



Isaiah 58:13

(13) If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing *your own* desires, nor speaking *your own* words,

A Faithful Version

"Your words": [Matthew 12:34](#) says that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." The key is *out of the abundance of the heart*, that is, "what is in the heart," what we want to talk about. Of the four broad areas in [Isaiah 58:13-14](#), this is probably the most difficult one for us. We wrestle with it, wondering whether "what we are saying" should be said or not.

The emphasis is on the word "your." Our conversations on the [Sabbath](#) should not be the same as they are on the other six days of the week, when our conversations would tend to be on those things that are pleasurable to us. What [God](#) wants us to do and say on the Sabbath are things that are His pleasure, not ours. But if we are growing spiritually, then what is "His pleasure" is also going to be in our heart.

The title of the first book of J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy on the one ring of power is very interesting. It is called "The [Fellowship](#) of the Ring." The story is a fantasy about a group of nine people who were chosen to destroy the one ring of power. If we understand the symbolism, their enemy was Satan.

He wanted to keep the one ring alive and working among the nations. It was up to Frodo Baggins and the group of people who were with him to destroy that one ring. The whole trilogy describes what happened to this "fellowship." It contains all of the experiences they had in carrying out this quest to destroy the ring: the good times and the bad, the good weather and the bad, the fear and the courage, the discouragement, sickness, and injuries—all of the things that happened along the way, all of the things that they fought against and overcame, all of the difficulties, all of the trials—and all the while carrying the

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burden of trying to make sure that this one ring of power was kept out of the enemy's hand so it could be destroyed.

There are a lot of good lessons there, but this illustration should help us to understand what should be the subjects of our Sabbath conversations. It is our fellowship, first of all with God the Father and His Son [Jesus Christ](#), as well as all of us who are within this fellowship. The things that we experience with the Father and Son, the things that we experience with each other—our discouragements, our hopes, our dreams, our failures, our successes, our courage, our fears, our worries, our crying, our happy times. All of these things become a part of the way.

The fellowship that we have along the way to the [Kingdom of God](#) is "fair game" to talk about on the Sabbath. Many things we might consider to be mundane contain vital lessons for us and others. We should share our happy times and sad times with our brothers and sisters in the faith.

But when we start throwing in things that we are planning to do about entertainments, sports, etc.—we are beginning to drift away. Are these part of the way? Is it part of the fellowship? Probably not, but it could be. This should begin to give us a framework within which we can see what is right to speak about.

God does not intend that we spend our whole time on the Sabbath turning to Scriptures. Certainly, to do so is right and good. But there is nothing wrong with talking about our fellowship and all it entails. There is a great deal that can be explored in these areas and that we can feel comfortable—with good conscience—talking about and sharing with one another.

A great deal of what we say is just so much vanity, but a lot of good lies in the experiences we have had, the lessons that we can pass on, the encouragement that we can share. There are multitudes of experiences and subjects that fit within positive purposes for which the Sabbath was created.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Fourth Commandment \(Part 5\)](#)



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