

**Introduction:** God's Word today is, on the one hand, very simple; and, on the other hand, I feel inadequate to express it. \*\*\* First, we need to go back to the best news about God. He is the One who is always delivering people. In the days of Moses, He delivered His people from four hundred years of bondage in Egypt (Genesis 15:13-16; Exodus 20:2). And for all time, especially in these last days of His Church, He has made deliverance from sin and self available to all people through the faith of His Son, the Savior (Micah 4:1-5:5). \*\*\* A lot of justified criticism has been directed at the concept of deconstruction: to look at the details of complex concepts and ideas in order to expose inconsistencies and therefore declare the entire concept invalid. And, some people are trying to deconstruct the Gospel of Christian faith. \*\*\* The first three times I read the Bible cover-to-cover it seemed to me God was deconstructing me – many times. So much of what I had been taught was acceptable behavior and belief was shown by God's Word to be offensive to God. But as I confessed each of these to God as sins for which I was guilty, and received forgiveness by faith in Jesus, the simple truth of the Gospel of Jesus began to restore me to the simplicity of my childhood days. \*\*\* Jesus said it best when He thanked His Father because He had hidden the things (about Him) from the wise and learned and revealed them to young children (Matthew 11:25 in the context of all the Gospel of Matthew). \*\*\* So, let's open our hearts with the trusting faith of young children with a good father so we may hear the simple truths we have missed from the familiar words of these first four commandments directed toward the Covenant God.

**I. We return God's delivering love by always putting Him above all and giving Him one day in seven. (Exodus 20:3-11)**

A. We will always put God above everything, bowing to no one else, and we will not speak thoughtlessly. (Verses 3-7)

1. Not it will be to thyself, 'gods' other, before Me. (Verse 3)

**Face:** Literally 'before' is 'above the face of'. With people, before can mean in front of (the face). A Hebrew scholar has written that much 'street talk' comes from Hebrew idiom. Could God be saying, you must get all of the junk in your life 'out of My face'? You need to put Me so high that nothing obstructs your view of Me.

**Only One:** The basic truth is this: there is only one God: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one (Deuteronomy 6:4).

2. Not thou will make to thyself (hewn of stone) image, and any likeness which (is) in heaven from above and (is) in the earth from beneath and which (is) in the water under the earth; not thou will bow down (to worship) them and not thou will be caused to serve them; because I, Yahweh, the God of thee, (am) jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon children, upon third and upon fourth, to hating Me; and, showing steadfast love to thousands loving Me and keeping commandments of Me. (Verses 4-6)

**Worship only God:** Most idols today are not made of stone, but are either technological, political or personal. But, anything that hinders people in their love, trust and obedience in God is an idol.

Everything we do should enhance our deep reverence for God and bring glory to only Him!

**Steadfast love:** God declares that He shows His strong love to all loving Him through the obedience of faith.

How do we glorify God? By returning our love to Him in gratitude for the love He gives us.

*God's LOVE is glorified when it is returned*

3. Not thou will bear-up Name of Yahweh, God of thee, to vanity; because not He will hold innocent, Yahweh, (one) who will bear-up Name of Him to vanity. (Verse 7)

**Words and actions:** The broader meaning of vanity is emptiness (and) worthless conduct. God's will is that everything people do and say is because they are always aware (NJB, mindful, RSV) of His presence (1 Peter 2:19).

Or, as the first 'word' puts it, they are in front of Him and He is watching.

B. We will set aside one day in seven to make it holy by resting in the Creator who rested after six days of creating. (Verses 8-11)

**Longest 'word':** This fourth 'word' covers four verses and forty-four Hebrew words compared to three verses and thirty-eight Hebrew words for the second 'word'. No other 'word' comes close.

1. To remember the day of the Sabbath, to keep holy it. (Verse 8)

**Statement:** The introduction is a declarative sentence that people are to remember the Sabbath (seventh) day and to sanctify it to God in all holiness. This is done by worshipping Him in accordance with all that went before, but with single-minded intensity on the Sabbath.

**God requires people to worship only Him, especially one day in seven**

2. Six (of) days thou will serve, and thou have done all thy work, and the day of seventh: Sabbath to Yahweh, God of thee; not thou will do any work: thou and son of thee and daughter of thee; manservant of thee and maidservant of thee; and cattle of thee; and sojourner of thee who (is) in the gates of thee. (Verses 9-10)

**Cycle:** God has ordained His own cycle for living for all His creatures. It consists of six days of service (work) and one day of rest dedicated wholly to Him. Notice the primacy God puts on meaningful work of service which goes back to the first two people (Genesis 2:15). Lazy, slothful sluggards are mentioned in nine chapters of Proverbs, culminating in a picturesque four verse condemnation (Proverbs 26:13-16).

**Not 'natural':** A seven day week does not fit into the twenty-nine-and-a-half day cycle of the moon, with one-and-a-half days leftover. And the solar year of three-hundred-sixty-five-and-a-quarter days has one-and-a-quarter days left over!

**All creatures:** Men and women of all classes and all ethnicities are to observe Sabbath, as well as, all cattle, which is a generic term for all the beasts on land. Everything that has breath (Psalm 150:6) is to worship Covenant God on the seventh day of the week!

**God requires people to worship only Him, especially one day in seven**

3. Because, six (of) days, He made, Yahweh: the heavens, and the earth, and the seas, and all which (is) in them; and then He rested in the day seventh; therefore, He blessed, Yahweh, the day of the Sabbath, and then He made holy it. (*Verse 11*)  
**Follow the Creator:** If the Creator of all living beings rested after six days of work, then His creatures, especially His last and greatest creatures – men and women – will take one day in seven to rest from their work of service and make it holy to the holy One who created them.

**God requires people to worship only Him, especially one day in seven**

**II. Jesus said the Great Commandment is to love God with all we are; and, we must cease from our works to enter God's Sabbath-rest.** (*Matthew 22:37-38; Hebrews 4:9-11*)

A. The Great Commandment is to love The Lord our God with everything. (*Matthew 22:37-38*)

1. But He, He was saying to (lawyer): thou will love Lord, the God of thee in whole of the heart of thee, and in whole of the soul of thee, and in whole of the mind of thee. (*Verse 37*)

**Heart:** Metaphorically, the heart is the sum of the emotions, affections and desires of a person. Most people think of love as highly emotional.

**Soul:** The soul is the breath God breathed into the first person to make him a living being (Genesis 2:7).

The soul animates the body and is immortal.

**Mind:** The mind is how people gain understanding about the world God created and the living beings He created. It is the seat of reason and logic.

**Love:** Because of God's great love for all that makes up each person, He expects each part of each person (heart, soul, and mind) to fully love Him as an expression of gratitude and worship to Him. It is this 'all-that-is-in-me' love that brings the most glory to God.

*God's LOVE is glorified when it is returned*

2. This is being the great and first commandment. (*Verse 38*)

**First Great:** This Great commandment sums up the first four of the ten 'words'. All who love God will place Him far above all so called 'gods'; they will allow no man-made creation or concept to distract their worship of the God who loves them with His strong life-giving, life-changing love; they will never say or do anything empty or worthless in His presence; and, they will cease from all works of service on the seventh day to rest in their Creator.

**God requires people to worship only Him, especially one day in seven**

B. God has an eternal Sabbath-rest for all who cease from their own works and do not fall through un-belief. (*Hebrews 4:9-11*)

1. So, it is being remaining a Sabbath-day-rest to the people of God. (*Verse 9*)

**Sabbath-rest:** Jesus is Lord of Sabbath (Mark 2:32-28). Even now, His people are to dedicate one day in seven fully to God. There is an eternal rest for all who are in Jesus in the new heavens and earth, but it starts now as each believer leaves earth: I heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Write, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!"' 'Yes', says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them' (Revelation 14:13).

2. For the (he) having entered into the place of rest of Him, also he, he has rested from the works of him just as from the works (of Him), God. (*Verse 10*)

**Cease from my works:** People who are in Jesus Christ by grace through faith know that all they receive from Him is because of the works He has done. They cease from all works done in their own strength because these are futile.

Instead, they do the works God prepared for them to do as they walk through life in their Savior (Ephesians 2:8-10).

**As God in creation:** This alludes to the fourth 'word' we considered in Exodus.

Because the Creator rested on the seventh day, His creatures will also rest on the seventh day.

3. Therefore, may we labor together to enter into that place of rest, so that not anyone may fall by imitating the disobedience (of them). (*Verse 11*)

**Human responsibility:** People cannot gain God's rest by work, but they have a responsibility to seek it.

**Warning:** The chapter is warning Jewish Christians about falling away from God through the faith of Jesus by the unbelief. Israel refused to believe after the miracles of the ten plagues and the Red Sea.

**Application:** Let us worship and love the only and true God with all we have!

**Conclusion:** All people who have been delivered by God's love will love Him in return by always putting Him above everything, not speaking or acting before Him thoughtlessly; and, to remember to keep His seventh day holy by ceasing from their work. This is how they love God with all they have and all they are.

**God requires people to worship only Him, especially one day in seven**