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SAA  
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## Celebrating God's Sabbath

**N**ative culture has always symbolically “celebrated” spirituality. In the Sioux “hoop dance,” stories of worship to our great Creator are symbolically acted out.



Each of the 28 hoops in the hoop dance represents a day in the lunar cycle, meaning our worship of the Creator should be an everyday expression from our hearts.



In the first illustration (left page), an eagle is represented soaring through the sky, expressing the idea that none of us originates from the earth but from powers on



high. In the middle illustration (see previous page), the dancer portrays a lowly caterpillar that turns into a beautiful butterfly. This symbolizes transformation that doesn't come by our own power. Only the power of the Creator can make us good people. The third illustration (see previous page) depicts what is known as the "hoop of many hoops." It symbolizes a Sioux prophecy that one day in the future all people and cultures shall sit down together in peace, united in a single great circle of common belief and unity.

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Source: *The Spirit World*. Time Life Books, 1992, pp. 12–13.

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**T**his is also a day  
of celebrating  
the “re-creative”  
powers of God.

These Sioux stories depicted by the hoop dancer are very similar to the way God wants us to celebrate our worship to Him each Sabbath. We are to worship God every day, but one day is special to God. Then He wants our undivided attention more than on any of the other days of the week.

It's a day of celebrating the “re-creative” power of God in our lives, which prepares us to someday live in heaven. It is the time each week when we can come together “as one” before Christ in unity and peace for

spiritual healing. God's instructions for celebrating His creative power are found in His Ten Commandments. The blessings of the fourth commandment that come from keeping His Sabbath day holy are meant for every nationality, tribe, and nation.

**T**he Creator  
wants the  
Sabbath to be a  
time of “closeness”  
with Him.



**Key Thought.** God says, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” But what does it mean to keep the Sabbath day holy? What does God want us to do on each of His Sabbaths? What should our attitude be during these sacred hours?

During the sacred hours of the Sabbath God would have us remember that it is a special time. He wants our full attention on this special day, much like couples give each other in their courtship.

He wants the Sabbath to be a time of “closeness” with Him, as much as possible, uninterrupted by the ordinary weekday things we do. He wants us to refrain from our regular employment and other usual weekday duties in order that He may have more of our attention. It is a time when we surround ourselves with happy events, with family and friends in celebration of what God has done and is doing for us.

The Bible has outlined specific principles that are helpful in keeping His day holy. If followed, these principles can bring more happiness each Sabbath than we ever thought possible.

## BIBLE ANSWERS

**1. When does the celebration of the seventh-day Sabbath begin and end? Leviticus 23:32.** “It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, . . . from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ you shall celebrate your sabbath.”

*(All quotations from the Bible in these lessons are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise noted.)*



**G**od wants our full attention on this special day, much like couples give each other in their courtship.

**Note.** Our Creator gave us this “evening to evening” concept at the time of creation. At the end of each day of creation, the Lord declared the evening and the daytime to be one day (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). This

means, like all of the other days of the week, the Sabbath day also begins at sundown. The Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday evening and ends at sundown Saturday evening (Mark 1:32).

Many Native Christians today across North America begin the Sabbath hours in their homes on Friday evening, often with sundown worship to welcome God into their hearts and homes. Some families even have a special supper menu reserved for Friday evenings. In some homes it's a special soup in a candlelight setting.



Sabbath is a time to surround ourselves with happy events, family, and friends in celebration of what God has done and is doing for us.



Each family may have its own customs and ways of celebrating the Sabbath that are special to family members. However, it's basically the direction of our attitude that makes the Sabbath "special," as God has designed it to be. God wants us to do things that will enhance our closeness to Him.

**2. What are some of the things God has asked us to refrain from doing during these special Sabbath hours? Exodus 20:8-10.** "Remember the Sabbath day,

to keep it holy . . . . The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do \_\_\_\_\_ .”

**Note.** God wants us to refrain from our regular labor of making a living on the Sabbath. The reason for this is that it is difficult to keep our minds on spiritual things when we are working on a job that requires most of our mental and physical attention.

It’s the same with such activities as shopping, sports events, or watching television. These activities involve most of our attention, making it difficult to experience the special hours of “rest” when we can “be still” and “know” God (Psalm 46:10).

The Sabbath is also a day which allows more time to be a blessing to others through acts of kindness and mercy (John 9:14; Matthew 12:12).

**3. What does the Scripture want us to do “in the Lord” on His Sabbath day? Isaiah 58:13–14.** “If you . . . call the Sabbath a delight, . . . Then you shall \_\_\_\_\_ yourself in the Lord.”



**T**he Sabbath is also a day to be a blessing to others through acts of kindness and mercy.



**Note.** God wants us to enjoy activities and experiences on the Sabbath which help us appreciate the blessings of our great Creator. Closeness with family and fellow believers is one thing that can bring us close to God. The Sabbath is a time of worshiping and studying together. It is a time of encouraging one another and sharing the struggles we go through in life.

**A**long with honoring our Creator, the Sabbath celebrates the “re-creative” powers of God in the life.



It's a time of enjoying our family. Families who keep the Sabbath day holy are almost always stronger, closer, and happier families. It is easier for our children to respect and appreciate the Sabbath when they see us as parents consistently observing this special time.

The Holy Spirit will help us discover many activities that bring special pleasure to our hearts whenever we make an effort to be close with God each Sabbath. There are as many individual ways to make this effort as there are people. But these Sabbath-day blessings only come to us when we purpose to set aside those things which take time and attention away from our closeness with God.

**4. According to His example, what “custom” would Jesus want all of us to follow each Sabbath day?**

**Luke 4:16.** (*Circle one.*) (1) Go to church. (2) Study with fellow believers. (3) Both.

**Note.** Jesus wants the Sabbath to be a day to worship Him. It is a day when we can attend worship services designed for our spiritual growth. The book of Hebrews tells us not to forsake assembling together with other believers as we prepare for Jesus' second coming (Hebrews 10:25).

Attending church services, worshiping together, and studying God's Word whenever possible with others are all a part of God's plan for the Sabbath hours. We find in the New Testament that "the Lord added to the



church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). This tells us that the church is God’s plan to help us align ourselves with Him. Sabbath worship helps us keep alive the assurance of His salvation and continued openness to the Holy Spirit who helps us with our daily problems.

The “assembling” of ourselves together in worship brings spiritual refreshing through encouraging fellowship with those who are wrestling with problems just as we are. When we see how God helps others, we have hope that He will also help us.

**5. What are we to remember that keeps the Sabbath day from becoming a legalistic, mechanical experience? Mark 2:27–28.** “And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and not man for the Sabbath.’”

**I**t takes time for a husband and wife to really know each other. They need times of closeness and communication. The Sabbath gives us a special time with the Creator.

**Note.** God didn’t create us just to obey a list of rules or laws He put together. His laws were made only to bring us true peace and happiness. One of the greatest discoveries in life is that following God’s commandments does bring true happiness and fulfillment. (See Psalm 16:11.) We must learn that God’s laws are not a burden at all.

Many people ask, “Shouldn’t we worship God every day? Shouldn’t these wonderful Sabbath-day experiences be an everyday experience?” The answer is “Yes.” It is more difficult, however, to cultivate a deep experience with the Lord on regular days of the week, when our minds are more often occupied with other things, such as making a living, going to school, and carrying on the usual practices that are common to all of us each week. This is one reason God wants us to take a day off from regular work activity so we can be close to Him. As a result, our closeness to God will be stronger the other days of the week.

**G**od’s commandments were made to bring happiness and fulfillment.

Often doing what God has asked us to do requires changing lifelong weekly habits or schedules such as getting work off on Saturdays. But He has promised to help us do as He has asked (Philippians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 10:12–13). Many Christians have had to give up a good job in order to keep the Sabbath, but whenever we give up something for Christ, He always gives us something better in its place.

**6. What will the Sabbath become to us, if we keep it as a holy, special day? Ezekiel 20:20.** “Hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a \_\_\_\_\_ between Me and you.”



**I**t's not the day  
that changes  
us; it's the activities  
practiced during  
that time that allow  
the Creator to talk  
to our hearts.



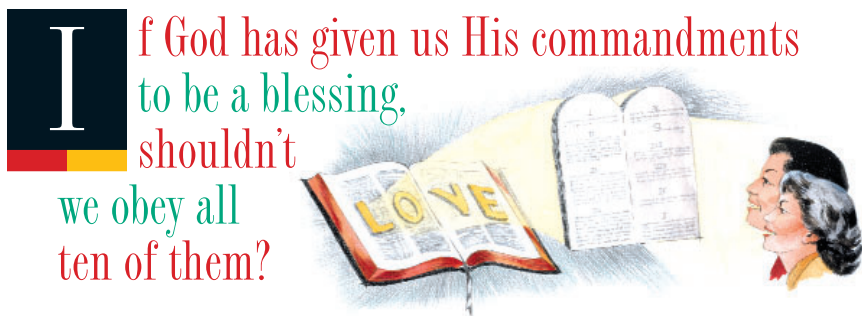
**Note.** By setting apart this time as God has said, something wonderful happens! Walking in the light He has given us will bring a deeper assurance to our soul of God's love for us (John 15:10–11). Keeping the Sabbath becomes a “sign” to us and others that we have a close walk with our Creator, because we are doing what God has asked us to do. When we have such a closeness with Christ, we will know it, and others will notice it too. Others will see the peace, happiness, and hope that come to us as a result. It isn't that the day changes us; it's the activities we practice during that day that allow Jesus to do what He longs to do with our hearts and souls. The love that develops between us and the Lord is the sign that He is our God, and we are His children.

Similarly, it takes time for a husband and wife to really know each other. There is no way they can understand each other and their plans and ideas unless they are taking time to talk and work things out together.

Special times of quiet communication and closeness are needed for success in marriage.

Just as it takes time to really know another person, so we must take time to develop our relationship with the Lord.

**7. What one word describes what the Sabbath is to be to us? Isaiah 58:13.** “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a \_\_\_\_\_ . . .”



**Note.** Wickedness is getting worse as we come closer to the time for Jesus’ return. Many Christians are taking a more serious look at their personal beliefs. People are saying, “If we are going to follow God, shouldn’t we follow Him in all of the ways He has asked us to? If God has given us His commandments to be a blessing, shouldn’t we obey all ten of them?”

What about the Sabbath of the fourth commandment which God tells us is to be “a delight” and to remember to keep holy? (See Exodus 20:8.) Shouldn’t we be receiving the blessings He wishes to bestow upon

us during this special time? If the Lord has asked those who follow Him to keep holy this part of each week, then why aren't we doing it today?

How serious are you about your religion? Have you given some thought to keeping the seventh-day Sabbath holy? If you step out in faith, God has promised to help you. You can be sure of His blessing.

**Closing Thought.** God tells us that He “winks” at, or overlooks, the things He has asked us to do that we haven't understood before (Acts 17:30, KJV and NKJV). But when we learn new things in Scripture we have the privilege, and responsibility to follow that teaching.

Won't you pray about this matter? The Bible says, “Blessed are those who do His commandments.” Those people of “active faith” who continue to learn and do what God asks can be trusted with the kingdom He has gone to prepare for them (Matthew 7:21, Revelation 22:14).

**T**he Creator has made  
a divine appointment  
in time—to celebrate  
His great creative power  
and love for us.



How do you think a wife who loves her husband would feel if he brought home a dozen red roses the day *after* their wedding anniversary? Meeting her at the door he proudly says, “Happy anniversary, dear!”

What would she say? She would probably answer, “I was waiting for you to remember our anniversary yesterday, but you forgot.”

It’s the same way with the Lord. He has made a divine appointment with each of us on the Sabbath day. He wants for us to take this appointed time to celebrate His great creative power and love for us. The Bible says, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8). When we obey God’s Word from a heart that loves Him, He is able to pour out blessings which we have never dreamed we would receive.

He is inviting each of us to be close to Him on a one-to-one basis on His holy seventh-day Sabbath. Won’t you meet Him there?



**Next Lesson.** The power of prayer is the topic for our next study together. Have you wondered how to receive answers to your prayers? How does God want us to pray? What are some of the privileges of prayer that we may be missing which God wants us to enjoy?



## Native New Day

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