

Loopholes in the Law of God

International Bible Lesson

Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-16

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“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, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns” (Exodus 20:9-10).

God’s detailed command reveals how much sinners look for loopholes to avoid the intentions of the lawgiver and the law. They look for ways to break the law while obeying the letter of the law for their personal benefit and without fear of penalties. With a less specific law, imagine an important Israelite rationalizing: “I will keep the law of God and only labor six days a week. I can always order my daughter and servant to work when I want. I employ foreigners to work in my business, so I can keep them working seven days a week.” In order to close every loophole they could think of regarding the Fourth Commandment, the religious leaders added their own laws to God’s laws. Based on their laws, they condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath and letting His disciples eat grain in a field; therefore, Jesus explained the purpose of the Sabbath, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27-28). God intended the Sabbath for everyone’s benefit, even for domestic animals. Jesus demonstrated God’s love for all people, and after Jesus wins our hearts, we recognize daily how much God loves us. We begin to see that God made His laws to bless everyone. Rather than look for loopholes, we pray for God’s guidance and strength to obey God in everything.

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Thinking Further

1. How might your church be different if everyone obeyed the commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy”?
2. How might your town be different if everyone obeyed the commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy”?
3. How might your nation be different if everyone obeyed the commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy”?
4. Today, do you think churches should teach people the commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy”? Give a reason for your answer.
5. Today, what kind of person obeys the commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy”? Give a reason for your answer.