

S T U D Y   G U I D E



W. ROBERT GODFREY

# *The Lord's Day*

SABBATH WORSHIP & REST

S T U D Y   G U I D E

# The Lord's Day

## Sabbath Worship and Rest

W. Robert Godfrey



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

*Renew your Mind.*

LIGONIER.ORG | 800-435-4343

Copyright © 2021 Ligonier Ministries

421 Ligonier Court, Sanford, FL 32771

E-mail: [info@ligonier.org](mailto:info@ligonier.org)

All rights reserved.

No reproduction of this work without permission.

Printed in the United States of America.

# Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Study Schedules</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1     What Should We Think of Sunday?</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>2     Historical &amp; Biblical Reflections</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>3     The Origin of the Sabbath</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>4     Answers to Difficulties</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>5     The Lord's Day as Sabbath</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>6     Living It Out</i>	<i>45</i>

# Introduction

Why do Christians worship on Sunday? And how is worship on the first day of the week connected to the fourth commandment? Isn't the Sabbath the seventh day of the week and not the first? These questions are important and have direct ramifications on how we worship, how we understand the Bible, and how we spend our time on what we now call the Lord's Day. In this teaching series, Dr. W. Robert Godfrey surveys the theology, history, practice, and biblical teaching behind the Lord's Day so that we might devote this day to the One to whom it rightly belongs—the Lord.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on [Ligonier.org](http://Ligonier.org), or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind yourself of what you have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills that the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge that each lecture is communicating.</p>

---

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that is intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The time stamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at <a href="http://Ligonier.org">Ligonier.org</a>.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

---

# Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through *The Lord's Day* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 8-Week Plan	Standard 6-Week Plan	Abbreviated 4-Week Plan	Intensive 3-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1	1 & 2
2	1	2	2 & 3	3 & 4
3	2	3	4 & 5	5 & 6
4	3	4	6	
5	4	5		
6	5	6		
7	6			
8	*			

\* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

# What Should We Think of Sunday?

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of the church, Christians have worshiped on Sunday. But the church has not always understood the significance of this day in the same way. Certainly today, many do not view it as significant at all. Things haven't always been this way. In this lesson, Dr. Godfrey surveys the recent landscape of the church concerning Sunday and begins to explain how the early church through the Middle Ages understood it in relation to the Sabbath and to the fourth commandment.

## LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe recent views and practices concerning the Lord's Day
- Identify how the Lord's Day was viewed and in what manner it was connected to the fourth commandment in the early and medieval church

## KEY IDEAS

- One of the greatest changes in the Christian church in the last seventy-five years has been in our attitude about Sunday.
- Cultural influences and church practice have changed the way we think about Sunday.
- The early church fathers made a sharp distinction between the Lord's Day and the fourth commandment, but the church reestablished this connection during the Middle Ages.

---

## REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Before the Video

#### *What Do You Think?*

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Why are you undertaking this study about the Lord's Day?
- What do you think Sunday is all about?

#### *Scripture Reading*

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.*

—Genesis 2:1–3

- How did God bless the seventh day and make it holy? Why is this significant?

### During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

#### *New Attitude*

0:00–15:00

- What are some indications that the church's attitude about Sunday has changed in its own practices?
- What are some reasons for this attitude change in the broader American culture?
- What are some of the negative results from this attitude change in the church?



*Sunday in the Early and Medieval Church*

15:00–23:51

- Why did the early church fathers make a sharp distinction between the Lord's Day and the Jewish Sabbath?
- What important distinction allowed Thomas Aquinas to connect the Lord's Day to the fourth commandment?

*After the Video*

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- Which do you think most influenced the other: the church's change in attitude about Sunday leading to the culture's change in attitude about Sunday or vice versa?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss where they have seen a change in the church's or the broader culture's attitudes about Sunday.

- What is the predominant attitude about Sunday among Christians today?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss the following question: How does either the church's practice or societal influences affect your understanding of the Lord's Day?

- Why is navigating what the early church fathers thought about Sunday difficult?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss whether they think the Lord's Day is connected to the fourth commandment while providing some rationale for their conclusions.

**PRAYER**

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for His sovereign hand and work throughout history.
- Confess times when you have neglected the worship of God with His gathered people.
- Thank God for creating all things, and especially the church, for His own glory.
- Ask God to help you understand the significance of the Lord's Day.

---

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Apart from the New Testament, we have testimony that Christians worshiped on the first day of the week going back to which century?
  - a. Second
  - b. Third
  - c. Fourth
  - d. Fifth
2. Why did the church fathers not connect the Lord's Day to the fourth commandment?
  - a. To free Christians from the moral aspects of God's law
  - b. To clarify that the church is not bound by Jewish regulations
  - c. To encourage Christians' industry throughout the week
  - d. To separate from early church practice
3. For a time, Jewish Christians continued to go to synagogue in the early church.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. Roman Catholics combine into one which two commandments that Protestants see as separate commandments?
  - a. The first and second
  - b. The second and third
  - c. The third and fourth
  - d. The ninth and tenth
5. As little as seventy-five years ago, certain cultural practices were unthinkable on Sundays.
  - a. True
  - b. False
6. What two distinctions in the Mosaic law did Thomas Aquinas make to underscore the enduring significance of the fourth commandment to Christians?
  - a. Moral and civil law
  - b. Civil and ceremonial law
  - c. Moral and ceremonial law
  - d. Case and statutory law

# Answer Key—What Should We Think of Sunday?

## REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Before the Video

#### *What Do You Think?*

*These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.*

#### *Scripture Reading*

- How did God bless the seventh day and make it holy? Why is this significant?  
*God blessed the seventh day and made it holy by resting on it. He ceased creating. This provides for us God's own example of resting, a resting through which He blessed the day. His act of blessing the day and making it holy gives us another reason to observe it.*

### During the Video

#### *New Attitude*

- What are some indications that the church's attitude about Sunday has changed in its own practices?  
*One of the greatest changes in the church in the last seventy-five years is its attitude about Sunday. Sunday is often no longer treated as a holy day. As Dr. Godfrey recounted, there was a time when a family would attend worship in the morning and spend devotional time together before returning to church to worship in the evening. Sunday evening worship is no longer practiced to the extent that it once was. In addition to this practice falling out of favor, people now spend the time that they would have spent worshipping doing other things.*
- What are some reasons for this attitude change in the broader American culture?  
*The changing attitude about Sunday is seen not only in the church's practice but also in the culture at large. Many reasons are hypothesized for why this has occurred. Because of the automobile, people can travel more readily. And because of television and a host of other technologies, entertainment is more widely available. Sports have become a prominent feature on any given Sunday.*
- What are some of the negative results from this attitude change in the church?  
*Many churches changed their approach to Lord's Day worship to adapt to the culture, thinking that they would be more evangelistically successful because of such*

*changes. But the truth is that the church is shrinking and is no longer as influential as it once was. More than this, negative impacts are seen within the church. Christians are less knowledgeable because they are gathering for worship half as often as they would once have done.*

### *Sunday in the Early and Medieval Church*

- Why did the early church fathers make a sharp distinction between the Lord's Day and the Jewish Sabbath?

*The early church fathers made a sharp distinction between the Lord's Day and the Jewish Sabbath because they essentially wanted to see a break between Jewish and Christian practices. They did not want the life of the church to be controlled by the synagogues and, as a result of that, by Mosaic regulations.*

- What important distinction allowed Thomas Aquinas to connect the Lord's Day to the fourth commandment?

*The church's thought about the connection between the Lord's Day and the fourth commandment changed over time. Thomas Aquinas saw in the fourth commandment both a ceremonial and a moral aspect. For this reason, he believed that the fourth commandment applied to Christians morally but that the seventh-day observance of the fourth commandment did not, since that was only a ceremonial aspect of the law.*

### *After the Video*

- Which do you think most influenced the other: the church's change in attitude about Sunday leading to the culture's change in attitude about Sunday or vice versa?

*This is a challenging question to reflect on, and certainly both the church and the culture influenced each other. It seems that the church may have been more influenced by the culture. Dr. Godfrey references many reasons behind this, including rapid changes in transportation and entertainment, as well as what the church perceived needed to be done to have an evangelistic influence on the culture. Whether the church or the culture most changed the way people think about Sunday, the church is facing detrimental results to its health within and to its influence without.*

- What is the predominant attitude about Sunday among Christians today?

*Your answer may reflect your own circles within evangelicalism, but with most churches' meeting once for worship on the Lord's Day and the norms of our culture at large, the predominant opinion about Sunday for many Christians seems to be that, besides worship, Sunday is free for us to do with it what we want.*

- Why is navigating what the early church fathers thought about Sunday difficult?

*The early church fathers didn't connect the Lord's Day to the fourth commandment, and this poses a difficulty for us because it might be assumed that the church was*

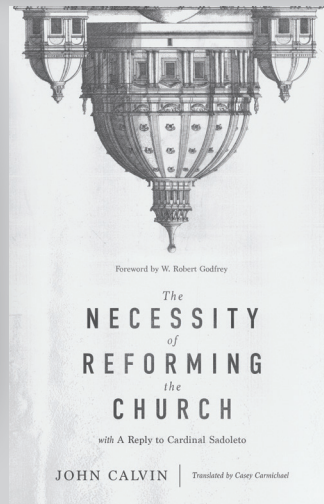
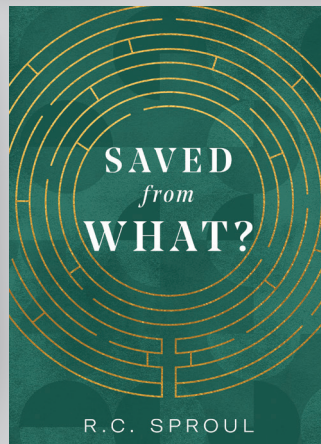
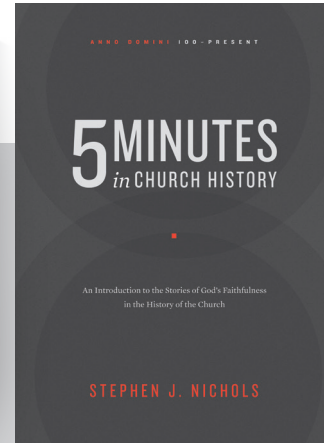
*so closely connected to the Apostolic church that it would indicate something about the New Testament church's own thought and practice. But we must consider the historical context of the church and the difficulties that began to arise between Jews and Christians, between synagogues and churches. The church fathers' impulse to make a sharp distinction between the Lord's Day and the Sabbath, in this light, is understandable.*

## REVIEW QUIZ

1. **A.**  
*The New Testament bears witness that Christians met on the first day of the week to worship. We also have extrabiblical testimony of this. The Epistle to Barnabas, dating back to the second century and possibly earlier, is one such example.*
2. **B.**  
*It may be surprising to learn that the church fathers did not connect the Lord's Day to the fourth commandment. Historical context is key for understanding why they did not. The church was in a time of transition. The church fathers did not want the church to be bound by certain Mosaic regulations, just as the Apostle Paul defended the church in his day.*
3. **A.**  
*Jewish Christians still attended synagogue while also worshiping on the first day in the early church. Historical testimony to this fact can be seen in such places as the Epistle to Barnabas and other rabbinic literature. Over time, tensions developed that would bring this practice to an end.*
4. **A.**  
*Roman Catholics divide the Ten Commandments differently from Protestants. They combine the first two commandments into one. In order to end up with Ten Commandments, Roman Catholics then split the tenth commandment in two. This is important to remember for clarity's sake when engaging with a Roman Catholic and even some Lutherans who follow this practice.*
5. **A.**  
*Dr. Godfrey told several stories that highlighted the influence on society at large of the church's setting apart the first day of the week as holy. Certain parts of stores were sectioned off, and even some roads were closed down in areas. People thought the National Football League wouldn't succeed because its games are played and televised on Sundays.*
6. **C.**  
*Reformed theologians continue to think of the Mosaic law in terms of a threefold division: moral, civil, and ceremonial. Thomas Aquinas asserted that the fourth commandment had moral and ceremonial aspects. He primarily understood the ceremonial aspects of this commandment as related to seventh-day observance.*



We want to see men and women around the world connect  
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



Order your copy of this title, download the digital version,  
or browse thousands of resources at **Ligonier.org**.



LIGONIER MINISTRIES