

BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE 2000

Article VIII – The Lord’s Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Three years ago, author and blogger Donald Miller wrote this:

“I’ve a confession. I don’t connect with God by singing to Him. Not at all.

I know I’m nearly alone in this but it’s true. I was finally able to admit this recently when I attended a church service that had, perhaps, the most talented worship team I’ve ever heard. I loved the music. But I loved it more for the music than the worship. As far as connecting with God goes, I wasn’t feeling much of anything.

I used to feel guilty about this but to be honest, I experience an intimacy with God I consider strong and healthy.

It’s just that I don’t experience that intimacy in a traditional worship service. In fact, I can count on one hand the number of sermons I actually remember. So to be brutally honest, I don’t learn much about God hearing a sermon and I don’t connect with him by singing songs to him. So, like most men, a traditional church service can be somewhat long and difficult to get through.

I’m fine with this, though. I’ve studied psychology and education reform long enough to know a traditional lecture isn’t for everybody. There’s an entire demographic of people who have to learn by doing, not by hearing. So you can lecture to them all day and they’re simply not going to get it.

Research suggest there are three learning styles, auditory (hearing) visual (seeing) and kinesthetic (doing) and I’m a kinesthetic learner. Of course churches have all kinds of ways for you to engage God including many kinesthetic opportunities including mission trips and so forth, but if you want to attend a “service” every Sunday, you best be an auditory learner. There’s not much out there for kinesthetic or visual learners.

Interestingly, I learn a great deal by teaching, which is interesting to me.

I learn by doing the very thing I don’t learn by hearing! My guess is because teaching is a kinesthetic discipline rather than an auditory discipline. But that’s a side note.

Here's the real question: How do I find intimacy with God if not through a traditional church model?

The answer came to me recently and it was a freeing revelation. I connect with God by working. I literally feel an intimacy with God when I build my company. I know it sounds crazy, but I believe God gave me my mission and my team and I feel closest to him when I've got my hand on the plow. It's thrilling and I couldn't be more grateful he's given me an outlet through which I can both serve and connect with him.

My friend Bob Goff says when we study somebody without getting to know them, it's called stalking. Bob says Jesus is getting creeped out that we keep stalking him. He'd like us to bond with him in the doing.

So, do I attend church? Not often, to be honest.

Like I said, it's not how I learn.

But I also believe the church is all around us, not to be confined by a specific tribe.

I'm fine with where I've landed and finally experiencing some forward momentum in my faith. I worship God every day through my work. It's a blast.

So are you an auditory, visual or kinesthetic learner? And if visual or kinesthetic, how do you connect with God?"¹

- What do you think about his post? Right? Wrong?
 - Wrong, obviously. Terrible.
- What are the underlying assumptions that he makes in this post?
 - He assumes that the service is primarily for his benefit.
 - He assumes that God lets us decide how we are to approach him.
 - He assumes that music is there simply for him to connect with God.
 - He assumes that the sermon is simply about teaching.
 - He redefines the church according to his own thoughts, not the Bible.

Instead of looking inward to what we think the church service should be, or what the Lord's day is about, let's look to the Word and let God define the Lord's Day for us.

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT THE LORD'S DAY?

¹ Miller, Donald, I Don't Worship God by Singing. I Connect With Him Elsewhere. (<http://storylineblog.com/2014/02/03/i-dont-worship-god-by-singing-i-connect-with-him-elsewhere/>, 2014)

1) The Lord's Day is a Christian Institution

The article says, "**The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance.**" The Lord's Day is *uniquely* a Christian institution. It is not a Jewish day, nor is it a day that was commonly recognized as a day off of work. It came about because of the church. This is a day that was recognized by the early church, and the tradition has been handed down to every branch of the church through history. Gathering together on Sunday is something that all Christians, everywhere have observed.

Acts 20:7

[7] On the first day of the week [Sunday], when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

Revelation 1:9-11

[9] I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. [10] I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet [11] saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

Coming from a culture with a Christian heritage, we have a lot to be thankful for. The fact that many [most] employees have Sundays off is a direct result of our historical Christian roots. We are blessed that we live in a place and time that (for a lot of people) we are freed up to gather as a local church without external obligations placed upon us. We should give thanks!

- We are going to get into differences between the Lord's Day and the Sabbath later on, but thinking strictly about the Lord's Day, is it important for us to gather together on Sunday? Why?

2) The Lord's Day Commemorates the Resurrection

The article says that the Lord's Day "**commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead.**" Our Lord was raised back to life on the first day of the week. This is why the early church gathered on Sunday. Every week commemorates this glorious truth, the linchpin for our entire faith. "He is risen indeed" is not just a slogan for us on Easter, but it should be our joyful refrain each and every Sunday.

Matthew 28:1-10

[1] Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. [2] And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. [3] His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. [4] And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. [5] But the angel said to the women, "Do not be

afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. [6] He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. [7] Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” [8] So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. [9] And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. [10] Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

Mark 16:1-8

Luke 24:1-3, 33-35

John 20:1-23

- Why is the resurrection so important for the church?

3) The Lord’s Day is to Include Worship and Spiritual Devotion

The article states, “[**The Lord’s Day**] **should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private.**” The Bible has a lot to say about what we are to do and be as the gathered local church. It does not leave it up to us to try and figure out how we are to organize ourselves, and it doesn’t leave it to us to figure out what we are supposed to do on Sunday’s together. The Lord has much to say by way of command about his gathered church.

a. Corporate Gathering

The first thing that we see in Scripture is there is a real, actual, local gathered body of believers. It rarely refers to the Church universal, but rather it almost always talks about the gathered local church. A body of believers is that does not gather together is completely foreign to the New Testament, and it doesn’t even make sense in light of all of the instructions concerning ecclesiological structure, the “one another” commands, or all of the examples we read about in the second have of the New Testament.

Matthew 18:15-20

*[15] “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. [16] But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. [17] If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. [18] Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. [19] Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. [20] **For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.**”*

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

[1] Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. [2] **On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.** [3] And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. [4] If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

Hebrews 10:19-25

[19] Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, [20] by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, [21] and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [23] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. [24] **And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**

- Why is it important that we gather together regularly? What do we lose when we treat our weekly gathering lightly?

b. Elder Led

The church is to be led by pastors who faithfully preach the Word, pray for its members, and shepherd the flock. There are clear instructions in the Pastoral Epistles on who should be serving in this role, and this role only makes sense in light of a gathered local assembly. Pastors are to be close to the people, not a dude on TV or a website, and they are to be actively involved in the activities of the church. When we gather on Sundays, the elders are responsible for preaching and teaching the Word of God. The responsibility for everything that happens during the service ultimately falls on the elders, as they must give an account to God.

Titus 1:5-9

[5] This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and **appoint elders in every town as I directed you**—[6] if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. [7] For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, [8] but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. [9] He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

c. Preaching the Word

This is closely tied to the previous attribute of the Sunday gathering. As Christians, we are Gospel-Centered, Word-Centered. It is the preaching of God's Word whereby we not only hear the Scripture read, but we hear it expounded upon by a man who has poured through

the text. It is to explain the meaning of the words, and apply it to the lives of the congregation. This is why it is so important for our preaching to be anchored in the Bible, not in our own thoughts and opinions.

On preaching, Bryan Chappell says,

I am “asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.. in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.” The prayer of every preacher who loves God’s Word and God’s people echoes this prayer of the apostle Paul for the Colossian church (Col. 1:9-10). We pray that God will also use our preaching to produce such a knowledge of God’s will that others will live to please him and will produce spiritual fruit, resulting in an ever growing knowledge of their God. These priorities indicate that the goal of preaching is not merely to impart information but to provide the means of transformation ordained by a sovereign God that will affect the lives and destinies of eternal souls committed to a preacher’s spiritual care.²

Preaching is not intended to merely communicate truths, but to communicate God’s Word in a way that affects the hearer. Scripture places great importance on preaching, and this is why we hold this up as central to our gathering on Sunday mornings.

Ephesians 4:11-13

[11] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, [13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

2 Timothy 4:1-4

[1] I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: [2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. [3] For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, [4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

- Are there other ways to communicate God’s truths that can take the place of preaching on Sunday morning? Songs? Skits? Movies?
- What would you say to someone who says that they don’t learn through lecture?

d. Corporate Prayer

Unsurprisingly, as Christians we value corporate prayer together in our Sunday morning gathering. As you are familiar, we do this several times in our service at Crossway. Our

²Chappell, Bryan, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, (Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 1994), 25.

worship of God would be incomplete without speaking to him, crying out to him in prayer. A pastor or a member of the congregation leads our prayer, but even as an individual leads it we should privately be praying to God in our seats. It would not make sense for us to sing praises to God, to hear from him in his word, and not pray to him asking for forgiveness, praising his holy and righteous name, and asking for insight and understanding. The early church certainly incorporated public prayer in their gathering.

Acts 2:42

*[42] And they devoted themselves to **the apostles' teaching** and the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers**.*

Acts 12:1-5

*[1] About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. [2] He killed James the brother of John with the sword, [3] and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. [4] And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. [5] So Peter was kept in prison, **but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church**.*

- What types of things should we be praying for corporately on Sunday morning?

e. Congregational Singing

One common thread we see in all Christian churches is our gathered corporate singing. First a bit of a tangent: this past fall we witnessed something crazy, unique, and unheard of for most living humans. Much to my dismay, the Cubs won the World Series. At the conclusion of their post season games, I did witness something pretty cool, something I was actually quite jealous of. There is a ridiculous song entitled "Go Cubs Go." It is pretty cheesy, pretty corny, but I tell you what, those North-siders love that thing. And after each win they would sing it at the top of their lungs in unison. And it sounded awesome. I jokingly sent one of my friends a video clip of this and entitled it "a case for congregational singing." All of these people were gathered in one place to celebrate one thing – a Cubs win. It was so much better than a musical performance – it was a mass of people belting it out together and it was powerful. Their normal, natural response was to joyfully sing out together with one voice. This was for a cool, but how much more should we as the church be singing out together in one voice to our God. We have something of so much more significance to sing about. Christ has redeemed us, and we can sing the praises of our triune God together. This is what we are instructed to do in Scripture.

Colossians 3:12-17

*[12] Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, [13] bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. [14] And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. [15] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. [16] **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and***

admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. [17] *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Ephesians 5:18-21

[18] And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, [19] addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, [20] giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [21] submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

- Based on these verses, what is our singing for and what should our music include?
 - It should include the whole congregation.
 - It is for teaching and admonishing one another.
 - It is for praising the Lord.
 - It should be done in thankfulness

f. Baptism

As we discussed last week, the gathered church is where we find the ordinance of baptism. It is here where we publically baptize individuals into the church.

Matthew 28:18-20

*[18] And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,** [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

g. The Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11:17-26

[17] But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. [18] For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, [19] for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. [20] When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. [21] For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. [22] What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

*[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. **Do this in remembrance of me.**" [25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. **Do***

this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” [26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

- Is there anything you would add as a required activity on the Lord's Day? (Church discipline?)

4) The Lord's Day is not the Sabbath

We need to be careful not to confuse the Lord's Day with the Sabbath as commanded in the Old Covenant. The Sabbath was a specific day (Saturday) commanded for a specific people (ethnic Israel). We see this in the preamble to the Law delivered in Exodus 20.

Exodus 20:1-2, 8-11

[1] And God spoke all these words, saying, [2] “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery...

[8] “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep 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, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. [11] For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

We see then in the pages of Scripture Jesus unpack the intention of the Sabbath, and further in Hebrews the author describes fulfillment of the Sabbath rest in Christ.

Mark 2:23-28

*[23] One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. [24] And the Pharisees were saying to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” [25] And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: [26] how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?” [27] And he said to them, “**The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. [28] So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.**”*

Matthew 12:1-14

Hebrews 4:8-11

*[8] For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. [9] **So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,** [10] for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.*

[11] Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

We do not see in the pages of the New Testament anything that transfers the Jewish Sabbath to Sunday, making it a Christian Sabbath. What we see is the church gather on the

Lord's Day, and we the Old Covenant Law no longer in effect the way it was for ethnic Israel.

Colossians 2:8-19

[8] See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. [9] For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, [10] and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. [11] In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, [12] having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. [13] And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, [14] by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. [15] He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

[16] Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. [17] These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. [18] Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, [19] and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

There have been a couple of different views on this, and there have been many Christians over the years that see this differently. Many traditions hold to a "Christian Sabbath," restricting activities on the Lord's Day. This is a very common and popular view among many historical figures that we love and have been greatly helped by. This includes Jonathan Edwards, almost all of the Puritans, and Charles Spurgeon.

"The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days (Lev. 23:3), and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship (Ps. 92:1-2; Isa. 58:13-14), except so much as is taken up in the works of necessity and mercy (Matt. 12:11-12)."³

Spurgeon and others directly connect the Old Testament Sabbath restrictions to the Lord's Day. I believe this to be in error. While there are certainly principles that we can glean from the restrictions in the law, this is speaking where Scripture is silent. Tom Schreiner was particularly helpful here in his book "40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law."

We would expect the Sabbath to no longer be in force since it was the covenant sign of the Mosaic covenant, and, as I have argued elsewhere in this book, it is clear that believers are no longer under the Sinai covenant. Therefore, they are no longer bound by the sign of the covenant either. The Sabbath, as a covenant sign, celebrated

³ Spurgeon, Charles, *Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q51

Israel's deliverance from Egypt, but the Exodus points forward, according to New Testament writers, to redemption in Christ. Believers in Christ were not freed from Egypt, and hence the covenant sign of Israel does not apply to them.

It is clear in Paul's letters that the Sabbath is not binding upon believers. In Colossians Paul identifies the Sabbath as a shadow along with requirements regarding foods, festivals, and the new moon (Col. 2:16–17). The Sabbath, in other words, points to Christ and is fulfilled in him. The word for "shadow" (*skia*) that Paul uses to describe the Sabbath is the same term the author of Hebrews used to describe Old Testament sacrifices. The law is only a "shadow (*skia*) of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities" (Heb. 10:1). The argument is remarkably similar to what we see in Colossians: both contrast elements of the law as a shadow with the "substance" (*sōma*, Col. 2:17) or the "form" (*eikona*, Heb. 10:1) found in Christ. Paul does not denigrate the Sabbath. He salutes its place in salvation history, for, like the Old Testament sacrifices, though not in precisely the same way, it prepared the way for Christ. I know of no one who thinks Old Testament sacrifices should be instituted today; and when we compare what Paul says about the Sabbath with such sacrifices, it seems right to conclude that he thinks the Sabbath is no longer binding.⁴

- What are your thoughts? Are Sabbath-like regulations binding on Christians?

5) Christian Response to the Lord's Day

For New Covenant believers, we should all agree on the basic Biblical commands for the Lord's Day.

a. Do Not Neglect the Gathering of the Church

We are directed to gather together (as we described above.) This is not optional for us, but this should be our regular course of action as we seek to live our the New Testament commands together.

Hebrews 10:19-25

*[19] Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, [20] by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, [21] and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [23] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. [24] **And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.***

⁴Schreiner, Tom, 40 Questions About Christians and Biblical Law, (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 2010), 212

b. Prayerfully Consider your Actions

The article says, **“Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.”** We are not bound by Sabbath commands, but we are bound by conscience. This does not mean that we get to do whatever we want. There is no room here for us to violate what the Bible clearly teaches. And as we do not bind one another's conscience to commands that are extra-Biblical, we must not participate in activities if it violates our conscience. In addition, we lovingly consider others as we cannot use our Christian freedom to cause another brother to stumble. We are free in Christ, and we should use that freedom to lovingly encourage one another.

Romans 14:1-12

[1] As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. [2] One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. [3] Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. [4] Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

[5] One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. [6] The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. [7] For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. [8] For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. [9] For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

[10] Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; [11] for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” [12] So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

c. Sacrificially Worship the Lord

We are called to worship him in spirit and in truth. We are called to be a part of his church, and this involves laying down what is comfortable for us at times, but it is all done to the glory of God.

Romans 12:1-2

[1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (ESV)

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

- A) What difference does this make in my life? How should my life look because of these truths?
- B) What changes do I need to make because of these truths?
- C) How can I share these truths with family, friends, or neighbors?

HOMEWORK

For next week, read Article 9 and all of the associated scriptures with this article.