

How To Be Tough?

Ephesians 6:10 - 18

Have you ever wanted to be physically, mentally, or emotionally tougher?

A tough person is someone who can deal with difficult situations without losing their capability.

Here are some things I read to get tougher:

- **Do something that scares you.**
- **Practice martial arts.**
- **Do something unnecessarily uncomfortable every day.**
- **Practice mindfulness/meditation.**
- **Join a boxing gym.**
- **Take cold showers.**

However, we Christians get tougher physically, mentally, or emotionally in a different way.

What Does The Bible Say?

10 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
(Ephesians 6:10 ESV)

We are tougher physically when we stand behind Christ, mentally when we think like Christ, and emotionally when we remain in Christ.

11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. 12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

(Ephesians 6:11–12 ESV)

Satan is stronger and more intelligent than we are; however, he has limited power. However, we have access to limitless power in God.

Satan is not omniscient. God knows all things, but Satan does not.

Satan is not omnipotent. Therefore, he cannot do everything he wants, and, in the case of believers especially, he can do only what God will permit.

Satan is not omnipresent, meaning he cannot be everywhere while tempting everybody. God is omnipresent.

Satan has never been in hell and does not control hell. God created hell, preparing it partly for the devil and his angels so that Satan will one day end up there.

How Can You Obey?

13 Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. (Ephesians 6:13 ESV)

We don't look for these evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world; they come looking for us because we are spreading the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. 15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. (Ephesians 6:14–15 NLT)

Belt of truth - Satan is a liar (John 8:44), and the truth (John 8:44) sets us free of his lies.

The body armor of God's righteousness - Satan is the accuser; when Satan accuses the Christian, it is the righteousness of Christ that assures the believer of his salvation.

For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News - Satan has declared war, but you and I are ambassadors of peace (2 Corinthians 5:18–21); and, as such, we take the Gospel of peace wherever we go.

16 In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. 17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

(Ephesians 6:16–17 NLT)

Shield of faith - A saving faith and living faith puts our trust in God's promises and power, so we don't fear what Satan throws at us.

Salvation as your helmet - Satan wants to attack the mind, but we are to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God - A material sword pierces the body, but the Word of God pierces the heart.

The Bible is your daily bread. Not a cake for special holidays.

18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. (Ephesians 6:18 NLT)

Persistent prayer expresses our reliance on God.

What kind of soldier for the Lord are you?

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Additional Notes:

This week's Talking Theology is inspired from Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in Stone: The Ten Commandments and Today's Moral Crisis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 107-116.

Explore:

Some scholars view this epistle as encyclical, a circular letter to be distributed to several undesignated local churches in the province of Asia or some other area. This is supported by two observations: (1) the words "in Ephesus" (1:1) do not appear in three early Alexandrian Greek manuscripts, and (2) it is strange for Paul not to mention by name any of the individuals in a church where he had lived and worked for three years (Acts 20:31).

Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F.

Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 613.

Explore:

Ephesus was a leading center in the Roman Empire. Paul had spent a short time in Ephesus on his way back to Antioch from his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19–22). On his third missionary journey he stayed in Ephesus three years (Acts 20:31). Several remarkable things happened in Ephesus. Paul baptized a dozen of John the Baptist’s followers (Acts 19:1–7). He had discussions in the hall of Tyrannus (19:8–10). Unusual miracles occurred (19:11–12), strange events took place (19:13–16), sorcerers were converted (19:17–20), and the city rioted over silversmith Demetrius’ loss of business because of people who turned to Christ from worshiping the great Ephesian goddess Artemis (19:23–41). On Paul’s return to Jerusalem

from his third missionary journey he gave a moving farewell address to the Ephesian elders at the coastal town of Miletus (20:13–35). That was his last time to see them (20:36–38), unless Paul visited Ephesus after he was in Rome (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3 with 3:14).

Harold W. Hoehner, “Ephesians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 613–614.

Explore:

Since Ephesians gives no hint of his release from prison, as do Philippians (1:19–26) and Philemon (v. 22), it is reasonable to think that he wrote it in the early part of his stay, or about a.d. 60. This would have been when Paul was kept under guard in rental quarters (Acts 28:30). Following his release he traveled,

wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was arrested again, wrote 2 Timothy, and was martyred in Rome.

Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F.

Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 614.

Explore:

On the return from his third missionary journey Paul told the Ephesian elders at Miletus (a.d. 57) to beware of evil teachers from without and of professing believers within who would teach perverse things (Acts 20:29–30). From Revelation one can see that the Ephesian church had succeeded in keeping out the false teachers (Rev. 2:2) but had failed to maintain the vibrancy of their first love for Christ (Rev. 2:4). This is substantiated in 1 Timothy 1:5, when Paul wrote from Macedonia to Timothy at

Ephesus (ca a.d. 62) that the goal of his instruction was “love which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” Thus the theme of love needed to be stressed for the saints at Ephesus.

Harold W. Hoehner, “Ephesians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 614.

Explore:

Pagan deities were marked by supposed great power, moral imperfection (to say the least!), and inscrutable, arbitrary decisions about who would obtain their favor. Jehovah God is not at all like such false gods. His power is great, yes, but He exercises it with absolute moral perfection. He is not arbitrary in His determination of who will and will not receive His favor. It has been determined since . . . forever! Those who through faith are in Christ will receive with Jesus the full inheritance reserved for the sons (legal heirs) of God. Nor will God capriciously change His mind on this as the pagan deities so often were said to do. The Holy Spirit Himself acts as the seal, the guarantee that God will keep His word.

Explore:

Our being dead in sin before trusting in Christ illustrates how sin brought death and destruction into the world. Encourage parents and grandparents to talk with family members about this.

Explore:

In Paul's day, many believed that evil spirits or demonic forces were active primarily in the air, or the space between earth and sky. Paul's language says more about the ruler of unholy spiritual activity than it does precise demonic geography.

Wherever and however they are at work, we can know for sure that they follow a ruler who is the enemy of our loving God and those whom He has redeemed. We do well to avoid

sensationalism in discussions about satanic activity, certainly.

Nevertheless, we should not kid ourselves—it is real, personal, and unrelenting until Satan's defeat. Dr. Robert Picirilli

comments: "...the Bible does not give us enough information

about the domain of Satan and the personal forces associated

with his dominion to enable us to bring other passages to bear

on this one The point of the passage is clear anyway, even if

our curiosity about the precise meaning of “of the air” is not satisfied. What is sure is that there are real, personal powers at hand, ready to influence and hinder us” (The Randall House Bible Commentary, Galatians through Colossians, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” p.153).

Explore:

Paul’s reference to predestination often provokes needless and fruitless quarrels. Many Christians believe Paul meant that from eternity past, God chose in advance who would be saved and who would be lost. His choice, they say, involved nothing more than the mystery of His own will. However, if that interpretation is valid, what then are we to make of the Bible’s teaching that God loved the world so much that He gave Jesus to save whosoever believed (John 3:16)? Other Christians believe that God’s predestination involved adopting as “sons” (adult heirs)

those who are in Christ—believers. In this interpretation predestination does not determine who would believe and who would not. Instead it was a pre-destination that all who believed would become part of God’s marvelous family (Romans 8:17). God knew in eternity past who would believe and who would not. That is not the same thing as to claim that God determined in eternity past who would believe and who would not. We are wise to stay within the bounds of what Scripture says: that God determined long before this world was made that belief in Christ would be the key to the salvation He intended to bring about. The duty of faithful mature believers on both sides is to speak the truth in love and to treat those with another viewpoint as Christian brothers and sisters.

Explore:

It is through the Church that the great spiritual truth, power, and reality of the gospel break out into this world. The Church lives in the hope of God's promise. By definition, that means the Church will have difficult times, for it is only in difficult times that people need hope. We will not understand true hope without difficulty. The Church will often incur the suspicion, jealousy, or wrath of the world's powers. What those powers do not know, however, is that their opposition to the Church is opposition to Christ, its head.

Explore:

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that he had fought wild beasts in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 15:32). Did he mean physical animals? Perhaps, but Luke did not mention it in his rather lengthy description of Paul's stay there. Paul may have referred instead to his spiritual enemies (human or otherwise). We know that

Ephesus was infused with demonic activity and magic arts (Acts 19:18-19).

Demetrius the silversmith put the entire city into riot mode out of anger against Paul and the changes in people's lives that resulted from the gospel. Either way, Ephesus was the scene of great struggle, physical and spiritual. The believers there would have understood Paul's armor references without problem. The spiritual forces that opposed Paul in the first century target our families today. We cannot afford to become complacent in the face of dark spiritual combat.

God Has Provided His Power and Spiritual Armor to Help Us Stand Against Satan's Attacks (Ephesians 6:10-17)

Paul urged the Ephesian believers to be strong in the Lord and His power. Believers' own power is insufficient, but God's power will prevail as we depend on Him (verse 10).

Roman soldiers traveled light by modern standards, yet they formed a fighting force that conquered much of Europe, North Africa, and the entire Mediterranean world. Paul had seen them in his travels. They were, at times, his persecutors, his guards, his jailers, and his protectors. He had close interaction with them and understood how important their armor and equipment were to them. In verse 11 he referred not to the armor of Rome, but rather the armor of God—the only armor that can lead to victory against Satan’s schemes.

We need God’s armor—spiritual armor—because of the spiritual nature of the war in which we are engaged. The battle is real. Its weapons may seem strange to us, but our foe seeks our doom—not merely ineffectiveness or weakness, but our utter destruction in every way. It is a battle to the death. There is no truce, no white flag, no time out, just continuous struggle until one side wins. We fight against spiritual forces and evil (verse 12). Only those protected in God’s armor can aspire to victory.

Paul had previously mentioned that the days were evil (Ephesians 5:16), yet verse 6:13 seems to indicate even greater evil to come. Withstanding or standing ground uses a construction that refers to a decisive act, a do-or-die decision. Paul understood that the spiritual conflict he had known in Ephesus now faced the believers living there. He knew that God's armor would not fail. In fact, it was all they could count on for victory.

In verses 14-17, Paul described what it takes for Christian believers to be able to stand, to remain victorious where God has placed them. No doubt, he had often seen Roman soldiers in their armor and was familiar with the various pieces.

- The belt held the tunic in place and also helped secure the breastplate. It represents Truth. When all else fails, let truth, especially the truth of the gospel, hold everything else in place.

- The breastplate went from the neck to the level of the thigh. A smaller piece gave some protection on the back, but the breastplate's main purpose was protecting the front of the body and the heart. Our protection is righteousness—but not just our own. Spiritual blows that would otherwise be deadly become ineffective against the righteousness that we have put on in Christ Jesus, our perfect Redeemer.

- Historians indicate that part of the reason for success for the Roman legions was proper footwear that enabled them to quickly traverse or make a stand on rough terrain. Believers are ready to move on or to stand, as the battle dictates, because the gospel of peace provides us a sure foundation.

- The shield of faith was the famous Roman scutum, a tall, usually-rectangular, curved shield made primarily of wood, often covered in leather. Soaked in water, it easily resisted even arrows with flaming tips. Enemy soldiers often exhausted

themselves trying to penetrate the shield, to the point where the Roman soldier could finish them off rather easily. The image is of a faith that can take it, so to speak. As long as what Satan casts our way is blocked by faith, we will stand.

- The helmet provided important protection to the head. Leather straps held the bronze helmet in place. Salvation protects believers. We belong to Christ. He is our deliverer and our salvation. Isaiah also used this image (Isaiah 59:17).

- Finally came the soldier's weapon (as opposed to his armor), the sword. For Roman soldiers this was a double-edged stabbing sword about two feet long. In our case, this is the Word of God—the Bible—that pierces the foe through the power of the Holy Spirit Himself (Hebrews 4:12 is helpful on this point).

Thus, we see our panoply, or battle kit for spiritual warfare: truth, righteousness, readiness in the gospel, faith, salvation, and the Bible.

We must make sure that we and our children become very familiar with the Bible, not merely Bible stories. We teach the Bible in age-appropriate ways, but we always aim for their interaction with Scripture, not merely stories. Bible memorization is a wonderful tool for them and for us.

Explore:

Prayer Is a Powerful Weapon for the Follower of Christ

(Ephesians 6:18-20)

What does it mean to pray in the Spirit (verse 18)? Some have suggested it is a form of worship, while others believe it means to be in a spirit of prayer, within our own spirit. Effective prayer is certainly powered by the Spirit of God. Paul elsewhere wrote of how the Spirit helps “translate” our prayers when we do not know how to express what comes from the depths of our souls (Romans 8:26-27). What Paul said about prayer in the remainder

of verse 18 seems to indicate he had in mind a recurring spirit of prayer, mindful of the Spirit, in all of life.

The key thought for the rest of the verse about prayer is All:

- All occasions—we cannot confine prayer only to special “spiritual” or “religious” events.
- All kinds of prayer—group prayer, private prayer, formal, informal, long, quick, and more.
- All the time—at any moment, and at regular times; it is always with us, always available.
- All the saints—not just us, not just ours, but especially for all who belong to the Lord.

Paul the apostle had launched the congregation at Ephesus. He taught them in person and through the epistle we have been studying. Yet he did not see himself as spiritually “above” them. He needed their prayers (verses 19-20). This was not a device to help the Ephesians feel better about themselves (Hey, look! Paul

wants our prayers!). He meant it.

To open the mouth (verse 19) was a special phrase that denoted giving a formal defense or presentation. Paul was under house arrest in Rome, waiting to appear before the emperor. The emperor would take Paul's words as an official description and defense of the Christian faith. Paul needed prayer to be up to the task. God's ways are certainly not ours. He sent us a Redeemer born in humility who died on a cross. He sent Rome an ambassador . . . in chains. It takes prayer to declare such a gospel fearlessly, for us as with Paul.

We were completely unsuitable to be such workmanship (see the previous section, verses 1-3), but God's love and mercy did their

work (verse 4). God began by making us spiritually alive in Christ— delivering us out of our own rebellion (verse 5). He issued a reminder that it is God’s grace that has saved us— because we were spiritually dead!

God also raised believers and seated them with Christ (verse 6). Now how is that, seeing that we are all still here on earth? We can interpret it in two ways. One is that Paul is speaking spiritually: our new spiritual life is as far above what we had while dead in sin as Jesus’ resurrection and ascension are above His experience of death in the tomb. A second is that Paul is speaking effectively. In other words, it is all as good as done. Christ was the first raised from the dead in this manner, but He will not be the last. In the same way, our ascension and reign with Him are just as certain.

Verse 7 takes us closer to the end in view. God determined to use His kindness to us in Christ to display just how rich His

grace is. This will become more obvious in the coming ages. In other words, our little blip on the radar of human history has a place in showcasing God's grace deep, deep into the future.

Believers will display this grace because it is through God's grace that they can belong to God at all. Of our salvation, we can all say, "We didn't build that!" No works or good deeds—Jewish nor Gentile—can procure our place in God's eternal heavenly display of grace. It is God's gift (verses 8-9).

Believers do not work to get into Heaven. We work because the God of Heaven created us for it. Believers' good works are part of God's purpose for us. Like a carefully prepared art exhibit, we are on display, performing the good works God has intended and prepared us for all along (verse 10). Good works have a place in the life of a Christian—not in becoming right with God, but as a result of being right with God. Our joy at such deliverance should motivate us and empower us to do good just because we want to please God.

Explore:

The phrase whole armor is a single word in the Greek. It is panoplia, the word which gave us the modern English word panoply. The panoply refers to the soldier's equipment both offensive and defensive. It was his battle kit.

Stand is an important recurring word in this passage. Giving ourselves to Christ regains territory from Satan and claims it for God. Wherever the gospel influence spreads, God's kingdom expands. Satan and his forces do not take their "loss of territory" without a fight, and the battle will sometimes be fierce to regain it. This is why believers must make a stand in their faith, determined that the Devil will not be allowed to hold sway over this life, this home, this congregation, etc.

Explore:

We need not lose ourselves in the details about why one trait was applied to one piece of armor rather than another, at least not entirely. After all, while Paul mentioned the belt of truth in Ephesians 6:14, Isaiah attributed a belt of righteousness and a sash of faithfulness to the Messiah (Isaiah 11:5). Truth, faith, and righteousness are critical for conducting spiritual warfare, regardless of the image of which piece of armor we use.

You can find an interesting description of the Roman shield here: bit.ly/HN-Roman-armor. Note the graphic on the page that shows effective applications of Roman shields.

Explore:

What is the preparation or readiness of the gospel of peace? The image itself goes in two distinct directions. Proper footwear permitted quick movements in attacking the enemy. On the other hand, defensively, they helped the soldier by providing a sure

foundation while fending off attackers. The gospel of peace is such an item for us. Good news for all, it drives us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. And, when Satan attacks, we stand on that same foundation—we serve the One Who said, “All power is given to me....”

Explore:

Like Paul, today’s church leaders need the prayers of their flock. Pastors, deacons, teachers, anyone with a particular congregational role . . . they all need prayer. Pastors in particular need our prayers. By virtue of their role, they often find themselves at the gospel’s sharpest point of contact with the world. Satan delights in target- ing them and their families. We mistakenly assume “well, that’s their job,” or “they know how to do that, so it’s not a problem for them.” This simply is not true. They are subject to the same weaknesses and limitations as the

rest of us, and they always need prayer. Many believers today bemoan what they consider to be weaknesses in the church. To seriously emphasize prayer and the Word would probably work wonders for the lives of many believers and their congregations. Let us demonstrate in our own households and families the importance of all kinds of prayer in all situations. Let us show that any time of day, any room of the house, prayer is never out of place.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

1. God Has Provided His Power and Spiritual Armor to Help Us Stand Against Satan's Attacks.
2. Prayer Is a Powerful Weapon for the Follower of Christ.

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the

Bible: Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians while under house arrest in Rome around AD 61 or 62. In this section of the letter, Paul wrote about the great blessings believers enjoy in Christ and about his prayers for the Ephesian believers.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary

emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ-followers. When they do, Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 5

Which view do you hold about the Sabbath? Practice it on Saturday (Old Testament Sabbath); Practice it on Sunday (New

Testament Sabbath); Not mandatory, but a good practice (Your choice of day of the week)?

Question 2 of 5

Name various kinds of protective gear or equipment people wear to keep them from injury or harm.

Question 3 of 5

How do we tap in to God's strength to help us stand firm?

Question 4 of 5

What does it mean to be in a spirit of prayer at all times?

Question 5 of 5

How do we put on spiritual armor?

Welcome to the Talking Theology segment, where we talk about theological topics. We are looking at the Ten Commandments, and this is part one of a three-part look at the fourth commandment.

The fourth commandment reads: (Exodus 20:8–11)

“Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 You have six days each week for your ordinary work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

Keeping the Sabbath may be the oldest of the Ten Commandments because it returns to the world's creation.

The Sabbath is a twenty-four-hour timeframe where we refrain from work, rest, and reflect on God. The Jewish Sabbath is from Friday sundown to Saturday evening. In most Christian circles, Sabbath is observed on Sunday. However, the apostle Paul stated that any day is okay to practice the Sabbath (Rom 14:1-17).

The Sabbath was given to Israel as a covenantal sign; therefore, the nation of Israel rested on the seventh day. God uses symbols to identify His people. The Noahic covenant is the rainbow (Gen 9:8-17), and the Abrahamic covenant is circumcision. The Sabbath and its observance is the prominent sign of the covenant between Israel and God (Exod 31:12, 13). The weekly observance of the Sabbath was a reminder that the Israelites were to obey the Sinai covenant.

No other nation had an observance such as the Sabbath. This time of ceasing from work allowed the people to reflect on eternal issues. But unfortunately, it was so critical of a sign early on that Sabbath following was enforced with the threat of death (Lev 23:30).

Understanding the Sabbath, one must start near the beginning of Scripture in Genesis 2:1-3, where it says that God ceased all His work after the six days of creation. God was not physically tired from his six days of creation. This passage in Genesis is best seen as referring to divine rest than the human Sabbath.

There is no mention of “Sabbath” or “rest” in this passage. God was not celebrating resting but that His creation was completed. Therefore, the seventh day began the opportunity for three things, fruitfulness, dominion, and relationships.

The word Sabbath means “rest.” It is a Hebrew verb that means “to rest or cease from labor.” The fourth commandment says that people are to rest every seven days. Since God ceased working on the seventh day of creation, the word Sabbath came to be used for the seventh day of the week. Therefore, the ideas of rest and the Sabbath are nearly identical.

The Jewish Sabbath corresponds with our Saturday (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset). In contrast, When the Bible mentions the Lord’s day, it is Sunday. Although the reason that Sunday is the Lord’s Day is that Jesus was raised from the dead on that day,

His continued appearances on succeeding Sundays (John 20:26), and the Holy Spirit’s descent on Sunday (Acts 2:1), the early church was given the pattern of Sunday worship. Also, the Lord appeared to John on “the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10). Therefore, every Lord’s Day is a weekly reminder of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. Thus, the early church met on Sundays (1 Cor. 16:2).

We will look at part two of the discussion of the fourth commandment in our following Talking Theology segment, where we look at two arguments concerning the beginning of the Sabbath.

Please remember that Theology is the study of God, and the more we understand God, the more we know about ourselves because we were created in His image. I look forward to speaking to you in future Talking Theology segments.

5 MIN 17 seconds

Welcome to the Talking Theology segment, where we talk about theological topics. We are looking at the Ten Commandments, part two of a three-part look at the fourth commandment.

This week, **we examine the** two arguments concerning the beginning of the Sabbath.

Remember that the fourth commandment is given twice, in Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. This commandment differs in each account, not in the narrative but in the reason behind the commandment.

The explanation in the Exodus statement for the commandment is rooted in God's rest at creation.

At the same time, Deuteronomy is connected to God's redemption of Israel from slavery in Egypt. This association between rest and redemption is essential for understanding and applying this commandment.

Therefore, when God wrote the Ten Commandments with His finger (Deut 9:10), He only wrote to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy (Exod 20:8; Deut 5:12).

God did not write anything else; therefore, he allowed Moses to give the two different motivations behind this passage since Moses would not change God's words.

So this week, we will look at the two arguments of how the Sabbath began, and in part three of this discussion, I will tell you which side I lean.

Several points are given for the Mosaic covenant view presented at the Mosaic Covenant, which means that the Sabbath was to be practiced only by the Jews and not us. First, there is no record of any Sabbath observance before the Exodus. If the Sabbath were an eternal principle, it would have been followed by someone before Sinai.

Secondly, there should be evidence of other nations following a Sabbath principle. None of the prophets ever condemn the surrounding countries

for not following a Sabbath. This command to observe the Sabbath was limited to Israel.

Thirdly, when creation is mentioned as a motivation for the fourth commandment, it is more of a reminder of creation but does not mean that the practice should have gone back to the creation week.

Those who like this view say because of the Deuteronomy account motivation that, the Sabbath also had a redemptive reason and would only apply to Israel.

The second view is that the idea of the Sabbath began at creation. Several points are given for the creation covenant view of the Sabbath. God then put it down in writing at Sinai.

Also, this view believes the concept of a weekly rest day remained the same for not just the Jews but all of humanity. Therefore, all society should observe a weekly day of rest.

Additionally, during the creation week, the seventh day is the only day God blesses in Scripture. There is nothing in Genesis 2:2-3 that indicates that this blessing was temporary. The motivation of the fourth commandment in Exodus 20 leads one to see that rest was an example for all people, not just Israel.

By blessing the seventh day, God is saying that this is the chronological pattern the world should use as a pattern. It is also interesting how many

times Scripture records the pattern of seven days (e.g., Gen 7:4, 10; 8:10, 12; 29:27; 31:23; 50:10).

This view would also state that the fourth commandment begins with the word, “Remember ...” This verse proves that Moses was asking the Jews to remember the Sabbath, which they already knew of and practiced. This law was not new but had been practiced since man was created.

Also, when Christ stated, “The Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27) was reinforcing the universal acceptance of the Sabbath as a moral law. In addition, the New Testament is silent as stopping the Sabbath adherence. Also, Jesus mentioned that Christians would celebrate the Sabbath at the world’s end (Matt 24:20).

So which view do you hold about the fourth commandment? Did the Sabbath begin at creation or on Mt. Sinai?

We will look at part three of the discussion of the fourth commandment in our following Talking Theology segment, where we look at is the Sabbath Still Required for Christians.

Please remember that Theology is the study of God, and the more we understand God, the more we know about ourselves because we were created in His image. I look forward to speaking to you in future Talking Theology segments.

5 MIN 49 seconds

Welcome to the Talking Theology segment, where we talk about theological topics. We are looking at the Ten Commandments, part three of a three-part look at the fourth commandment.

This week, **we examine** is the Sabbath Still Required for Christians.

Christians have four reactions to the Sabbath. First, the Seventh Day Adventists say Christians should practice taking a rest from work on Saturday because of the Old Testament.

In contrast, others follow the English Puritans and observe Sunday as the Christian Sabbath.

Then there are Christians who follow the Reformer's tradition and believe that the Sabbath was a ceremonial law from the Old Testament; therefore, it does not need to be observed.

Finally, there is a fourth view where one identifies any twenty-four timeframe as their Sabbath. The key is to use the same day each week as one's individual Sabbath. This view is where I lean.

So, do Christians need to practice the Sabbath today?

Remember, if it is a creation ordinance, it must be followed today. First, however, you must find in the creation account itself one or more of the following things:

A command was given to man to keep a seven-day week; an order was given to man to rest on the seventh day; An example of a man resting on the seventh day; An explanation for why a man should rest on the seventh day.

However, there is no single command, example, or explanation for Sabbath-keeping in the Creation account. There is absolutely nothing in Genesis 1–3 or elsewhere to warrant the assumption that Sabbath-keeping was a creation ordinance.

In addition, Adam's and God's days were not the same; God's seventh day was Adam's second day. Genesis 2:1-3 states that God's creative acts were over, not that man or animals rested.

So the fourth commandment motivation in Exodus refers to creation. However, that does not make it a creation order, nor does it make sense that the basis of the fourth commandment in Deuteronomy that Israel

enslaved people in Egypt applies to Christians since they were not freed from bondage. Therefore, the covenant sign of Egypt does not apply to them.

All of the moral principles taught in the 10 Commandments are reaffirmed in the New Testament. In addition, however, the New Testament makes it clear that believers are not under the Old Testament law (Rom. 6:14; 2 Cor. 3:7, 11, 13; Gal. 3:24–25; Heb. 7:12). The fourth commandment is the only one of the Ten Commandments not repeated in the New Testament.

From reading the gospel accounts, Jesus stirred the opposition because of His usage of the Sabbath. His views on the Sabbath eventually led to His crucifixion. For example, it seems Jesus deliberately healed on the Sabbath day when he could easily have waited until the next day. There are other incidents, such as the disciples gathering food on the Sabbath as they walked through a field (Mk. 2:23f.).

Jesus, however, pointed the Pharisees to David's example, implying that hunger and human need supersede the Sabbath. To make matters worse, when He was confronted, He said, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mk. 2:27).

The Jews hated Jesus' attitude, and they had a reverence for the Sabbath. Most Christians today do not understand the Jew's attitude since the law is abolished for the church under grace (Rom. 7:4); as stated before, there is no repetition of the fourth commandment in the New Testament.

In Paul's letters, he clarifies that the Sabbath is not binding upon Christians. Paul calls the Sabbath a shadow (Col 2:16-17), and the writer of Hebrews does the same (Heb 10:1). Therefore, Paul categorizes the Sabbath with the food laws, and festivals like Passover minimize their importance. In Romans 14:5, Paul says that what days you consider holy is not essential.

Therefore, I lean that the Sabbath observance is no longer necessary. This view was the Reformer's belief. Remember that the Jerusalem Council did not put the Sabbath requirement upon Gentiles even though they referenced the Sabbath in the ruling (Acts 15:21).

So, in detail, I lean toward the Sabbath starting at Mount Sinai as a practice and that practicing the Sabbath because of the creation view is a healthy observance.

Therefore the Mosaic Covenant is a law for the Jews; however, God's example at creation is a good practice for us to follow.

Practicing the Sabbath keeps us balanced. We should engage in activities that restore and replenish us. Practicing the Sabbath will help you enjoy life better and help you be ready to face what God brings you on your journey with Him.

Please remember that Theology is the study of God, and the more we understand God, the more we know about ourselves because we

were created in His image. I look forward to speaking to you in future Talking Theology segments.

6 Min 9 sec.

Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in Stone: The Ten Commandments and Today's Moral Crisis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 107.