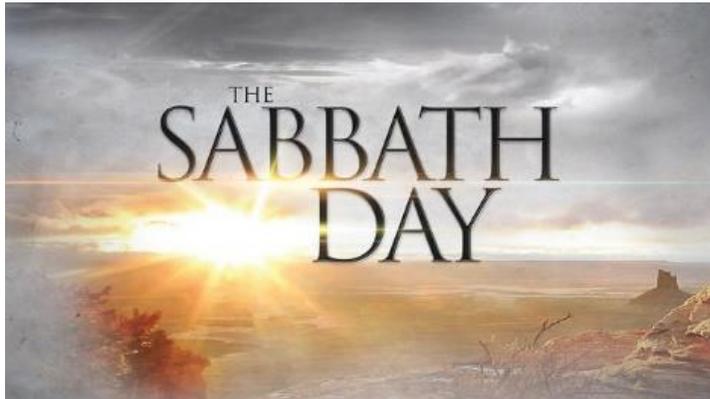


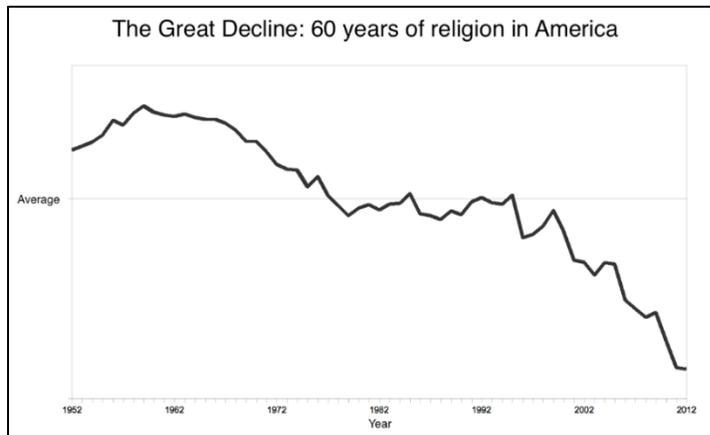
OUR NEED FOR THE SABBATH—A DAY OF REST



I'VE BEEN TELLING ANYBODY WHO WOULD LISTEN about the importance of observing the Sabbath for about 25 years. Of course I should say that for the first twenty years of my life I was like every other middle-class American male of the late twentieth and early

twenty-first centuries. I was busy, hurrying everywhere, stressed out all the time, never satisfied with what I had done, always trying to do more, get more, have more!

I was convinced—in my own mind and by everything I was told—that rest was laziness, work is the only thing of real value, and your worth as a human being is measured only by what you have accomplished. It's known as the Puritan (or



Protestant) Work Ethic, and it is embedded deeply in American society, thanks to preachers reading, or misreading, the works of John Calvin. Zeal for this sort of “God-wants-you-to-be-Successful” moral philosophy reached a highpoint with church attendance in the 1950s.

(Take a look at this chart and you'll see what I mean.) And even though churchgoing dropped off a cliff over the past 60 years, the “busy-ness” of America has never been higher. The Blue Laws of my childhood no longer exist; stores are open 24/7, and Sundays are the second busiest shopping days of the week. All sports are played on Sundays, even

kids' soccer tournaments. Bars do a brisk business on what once was called "The Lord's Day." Our world has changed dramatically during my lifetime and yours—and I want to suggest that the great downhill climb began with the loss of the Sabbath, that day of rest I've been talking about for years.

The Sabbath. It's one of the Ten Commandments. Moses brought them down from the mountain, etched by God on two stone tablets. That's the story from the Book of Exodus. 'Honor the Sabbath and keep it holy,' is the Fourth Commandment. Notice that they are called "Commandments," not suggestions or guidelines. Then see that God says more about the Sabbath than any of the other nine:

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; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, 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 the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.



There's more, and there is always more than meets the eye with God. Sabbath is a Gift, something to be accepted, enjoyed, cherished, and appreciated. It's yours.

Six days a week is enough for anybody to have to work! Nobody ought to have to work all the time. Take a break. Take a day of rest. It's a commandment!

Don't try to rationalize your way out of it. Don't make excuses, convincing yourself that work isn't work, you don't have any choice, this is how you are.

Help yourself rest, and I mean really rest. Take a nap, or two, or three. Turn off the TV. Stay off the computer. Read a book. Go for a walk. Sit outside. Rest.

Peace and blessings,

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