

“GOD’S MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE”

The Fourth Commandment

INTRODUCTION

A member of my church owns and drives an airport limousine for a living. As he was taking my wife and me to the airport several weeks ago, I asked him how many miles he thought he would get out of his limo. He told me had driven his previous vehicle over 400,000 miles without a single major engine repair, and he fully expected to do the same with his current one.

I was dumbfounded. “How can you possibly put that many miles on a car?”

He answered with a single word: “Maintenance.”

Maintenance is the key to more than optimal car performance. It’s also essential to optimal human performance. And if a car needs an owner’s manual to define proper maintenance, so do we. Fortunately, we have one—the Bible. One of the many benefits that this owner’s manual provides is a “Maintenance Law”—the fourth commandment—which tells us how to maintain a level of peak performance in our lives through a wisely designed upkeep schedule.

God begins the fourth commandment with a positive statement—“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy”—and clarifies it with a negative statement—“In it you shall not do any work.” Then, as if He anticipates our resistance to this simple command, He silences us with a refresher course on the sequence of Creation.

Genesis 1 tells us that on the first day God called forth light, and separated the day from the night. On the second day He created the vast expanse of sky called “the heavens.” On the third day He caused the dry land to appear and covered it with vegetation. On the fourth day He created the sun, the moon, and the stars. On the fifth and sixth days He filled the earth with animals. Then, finally, He created man. From the dust of the ground He formed him, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

During six distinct periods of time, God moved from the most basic elements of creation to the most phenomenally complex. So what now, we wonder. What’s left for Him to do on the seventh day?

Genesis tells us that “by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (2:2-3).

Obviously, God was not trying to illustrate His personal fatigue. He was, instead, introducing a maintenance plan for the human race. He was so serious about this principle of maintenance, in fact, that He chose to use Himself as an example. He wanted to announce to all creation, and all history, that after six days of labor, enough is enough! Labor is a very good thing—but it’s not the only thing. There is more to life than labor.

-Bill Hybels, Engraved On Your Heart

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Take a quick bible trivia quiz. Turn your paper over and try to write down the acts of God for each of the seven days of Creation.
2. Read Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 23:12, and Isaiah 58:13-14. What are some principles that we can draw out from these verses to help determine how we should observe the Sabbath?
3. Read Psalm 16, David’s song of rest.
 - a. What are some sources of delight for the psalmist (vv.2-7)?
 - b. What observations help David find peace with his “lot in life” (vv. 5-6)?
 - c. How do God’s presence and teaching affect the psalmist (vv.7-8)?
 - d. How does David face the uncertainty of the future (vv.9-10)?
 - e. Given this psalm, what lessons can we learn about the importance of Sabbath rest?
4. What are some of the hindrances to God’s maintenance schedule working out in your life? How can you better arrange your life to choose what is best?
5. Share about some convictions that you gained today.