

THE LORD'S DAY

A

POSITIVE

APPROACH

John G. Roberts

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This booklet was written to emphasize the importance of the Lord's Day and to show its positive value which is so often undermined.

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THE LORD'S DAY — A POSITIVE APPROACH

Sunday, known biblically as 'The Sabbath' or 'Lord's Day' has been of considerable benefit to all mankind. The setting aside of one day in seven for the express purpose of worshipping God and benefiting man has its roots in Scripture. God Himself 'rested on the seventh day' following His work of creation. The Sabbath principle is embodied within the Ten Commandments which were given for all men and for all time. Following the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the first day of the week became a weekly reminder of His risen presence. Whereas the seventh day speaks of God's work in creation, the first day reminds us of His love in redemption.

This special day has been a great blessing to every Christian believer. It is a day which Christians value and one which they have come to love and respect.

The Christian loves and respects this day because:

(1) It is evidence of love for Almighty God

When, by His Grace God calls us to Himself, we experience a depth of love for Him which we never thought possible. When we come to love someone, our desire is to please that person in thought, word and deed. If this is so in human relationships, how much more so in a relationship with God. John 14:14 says, 'If you love me Keep my commandments'. 2 John 6 says, 'This is love that we walk after his commandments'. We love and respect the Day because it is God's. He made it (Genesis 2:3, Psalm 118:24) and He gave it to us (Exodus 16:29; 20:8-11). Even unbelievers can appreciate and be thankful for a

day different from others, but no-one can fully value it without a personal knowledge of the Lord.

(2) It is the day of worship

Man has created many gods to worship. All religions have a deity, honoured and sought after. The Bible portrays the only true God as He really is and not how men wish Him to be.

Man is a creature made for worship and our creator, the true and living God, is alone worthy of adoration and praise.

The Lord's Day, being free from the everyday pressures of life, gives opportunity for private and corporate worship. It is a day which turns us from temporal things, which constantly occupy our attention, and enables us to concentrate on eternal things. In short it is a day preparing us for heaven.

In Canada, Christians are privileged to have the liberty to worship God openly and undisturbed. This is not afforded to all, particularly not to those living in atheistic countries.

Worship, therefore, is a great blessing and the Lord's Day provides for it. May we and future generations never lose the privilege of worshipping our Maker and Saviour.

(3) It brings a relief from the stress and strain of everyday life

The pace and pressure of life have greatly increased over the past 40 years. It is so easy for people to be sucked into the commercial 'rat race' which dominates the second-half of the century.

In these days of rush and tension, our bodies and minds need a break for refreshment and recuperation. People cannot continue at the current

pace without eventually reaping the consequences. The mind can become exhausted: the body can collapse. Many an illness is made worse by neglect of a regular pattern of rest.

Almighty God made us and knows our capabilities. In the Scriptures He gave directions as to the way life can be lived to its best and fullest potential. Even Christians would do well to spend more time studying their Maker's instructions. God gave us a day of rest for body and mind. We should use this gift wisely and well; and, at the same time, ensure that others within society have the same opportunity for rest, reflection and refreshment.

(4) It contributes to the strengthening of family life

As with the third consideration, this is applicable to all people. Nations are built on the basis of family units. If families are divided, the consequences inevitably affect the nation.

The way society is constructed today leaves little opportunity for family unity. Within many families both parents work. Evenings are taken up with many secular pursuits. There is very little opportunity for families to be together. When the opportunity comes television often dominates so that there is little time for conversation and discussion. Although individuals still live in the same house, the 'home' is broken and often this results in broken marriages and juvenile delinquency.

What a different country we would have — what a change there would be in our homes — if people were aware that Sunday provides a unique opportunity for families to be together. Sunday is the family-day and, in today's society, it is needed more than ever. We neglect it at our peril.

This strengthening of family life is also vital for Christians. Each week-day, family prayers can bring unity, binding the members together. Yet the Lord's Day is even more precious affording greater opportunity of worshipping together in the House of God and sharing each others company during that day's meals, discussing important topics, which are vital parts of family life.

The family unit must be maintained for the benefit of its members, and for the strengthening of the national life.

(5) It gives quiet opportunities for reading, meditation and the study of God's Word

It is vitally important for the Christian to have a daily 'quiet-time', both for prayer and the reading of God's Word. This will enable him to come closer to the Lord and also grow in the faith. If we neglect this opportunity our faith will become stagnant and soon we shall fall into a backslidden condition. For many this privilege is limited due to daily responsibilities, pressures of work, and other duties, which demand considerable time and attention.

However, the Lord's Day provides invaluable opportunities to be alone with God so that we can recharge our spiritual life. Every Christian is a steward of his time. One seventh of our week belongs to God in a very special way. It is worth contemplating the fact that if we live on this earth to the age of 70 years, Sundays will have amounted to 10 years. We are stewards of these precious years to use them as God intended.

This day also presents an opportunity of teaching our children, and any young people in our care, truths which will have an impact upon them for time and eternity.

(6) It brings opportunities for Christian service

In every place and situation Christians should be looking for opportunities to bear a witness to the Saviour. The seed of God's Word must continually be sown, although we acknowledge that it is only Almighty God who can give the increase.

However our duty to employers and our other important responsibilities mean that many forms of Christian service and witness are limited. For many believers, the Lord's Day presents wonderful opportunities of serving Christ.

The Lord's Day enables us to spend time in hospital ministry, visiting the sick and house-bound, conducting services in old people's homes and witnessing in the open-air.

We constantly need to be reminded of our stewardship of time and these are areas our testimonies can be greatly used.

(7) If we use the day as God intends, it will provide strength for the week's activities

Have you heard of the 'Monday morning feeling'? This malaise is plain to see on the faces of many who travel to work by bus or train. The cause of it is invariably the way in which the Lord's Day was spent. Many use its valuable hours for pursuits which do not bring rest and refreshment.

The Christian should never have a 'Monday morning feeling' since he tries to spend Sunday as God directed in His Word.

Judge Matthew Hale, who lived in the 17th century, once wrote:

'A Sabbath well spent, brings a week of content and Health for the toil of the morrow,
A Sabbath profaned, whatever be gained,
Is a certain forerunner of sorrow.'

We should thank Almighty God. The gift of His Son and the preservation of His Word are matters for thanksgiving. However we should also be eternally grateful for the gift of a day different from all others and one which proves such a blessing to individuals, families and nations.

May it not only be loved and respected — may it continue as one of our country's great Christian and National heritages!

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