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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

The Sabbath Day

TEACHING SUMMARY

The teaching begins by examining one of the most common questions surrounding the Sabbath: whether the seventh-day Sabbath established in Scripture has been changed to Sunday. Rather than relying on church tradition or popular opinion, the lesson encourages believers to imitate the Bereans by testing every teaching against the Scriptures. Since the New Testament writers considered the Old Testament to be the foundation of God's revealed Word, every interpretation of New Testament passages must remain consistent with what God had already established. The teaching therefore sets out to examine the passages most often cited in support of Sunday worship and compares them with the whole counsel of Scripture.

The lesson first addresses Acts 20 and 1 Corinthians 16, passages commonly interpreted as evidence that the apostles gathered on the first day of the week in place of the Sabbath. By examining the Greek text and the context of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the counting toward Shavuot, the teaching argues that these passages actually refer to the counting of Sabbaths rather than establishing a new weekly day of worship. Likewise, Galatians 4, Romans 14, and Colossians 2 are examined in their historical and literary contexts. The lesson concludes that Paul was not teaching against God's Sabbath but warning believers about pagan practices, human traditions, asceticism, and false teachings that threatened the faith of the early assemblies. Rather than abolishing the Sabbath, Paul encouraged believers not to allow others to judge them for faithfully observing God's appointed times.

The teaching then explores the prophetic significance of the Sabbath. Just as the spring appointed times pointed forward to Messiah's first coming and now memorialize His completed work, the Sabbath and the fall appointed times continue to point toward future prophetic events. The weekly Sabbath foreshadows the coming millennial reign of Messiah—the seventh "day" of redemptive history when creation will experience its ultimate rest. Hebrews 4, 2 Peter 3, Genesis, and Revelation are woven together to

demonstrate that believers have not yet entered this ultimate Sabbath rest but continue striving toward it through faithful obedience. The weekly Sabbath therefore serves as both a memorial of creation and a prophetic picture of the Kingdom that is still to come.

Building upon this foundation, the lesson explains that Scripture consistently presents the Sabbath as remaining in effect throughout God's plan of redemption. Isaiah prophesies that all flesh will worship God from Sabbath to Sabbath in the new heavens and new earth, demonstrating that the Sabbath existed at creation, remained during Messiah's earthly ministry, continues during the present age, and will still be observed in the coming Kingdom. The teaching argues that there is no biblical passage in which God or Messiah revokes or replaces the Sabbath. Instead, believers are repeatedly instructed to continue teaching and obeying everything God has commanded. The New Covenant does not abolish God's Law but fulfills the promise of writing His instructions upon the hearts of His people so they desire to obey them.

The lesson also emphasizes that there is only one people of God and one standard of obedience. Throughout both the Torah and the New Testament, God declares that there is one law for the native-born Israelite and the foreigner who joins himself to the covenant. Gentile believers are grafted into Israel rather than forming a separate people with different commandments. Because there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one body, there is likewise one pattern of covenant obedience. The Sabbath was never intended exclusively for ethnic Israel but was made for mankind and remains a blessing for all who follow the God of Israel through Messiah.

The teaching then turns to history by tracing how Sunday gradually replaced the biblical Sabbath within much of Christianity. Numerous historical quotations are presented from Roman Catholic sources acknowledging that Scripture never changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week. Instead, the transition is attributed to church authority, particularly following the influence of Constantine and later church councils. The lesson contrasts these historical developments with Messiah's repeated warnings against replacing God's commandments with human traditions. Just as Yeshua rebuked the religious leaders of His day for elevating tradition above Scripture, believers today are encouraged to test inherited traditions against God's Word rather than accepting them simply because they have been widely practiced.

Returning to Scripture, the lesson highlights the unique significance of the Sabbath as a covenant sign between God and His people. From Genesis through Exodus and Ezekiel, the Sabbath is repeatedly described as holy, blessed, and set apart. It serves not only as a weekly day of physical rest but also as an ongoing reminder that God Himself sanctifies His people. Just as He separated the seventh day from the other six days, He calls His people to be distinct from the surrounding nations. The Sabbath therefore functions as a visible testimony of belonging to the God of Israel and as a reminder that believers are to reflect His character before the world.

The teaching further explains that God's people are called to be a light to the nations. Israel was originally commissioned to display God's wisdom through faithful obedience,

and Messiah perfectly fulfilled that calling during His earthly ministry. Believers now continue that mission by following Messiah's example and living according to God's instructions. Observing the Sabbath becomes one practical way of demonstrating trust in God's authority and shining His light in a world that largely ignores His commandments. The lesson also points to Isaiah 56, showing that foreigners who join themselves to the Lord are specifically invited to keep His Sabbath and become part of His covenant people, reinforcing that the Sabbath belongs to all who follow God through Messiah.

The final portion of the teaching addresses practical questions about Sabbath observance. Scripture instructs believers to cease from ordinary work, recognizing that the Sabbath was created as a gift rather than a burden. At the same time, the lesson acknowledges that modern employment situations can create genuine difficulties, especially for those in emergency services or occupations involving the preservation of life. Believers are encouraged to pursue obedience with humility, seeking opportunities to honor the Sabbath whenever possible while trusting God to open doors for greater faithfulness. Throughout this discussion, the teaching distinguishes between a sincere desire to obey despite difficult circumstances and a deliberate rejection of God's command. The emphasis remains on cultivating a heart that loves God's ways and desires to honor Him above personal convenience.

The teaching concludes by encouraging believers to view the Sabbath as a delight rather than a restriction. Isaiah 58 describes the Sabbath as a day devoted to honoring God instead of pursuing personal interests, while Nehemiah demonstrates the importance of guarding the day from becoming like every other day of the week. Practical examples such as buying and selling, unnecessary labor, and planning ordinary business activities illustrate the principle of keeping the Sabbath holy and set apart. At the same time, Messiah's own example reminds believers that acts of mercy and preserving life are entirely consistent with the purpose of the Sabbath. Ultimately, the teaching presents the Sabbath as God's enduring gift to His people—a weekly reminder of creation, redemption, sanctification, covenant relationship, future hope, and faithful obedience to the God who never changes.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The seventh-day Sabbath was established by God at creation.
- Scripture never records God changing the Sabbath to Sunday.
- The Bereans provide the biblical example of testing all teachings by Scripture.
- Acts 20 and 1 Corinthians 16 do not establish Sunday worship.
- Romans 14 does not discuss the weekly Sabbath.
- Colossians 2 encourages believers not to let others judge them for observing God's appointed times.
- The Sabbath points both backward to creation and forward to Messiah's Kingdom.
- Hebrews 4 teaches that the ultimate Sabbath rest is still future.

- Isaiah prophesies that the Sabbath will continue in the new heavens and new earth.
- There is one covenant people and one standard of obedience for all believers.
- Gentile believers are grafted into Israel.
- History shows that Sunday observance developed through church tradition rather than biblical command.
- The Sabbath is a covenant sign between God and His people.
- God calls the Sabbath a delight rather than a burden.
- Acts of mercy and preserving life are consistent with Sabbath observance.
- The Sabbath reminds believers of creation, redemption, sanctification, and future restoration.
- God's people are called to honor the Sabbath as holy and set apart.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. God sanctified the _____ day at creation.
2. The Bereans tested everything against the _____.
3. The Sabbath reminds us of God's _____.
4. Hebrews 4 teaches about a future _____ rest.
5. Gentile believers are grafted into _____.
6. The Sabbath is a covenant _____ between God and His people.
7. Isaiah calls the Sabbath a _____.
8. Acts of _____ are appropriate on the Sabbath.
9. Scripture never records the Sabbath being changed to _____.
10. The Sabbath points forward to Messiah's _____.

Challenging

1. Acts 20 occurs during the counting toward the Feast of _____.
2. Colossians 2 warns believers not to let others judge them concerning God's appointed _____.
3. Romans 14 addresses personal _____ rather than the weekly Sabbath.

4. Isaiah 56 specifically invites _____ to keep God's Sabbath.
5. Isaiah 66 says all flesh will worship from Sabbath to _____.
6. Constantine and later church _____ played a major role in the historical transition to Sunday observance.
7. The Sabbath serves as a sign that God _____ His people.
8. Nehemiah warned against _____ and selling on the Sabbath.
9. The Sabbath teaches believers to trust God's _____ instead of depending solely on their own efforts.
10. The weekly Sabbath foreshadows Messiah's _____ reign.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the Sabbath has remained such an important part of God's plan from creation through the coming Kingdom?
2. How does understanding the historical background behind Sunday observance affect the way we evaluate church traditions?
3. Why is it important to interpret New Testament passages about the Sabbath in light of the whole of Scripture?
4. How does the Sabbath remind believers of both God's work in creation and His work of redemption?
5. What does Hebrews 4 teach about the future Sabbath rest, and how should that shape the way believers observe the Sabbath today?
6. In what practical ways can believers honor the Sabbath while still showing mercy and meeting genuine human needs?
7. Why do you think God chose the Sabbath as a covenant sign between Himself and His people?
8. How does keeping the Sabbath demonstrate trust in God rather than reliance upon our own efforts?
9. What challenges do believers face when trying to honor the Sabbath in today's culture, and how can those challenges be approached with wisdom and faith?
10. After studying this teaching, what aspect of the Sabbath has most strengthened your understanding of God's character and His plan for His people?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Seventh
2. Scriptures
3. Creation
4. Sabbath
5. Israel
6. Sign
7. Delight
8. Mercy
9. Sunday
10. Kingdom

Challenging

1. Shavuot (Pentecost)
2. Times (Festivals)
3. Opinions
4. Foreigners
5. Sabbath
6. Councils
7. Sanctifies
8. Buying
9. Provision
10. Millennial