

So Little Respect

Lets's Not Follow The World

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You will often hear me and other church of God ministers reference Sabbath-breaking as an example of people not keeping the commandments of God. We do this because it [Sabbath breaking] is so clearly recognizable. All one has to do is observe them keeping Sunday rather than the Sabbath. But brethren, that obvious divide between Sabbath-keepers and Sunday-keepers is driven even wider and more obvious when one takes a bit of care observing *how* they keep it—that is, how they keep Sunday. The manner in which they keep Sunday reveals the huge deficits in their respect for God.

An expanded translation of Romans 8:7 might read like this:

Romans 8:7 (paraphrased) The carnal mind [meaning the normal, uncalled and unconverted mind of all humanity] is enmity against God [meaning, it normally and naturally views God and the things that He requires of man—being His creation—as an enemy to be resisted]. That mind is not only not subject to God's right to rule over His creation, it cannot be made to be subject to Him.

In one sense, the measure of this resistance is incredible. Except for the angels who rebelled, we are the only ones in the tremendous multitude of living things that God has created who rebel.

Isaiah gives a kind of startled viewpoint on this, saying, "Shall the clay say to the potter, 'Why have you made me thus?'" (Isaiah 45:9). But we do do this and very few humans seem to stop to think that *we* are the problem that is at the base of everything that is going wrong in this world.

Instead people will blame God, complaining, "Well, if there is a God, why does He allow such things? Why doesn't He do something?" Brethren, do you understand that if He did do such a thing, He would offend just as many, who would wail about what He chose to do? Human nature is that perverse.

But back to the Sabbath. Last Sabbath, an article appeared in the *Charlotte Observer* that was really a brief book review of a new religious book just published. Would you believe that a man named Steven Miller wrote and published a 310-page book titled,

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"The Peculiar Life of Sundays"? He did that to illustrate in word fashion how people observe Sunday. 310 pages!

If I had written that book, I would have some said something like this—this is how they keep Sunday: "Some sleep in; others play golf, while others play baseball and soccer. There are some who go to the movies, and some even go to Sunday school and church, and then everybody goes to the restaurant."

Pardon my sarcasm, but there was a time even in my lifetime when people treated Sunday with a great deal more respect than that. But now virtually anything goes, so there is absolutely no difference between the keeping of Sunday or Monday or Tuesday or any other day of the week. Preachers even adjust their Sunday service routines around some major sporting event, like the World Series, the Super Bowl, a golf tournament, or even some local university big game.

What is so tragic to me is how minuscule is the attention, let alone respect, that is given God. He has become a non-entity to the overwhelming majority of Americans. Even among those who do pay enough attention to Him at least to attend services (on the wrong day), what He says is not taken seriously. His will is basically ignored.

Let me suggest something to you that I think is truly simple. Does everybody here know what the word "follow" means? It means "to go after; to move along the course of; to accept the guidance or the leadership of; to take as a model or precedent." Jesus told his disciples, "Follow Me!" Paul said to "Follow me (or, imitate me) as I follow (or imitate) Christ." Furthermore, to make this reality really simple, a disciple is to walk in the very steps of Jesus Christ, as Peter commanded. How close can you get to understanding what "follow Me" means?

All the way from Genesis 2, up to and including the book of Acts and beyond, the only day the heroes of faith—including Jesus and Paul—kept as a part of their manner of living (and taught besides) is the Sabbath, not Sunday.

To human nature and its enmity against God, that is, incredibly, not enough evidence. So, human nature creates twisted justifications, like somehow the law is done away—even though Jesus said, "Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets." Or, "One has to keep all the laws except the Sabbath, because (they say) it's only ceremonial."

Where did man find the authority to declare the Sabbath ceremonial? Has God also declared "you shall not murder" ceremonial, or that lying and stealing are also

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ceremonial? If you can do it to one commandment, why can't you do it to the others?

But I think the lesson in this for us is that what they do is to justify not keeping the Sabbath illustrates how perverse human nature is—so perverse that it took a well-educated man 310 pages to describe how they keep Sunday.

Do you remember seeing those billboards along the major highways that read as if they were a message from God? They would say something like, "Just what don't you understand about 'thou shall not'?" Did you ever see one that said, "Just what don't you understand about 'thou shall keep the Sabbath'?"

This is why the church of God ministry so frequently uses Sabbath-breaking as the example of human nature's perversity. The requirement of keeping the Sabbath is so clearly commanded and shown by example, and yet men reject it, unwilling to give him their time on even one day out of a week.

But let us not never forget that we should know better, and because we have been enabled to know better, we are held to a much higher standard. Right now we are being judged with a scrutiny they are not. Never forget that human nature still lurks in us, still seeking to express its enmity against God. And "to whom much is given, of him shall much be required." So, let us give God much more than the world.