luke 13:14-16. Work of mercy may be performed on the Sabbath day.
- Isa. 58:13-14; Luke 4:16; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Isa. 66:23; Lev. 23:3. The duty of positive observance of the Sabbath day by worship of God.
- Exod. 20:8; Luke 23:54-56; Exod. 16:22-29; Neh. 13:19. The duty of preparing for the Sabbath by arranging our worldly business beforehand.
- Exod. 20:10. The fourth commandment addressed especially to heads of families.
- Josh. 24:15. The responsibility of the head of a family to lead the family in serving the Lord.
- Neh. 13:15. 17. Persons in positions of prominence or authority have an added responsibility to keep the Sabbath day holy.
- Jer. 17:20-22. Kings and civil rulers have a responsibility for the right observance of the Sabbath day.
- Exod. 23:12; Deut. 5:14-15. Servants or employees are entitled to their Sabbath rest, and not to be deprived of it by employers requiring the performance of unnecessary labor.