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Why did God give the Sabbath?

God gave the Sabbath as a day of rest for our body and soul. In the Exodus and Deuteronomy passages, we see a constant emphasis on the importance of remembering the Sabbath and keeping it holy to honor the covenant between God and Israel. Exod 20:8-11 establishes the fourth commandment, which commands the Sabbath day to be kept holy and set apart as a day of rest. This passage emphasizes the importance of taking a break from work and devoting time to worship and rest. The reason given for this is that on the seventh day of creation, God rested from His work, and blessed the Sabbath day, declaring it to be holy (Gen 2:2-3). By observing the Sabbath, we are imitating God and acknowledging our dependence on Him. Deut 5:12-15 emphasizes the Sabbath as a sign of the covenant between God and Israel. This passage emphasizes the importance of remembering the Sabbath and keeping it holy. It gives a different reason for doing so: to remember that God had delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. By resting on the Sabbath and refraining from work, the Israelites were demonstrating their trust in God and their gratitude for His deliverance.

In the Bible, Exod 20:8-11 says, Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

God commanded his people to set aside Sabbath from mundane activities and to use it as a special day to return to God and form a covenant with him. This passage explicitly forbids any work for being done during the Sabbath, including work done by oneself or by one's servants and even animals. In Num 15:32-36, we see a specific example of the Sabbath being violated when a man was caught gathering wood on the Sabbath. The Lord commanded that he be stoned to death as a warning to others not to violate the Sabbath. Jer 17:21-22 emphasizes the importance of refraining from carrying burdens on the Sabbath, and forbids any work being done on the Sabbath day. Neh 13:15-16 tells the story of Nehemiah rebuking the people for violating the Sabbath by conducting business and working on a holy day. The Numbers, Jeremiah, and Nehemiah passages all gave examples of people violating the Sabbath by not taking rest and not using the day to worship, gratify, and glorify God on his appointment day. By not respecting the seventh day as the day to rest and worship, we are pushing ourselves to the limit, leading our body and soul to burnout, resulting in more disappointments that can affect our Holy practice with God. Furthermore, continuous work while not stopping for God's

appointed day to rest demonstrates disobedience and signals independence from God, which is very bad considering God's jealousy (Exod 20:5).

To this day, I believe that the command to honor the Sabbath is still valid, although the specific ways in which we do so may look different from those described in the text of the Old Testament. While some may argue that the Sabbath commandment was specific to the Israelites, I believe the principles underlying the commandment still apply to us Christians today. The Sabbath reminds us of our need for rest and renewal and our dependence on God for our physical and spiritual well-being. In an increasingly hectic world, the Sabbath is a reminder to slow down, step back, and focus on our relationship with God and the things in heaven above. It is a gift from God meant to nourish our souls and bring us closer to Him.

As for which day is the Sabbath, I know for Jews, it is Saturday. I have worked with Jewish people during the summer, and I have observed that every Friday for supper, they will light two candles, put bread on a special plate, pray together, and share the knotted-looking bread. However, many Christian churches, including Catholics, have traditionally observed Sunday as a day of rest and worship in commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the first day of the week. Personally, I will depend more on which day our Lord Jesus was resurrected than the Old Testament. If I must be more technical on which day is the seventh day for me, then I will have to count from which day I was born, which is a Monday, so, my seventh day on Earth is on Sunday. Ultimately, the decision of which day to observe the Sabbath

may depend on cultural context and individual circumstances. For some, observing the Sabbath on Saturday may be a way of honoring the Jewish roots of the Sabbath and the commandment given in the Old Testament. For others, observing the Sabbath on Sunday may be a way of honoring the significance of the resurrection of Jesus and the practice of the early Christian church. Regardless of which day we observe the Sabbath, I think what matters most is that we obey God's command to take the time to rest, renew our spirits, and deepen our relationship with God. If we come to him with a whole heart, I don't think he will judge us because of the day we counted the first day.