

The Sabbath

Is America at the Crossroads?

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Through my own recent experience with my last employer I can say that the personal desire of employees to honor their religious beliefs comes secondary to the needs of the company. Religious discrimination or at the very least discouragement in the workplace is alive and well. From the time I left my last position until now I have tried to find employment without much success. I specifically state in my cover letters that I am available 24/6, all hours and unfortunately, I have not had many interviews. This may be in part because the type of work I do is specialized and there are not that many opportunities in that field. The interviews I have received, I had to question the fact there was going to be on call duty which would put me back into the same position of having to work on the Sabbath again. I made this mistake on my last job and agreed to work on call every third week 24/7. The company changed the terms of my employment after 6 years and put me in a position where I had to refuse to work on Sunday's. I could understand the absolute necessity for Sabbath work if someone's employment was religious in nature or pertained to matters of life and death such as health care professionals. For these people I could see the logic in sharing the burden of Sabbath duties. This, however, would be up to the conscience of the individual and dependent on their own religious beliefs.

My employer also expected me to find another employee to make a shift swaps. This amounts to me requesting another

employee to disobey the fourth commandment and disregard the Sabbath so I can observe it. I found this unacceptable and believe it is the fair and reasonable duty of the employer to work this out and accommodate a person's religious beliefs in the workplace.

Another issue I experience was that my employer stated that I could go to church and then come back to work, and that this should satisfy my Sabbath requirement. Employers need to respect the religious beliefs of their employees without expecting their employees to compromise their beliefs or compelling them to do so. Therefore, we as Christians must make our choice regardless of what others do or say, which is what I did and why I am not working for my former employer.

The sad fact is that our society has compromised ourselves away from the days when Saturday or Sunday was a holy day. I can remember when I was a teenager back in the late 60's early 70's living in Los Angeles, there was not much open on Sunday's. I

do not remember too many shops open although I am sure that Jewish establishments were open on Sunday, However, they were closed on Saturday and the Synagogues were full. The buses ran but I do not remember too many people riding them. Overall, it was dead compared to a regular workday which is as it should be. People were at church, or at home with their families. I am not against hard work, and neither were the ancient Hebrews. In Exodus 20:8-11 (4th Commandment) which states: ⁸“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, ⁹ Six Days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ 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 manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien

within your gates. ¹¹ 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”. In those days, work hours were from sunup to sundown six days per week, not an eight-hour day like most of us are used to. On the Sabbath you rested, period. With employer expectations to work 24/7 this makes it difficult to live ones religious beliefs. Nevertheless, whether it is easy or not, we are supposed to be salt and light and set apart from the world. As Christians we obey God not because of duty or obligation or to expect something in return. We obey out of love, 1 John 5:3: 3, This is Love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome. Learning the self-discipline to obey God's commandments is not easy, especially when it costs us something, but when we truly love God, it is not burdensome.

We must remember What Jesus said regarding the greatest commandment,

Matthew 22:37: 37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.” Jesus was referring to the “Shema” in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Jesus also states this in John 14:21 “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me”. In full view of what God did for all of us through the death and resurrection of his Son Jesus, Paul said it best in Romans 12:1, Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. The way I look at the Ten Commandments is that the first commandment is about love and respect for God. All the other commandments are about love and respect for other people. I

also look at them like an everyday recipe for living rather than look upon them as a set of rules. The first commandment teaches us to prioritize and nurture a relationship with God first in our lives which are based on truth, faith, trust, hope, and love. By doing this it helps us in our decision making, gives us peace, joy, which can influence our present and future. All the rest of the commandments are the black and white do not that prevent us from destroying relationships with our neighbors and families. We do not do certain behaviors so that we may live in harmony and peace with others.

I do not recommend or advise anyone to make rash decisions regarding their employment. I wrote to share my experience with others so they can use it as a supplement in their own decision making.

Aiden Wilson Tozer said, “We are not diplomats but prophets, and our message is not a compromise but an ultimatum.”

Tozer also said, “The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian.”

In an article “Wisdom and Sabbath Rest” by Dr. Timothy Keller he wrote, “The purpose of Sabbath is not simply to rejuvenate yourself to do more production, nor is it the pursuit of pleasure. The purpose of Sabbath is to enjoy your God, life in general, what you have accomplished in the world through his help, and the freedom you have in the gospel-the freedom from slavery to any material object or human expectation. The Sabbath is a sign of the hope that we have in the world to come.” I will post this [here](#) on the site for reference.

Jeremiah 6:16, This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. We should all pray for revival in America to return to the ancient paths so we may find rest in Christ our Lord. I know we all want to share in the American dream, but at what price? The Lord intends to come back and find a church without spot or wrinkle. It is up to us.

In His service,

Thomas

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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