



How Do You Keep Your Life in Balance? **Exodus 20:8-10**

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 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 (Exodus 20:8-10—ESV).

For our personal benefit, God commands us to both labor and rest; each activity requires the other, when one starts the other stops. Because we need mental, physical, and spiritual relief from our labors, Jesus declared that God made the Sabbath for us (Mark 2:27-28). God commands us to labor, because everyone needs the fruits of labor (their own labor or another's labor) to live. Paul wrote, "we gave you this command: anyone unwilling to work should not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). The key word in the command is "unwilling." Why should those "willing to work" put forth their labor for those "unwilling to work"? Some are "unable to work" at any job, and believers must struggle against those in our society that would starve such people to death. The Bible explicitly commands believers "to care for orphans and widows in their distress," and we might add the underemployed (James 1:27). Fortunately, we have assistance programs, the church, and volunteer agencies to help those unable to work and those willing but unable to work. For the unemployed or retired, looking for work or going to school or doing some volunteer work can be appropriate labor. Whatever we do, we should all learn to pray as Jesus taught, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). Worship on the Sabbath can provide encouragement from God's word, spiritual nourishment, prayer support, and clarity of thought to prepare us for the labor and week ahead. The Bible reveals the value of labor and rest and teaches us to maintain the proper balance between the two: six days of labor and one day of rest. All of God's commands are for our benefit always and they reveal God's love and concern for us.