

# Sabbath Rest



## SABBATH—AUGUST 28

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Genesis 1:26, 27; 2 Peter 2:19; Exodus 19:6; John 5:7–16; Exodus 31:13, 16, 17.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘ “Work may be done for six days. But the seventh day is the Day of Rest, a holy meeting when you do no work at all. It is the Day of Rest to the Lord in all your homes” ’ ” (Leviticus 23:3, NLV).



As Seventh-day Adventists, we understand that the law of God continues forever.

**CHRISTIANS GIVE MANY REASONS** why we no longer need to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Some Christians say Jesus changed the Sabbath to Sunday. Or Jesus got rid of the Sabbath. Or Paul did. Other Christians say church leaders during New Testament times replaced the seventh-day Sabbath with Sunday. Sunday is the day Jesus came back to life. The newest reasons for not keeping the Sabbath are sneaky. So, we may have a hard time seeing that these ideas are dangerous. These ideas are not really bad. But people use these ideas in the wrong way to prove their lies. One example is the idea that Jesus is our Sabbath rest. So, we do not need to rest on the seventh day or any day at all.

But more Christians now are becoming interested in a day of rest. Of course, they say Sunday is the correct rest day. Or they say God does not care about the day they keep. We know the Bible teaches that these ideas are wrong. As Seventh-day Adventists, we understand that the law of God continues forever. But these Christians are now starting to see that a day of rest is important.

This week we will look more at the rest that God gave us in the Sabbath commandment and why it is so important.

**REMEMBER THE SABBATH (Genesis 1:26, 27)**

The fourth commandment is the only commandment that starts with the verb “remember.” The fourth commandment does not tell us to “remember not to steal” or to “remember not to kill.” The fourth commandment tells us to remember the Sabbath day.

The word “remember” helps us think about history or things that happened in the past. So, when we remember, we make a connection with the past. The fourth commandment helps us to connect all the way back to the time when God made the earth and the sky in six days. Then He rested on the seventh day.

**Read Genesis 1:26, 27 and Genesis 9:6. What do these verses teach us about why we are special? How different are humans from the rest of the things God made? Why is it so important that we understand why we are so different?**

When we remember God made everything, we remember God made us, too. We did not come from apes. We are copies of God. God did not make anything else to be a copy of Himself except humans. So, as humans, we are very different from any other animal on this planet. As humans, we are different from everything else God made.

**How does the story about how God made the earth and sky in six days help us remember our connection to nature? For the answer, read Genesis 2:15, 19.**

When we remember that God made the earth, we also remember that God made us responsible for taking care of this earth. God made us managers over everything He made. God put us in charge of this earth. So, we must take care of this earth in a way that honors God.

Yes, sin has messed up everything. But this earth belongs to God. So we must not hurt the earth or any other people. Many people often do hurt the earth and each other. But their evil behavior goes against the plan of God for humans and this earth.

**The Sabbath helps us remember that Jesus made us. In what ways can the Sabbath also help us remember to take good care of this planet?**



**When we remember that God made the earth, we also remember that God made us responsible for taking care of this earth.**

## CELEBRATING OUR FREEDOM (2 Peter 2:19)



**The blood of the lamb is painted on the sides of the doors of the Israelites' houses on the evening before they leave Egypt.**

Moses writes the Ten Commandments twice: first in Exodus and then in Deuteronomy. We saw that the Sabbath commandment in Exodus helps us think about the time when God made the earth. In Deuteronomy, Moses talks to Israel about the 40 years they spent in the desert. Then he gives them the Ten Commandments again. This time, Moses tells the Israelites to remember the Sabbath for a different reason. They should remember the Sabbath because God made them free from slavery in Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:12–15).

**Today, we are not slaves in Egypt. But what slavery do we need to be made free from? For the answer, read Genesis 4:7; Hebrews 12:1; and 2 Peter 2:19.**

The Sabbath is a celebration of our freedom from everything that makes us slaves to sin. On the Sabbath, we remember that God gives us freedom. God freely offers this freedom to us. We must accept His gift by faith. The Sabbath also helps us remember we cannot earn freedom from sin ourselves. We see this Bible truth in the story about the firstborn Israelite children on the night before they leave Egypt. The children are saved by the blood of the lamb. The blood of the lamb is painted on the sides of the doors of their houses on the evening before they leave Egypt (Exodus 12). In the same way, the blood of the Lamb saves us. The blood of Jesus makes us free from all sin.

**Read Romans 6:1–7. What does Paul say here that shows the freedom that the Sabbath promises us?**

Look at the way Deuteronomy 5:15 is written: “ ‘Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. The LORD your God reached out his mighty hand and powerful arm and brought you out of there’ ” (Deuteronomy 5:15, NIV). In this verse, Moses helps the people of Israel remember again that only God saves them. There is a lesson here for us as Christians, too. We are saved only because of Jesus.

The Sabbath commandment tells us to rest in the peace that Jesus earned for us. God makes us free from sin and from the useless behavior of trying to save ourselves. The Sabbath helps us remember that God made us. So, we can trust Him to make us new, too. We can trust God to free us, right now, from sin if we let Him.

**THE FOREIGNERS LIVING IN YOUR CITIES (Exodus 19:6)**

**Read Exodus 19:6. What does this verse tell us about the plan of God for the people of Israel in Bible times? (Read also 1 Peter 2:9).**

God brought Israel out of Egypt. God chose Israel to be His people. He made His agreement with them. God planned for Israel to share the good news about Jesus with everyone on earth. God showed Israel special care. He protected them and gave them many gifts. At the same time, God made Israel responsible for sharing His Bible truth with people. It is sad that the people of Israel did not stay loyal to God.

**Read Exodus 23:12. What is happening in this verse? What does this verse teach us about how God looks at other people who are not His chosen people?**

The Sabbath is for everyone. Many people miss this important Bible truth. Of course, the biggest mistake people make is thinking that the Sabbath is only for the Jews. But if we read Genesis 1 and 2, we see this idea is wrong. God made all people. So, all people should remember the Sabbath day.

We should always remember what the Sabbath means to us. At the same time, we should remember what the Sabbath teaches us about other people. Our resting on the Sabbath will bring us closer to our Savior, who made us and died for us. When we come close to Jesus, we will look at people with new eyes. We will see them as made by the same God who made us. All people are loved by the same God who loves us. The same God who died for us also died for them. As we saw in Exodus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 5:14, the servants, foreigners, and even the animals should be given a Sabbath rest.

The foreigners who live in our cities show us the people who are not yet in a special agreement with God. But God wants them to enjoy the Sabbath rest anyway. This says a lot about our need for rest. People, even animals, should never be hurt or used in a bad way. Every week, the Hebrew people (and we, too) should remember in a powerful way just how much we are the same as other people. We may enjoy blessings that other people do not. But we must remember that we are all part of the same human family. So, we must show other people respect and love.



**Even the animals should be given a Sabbath rest.**

## SERVING PEOPLE ON THE SABBATH HONORS GOD (John 5:7–16)



The leaders are upset that the man carries his bed in public on the Sabbath!

In New Testament times, the Jewish religious leaders made many rules about keeping Sabbath. What were some of these rules? You cannot tie anything up or untie anything on the Sabbath. Tying and untying was work. You cannot put out a fire. You cannot move an object from a private house to a public building or area.

**In John 5:7–16, the Jewish religious leaders blame Jesus for doing wrong. Did Jesus do something wrong?**

Jesus heals a crippled man. The poor man was sick for 38 years. Do the religious leaders care that the man can now walk? No! The leaders pay no attention to the wonderful miracle. What do the leaders care about? They are upset that the man carries his bed in public on the Sabbath! The leaders miss the lesson this miracle can teach them. They fail to see that Jesus uses the Sabbath to help people in need. The leaders care only about their rules. We must be careful not to make the same mistake the leaders do.

**How does Isaiah 58:12–14 show us the way God wants us to keep the Sabbath? What is His plan for Sabbath keeping?**

God does not want us to give Him empty worship on the Sabbath. He wants us to help and serve people in need.

Isaiah makes this idea plain and clear in Isaiah 58:13, 14, NIV: “ ‘Do not work on the Sabbath day. Do not do just anything you want to on my holy day. Make the Sabbath a day you can enjoy. Honor the LORD’s holy day. Do not work on it. Do not do just anything you want to. Do not talk about things that are worthless [trashy, foolish, empty, and useless]. Then you will find your joy in me. I will give you control over the most important places in the land. And you will enjoy all the good things in the land I gave your father Jacob.’ The LORD has spoken.”

Doing “ ‘anything you want to’ ” (Isaiah 58:13, NIV) or “ ‘doing things to please yourself’ ” (Isaiah 58:13, ERV) is the same thing as “ ‘trampling [breaking] the Sabbath’ ” (Isaiah 58:13, NRSV). God invites us on the Sabbath to take care of needy people, people no one cares about, and people who are hungry and have no clothes. More than any other day, the Sabbath should help us think about the needs of other people more than we think about our own needs.

## THE SIGN THAT SHOWS WE BELONG TO GOD (Exodus 31:13, 16, 17)

During World War 2, England expected an attack at any moment from the German army. The English got ready to defend their island home as much as possible. Of course, the roads in England offered the enemy the fastest way to carry out their plans. So, the English people put roadblocks in many important places along the streets and highways. Then the English leaders did something strange. The leaders wanted to slow down the enemy and confuse its army. So, the English leaders removed railroad signs and road signs. Signs on buildings were covered in concrete.

Road signs and building signs are important. They help guide us. They also give us important information about where we are and where we need to go. Before GPS was invented, we all used maps to get directions. We watched for signs to locate where we were. The signs helped us know if we were going in the right direction or the wrong way.

**What is the Sabbath a sign of? Read Exodus 31:13, 16, 17. We believe that the law of God continues forever. So, what meaning does Exodus 31:13, 16, 17 have for us today?**

Exodus 31:13, 16, 17 was said to Israel in Bible times. But Paul tells us that “if you belong to Christ, then you have become the true [real] children of Abraham. What God promised to him is now yours” (Galatians 3:29, NLT). So, then, the words God said to Israel are meant for us, too. That is why the Sabbath is still a sign between God and His people today. Exodus 31 shows us that the Sabbath is a sign of the everlasting agreement God makes with His people (Exodus 31:16, 17). The Sabbath helps us know our Savior. He is the One who made us. He also makes us holy. The Sabbath is the same as a big flag that gets raised on a pole every seven days. When we see this “flag,” we remember to honor and worship God. As humans, we often forget to put God first. So, God gave us the Sabbath to help us remember to worship Him.

The Sabbath comes to us every week. The Sabbath shows us that God made us. The Sabbath also shows us that God frees us from sin. It helps us see that we are responsible for helping people no one remembers or cares about. The Sabbath always helps us remember who we are, who made us, and what God is doing for us now. The Sabbath also shows what God will do for us when He makes the sky and earth new again.



**The English leaders removed railroad signs and road signs to slow down the enemy and confuse its army.**



**We should get ready during the week for the Sabbath.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “Everyone in heaven keeps the Sabbath. But they do not keep the Sabbath in a boring way. God and His angels do not sit around doing nothing on this day. On the Sabbath, we should be spiritually awake. Why? Because we are going to meet with God and Jesus our Savior on this day! By faith, we may see Jesus. Jesus deeply wishes to refresh and bless every one of us.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 6, page 362, adapted.

“We need help from God on the Sabbath even more than on other days. On the Sabbath, we stop our work for the week. We spend the Sabbath thinking about God and worshipping Him. We ask more favors from God on the Sabbath than on other days. We ask for His special attention. We so deeply want His best and biggest blessings. God does not wait for the Sabbath to end before He answers our prayers. The work of God never stops. In the same way, we must never rest from doing good. The Sabbath is not meant to be a time when we do nothing and are useless. The law forbids us to do any work on the Sabbath that is not holy. So, the work we do to earn a living must stop. We must not please ourselves or make money on the Sabbath. We must do what God did after He made the sky and the earth. He rested on the seventh day. So, we must, too. We should rest, worship, and do holy work. Jesus healed the sick on the Sabbath. This work keeps the law of God and honors the Sabbath.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 207, adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Today, people from many different countries talk about the need for humans to take care of our planet. How can we, as Adventists, be good managers of nature, animals, and the planet?
- ② Where does our helping other people start? In our minds and hearts. How can we help other people around us in our churches, towns, and families learn to be more caring? In what ways does the Sabbath offer us the wonderful chance to show people how to care about the needy, the poor, the homeless, and the hungry?
- ③ Every Sabbath, we remember that God made all people. The Sabbath helps us see people as God sees them: with the eyes of love. How should the Sabbath help us remember that the different things that separate people groups do not matter in the eyes of God? How should this understanding help us love people even more?

## THE ANGEL AT THE GAS STATION

Lamphai Sihavong stared out the car window at all the confusing highways. Lamphai was lost in the city of Chicago. Worse, she did not know how to find her husband.

Lamphai and her family came to the United States from the country of Laos in Southeast Asia. Then Lamphai and her husband drove with their six kids across the country to find jobs. They traveled 1,400 miles from California to Grand Island, Nebraska. Lamphai and her husband heard there were jobs in Grand Island at a factory. But when they got there, Lamphai and her husband, Veuy, learned there were no more jobs. Someone told them about possible work in Holland, Michigan. That was 750 more miles away. The family started out on the 12-hour trip to Michigan. Veuy drove the moving truck. Two of their children were with him. Lamphai followed the truck with their four other children in the car.

Everything went fine until Chicago. Lamphai followed her husband closely, but the traffic was bad. She lost the truck. Lamphai felt confused by all the highways. So, she stopped at a gas station. She and her husband did not own cell phones. So, Lamphai had no way to contact Veuy. She also did not know how to drive to Holland, Michigan. Her only hope was God. Lamphai learned about God from Bible workers at the camp for foreigners in Thailand. Now, Lamphai and her four kids prayed for help.

When Lamphai and her kids opened their eyes, they saw a nice man walking their way.

"Let me guess," the man said. "Are you looking for your husband, Veuy?"

"Yes!" Lamphai said with surprise. She wondered how this kind stranger knew her husband or his name.

"Get in your car and follow me," the man said. "I will help you find him." Lamphai followed him back to the road. He led her through the highways until she saw the moving truck her husband drove. Lamphai and her children were so grateful. They turned back to wave at the stranger, but the stranger was gone.

Lamphai and her family arrived safely in Michigan. Both Veuy and Lamphai found work there. They started going to the Holland SDA Church. Soon they invited new Lao friends to join them in worship. Today, the Lao group has its own church. Lamphai tells the people there about the God who sent an angel to a gas station to help her.

Several Lao groups worship God across North America because of a 13th Sabbath Offering in 2011. This quarter, your offering will help send preachers to these groups.

INSIDE  
*Story*  
by TERRI SAELEE



Lamphai felt confused by all the highways.

