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The Sabbath

A Prophecy of Eternal Life

by Bill Fowler

When I was in my early teens, my dad gave me some advice that I have remembered over the years, although I have not always followed it as I should have. He said, "If you want to be happy and effective in life with it's continuing problems, then you need to apply this principle."

It's basic, it's simple and it works. Here is the simple but wise counsel he gave me: "When you have a decision to make, if you are not positive it's the right thing to do, put it off for now and come back to it later, if the thought stays with you. You will make fewer mistakes in life if you are confident that your decisions are correct. Don't make hasty decisions, get the facts first."

How could anything be simpler? Yet, it is not a way of life with so many in our "buy now-pay later" society. It feels good, I've got to have it! Now! We have learned over time that the things in life that are really worthwhile are worth planning for and waiting for. All good decisions are based on proper knowledge and proper timing.

Two statements in Proverbs certainly support this principle of not rushing into important decisions: "*The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty*" (Proverbs 21:5, NKJV).

"Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Proverbs 29:20, NKJV).

I really came to understand this principle in 1966 when I was first exposed to the Sabbath day and the commitment required to respond to the calling of God.

I grew up in the Methodist church. We had many good friends and were involved in Sunday School class, youth

activities, men's prayer group and all the holidays. We were having a good time, it was family. My brother and his family had not been to services for a couple of weeks, so I called him to see if someone was sick. He said, "No, we don't go to church on Sunday anymore, we go on Saturday, the Sabbath of the Bible." "You WHAT?," I said. I didn't have a clue what he was talking about.

It didn't make sense to me, but I wondered if he was going to convert to Judaism. The weeks passed into months. One day I was driving by a park area on my way to see a customer, and I saw my brother and his family having a picnic. I wondered why he was doing this on a weekday. Why wasn't he at work? I stopped my "cool" '29 Ford Model A coupe, honked at him and waved him over to where I was parked. "What's going on," I asked. He said he was observing the Days of Unleavened Bread. I thought he had gone over the deep end. I knew my brother was intelligent; he was an aeronautical engineer with a master's degree. Why was he doing all this Jewish stuff?

It was time to get serious and show him how he was wrong in rejecting Christian traditions. Dad's advice came to my mind, I knew I had to approach this in a logical way. Don't make hasty judgments, do some logical research to prove him wrong. I knew this was going to be an easy job; the majority of all churches observe Sunday, the Lord's day. Yes sir, I won't be hasty, I'll have the facts to show him. This wouldn't take long at all.

After about six months of intense study and research at the library and at home, sometimes until several hours after midnight, I knew I had a problem. I could not prove my brother wrong. It wasn't only the Sabbath and the Holy days, it was Xmas, Easter, Valentine's Day, Halloween, all ten of the commandments. It would mean a major change

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of lifestyle. I was overwhelmed.

We started attending Sabbath services. It was quite different than what we were used to, going to church on Saturday, but the warmth of the people was so helpful, we were treated like longtime friends. Passover was coming up in a few months and we were not baptized yet.

My wife was pregnant with our fourth child. Many of the women then were having “natural childbirth.” I told her, maybe “WE” should have this fourth child by natural childbirth. She thought I was crazy! I was pushing her. What I had learned in the last 6 months was so exciting and invigorating that I forgot my dad’s advice about not rushing into a decision. I knew we had entered into a new way of life, but I didn’t realize then how much change was to come into our lives and the trials of overcoming that would test us greatly. With some wise counsel given by the local pastor, I slowed down, eased off on my wife, and she chose to have a natural delivery. This birth of our last child was the easiest of all, and I was able to see our daughter enter this life.

We have been blessed so much since that time 34 years ago, and it all started by trying to prove the Sabbath was not the day that our Heavenly Father had set apart for us to be with Him and our Savior. We entered into a rest that has changed our lives, like many others, and the end result will be eternal love, joy and peace.

As the months turned into years, with new tests and trials to strengthen us, our understanding of the reality of the Sabbath day has become our motive of striving to walk in His way. The Sabbath has been a major factor in our understanding that the very purpose of life is to be at rest as sons and daughters of the Eternal, forever. The purpose for mankind is revealed in the “beginning” book of the Bible: *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them”* (Genesis 1:26-27).

After creating mankind in their image and to be like them in character, the Sabbath was made for mankind. Jesus made that clear when He made this statement: *“And he said unto them, the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath”* (Mark 2:27).

The Sabbath was intended to show man the ultimate rest of being born again, resurrected into the very Family of God.

Mankind has not learned this principle because of continual rejection of God’s laws of love, the Ten Commandments. It takes time and the experience of living to grasp the magnitude of creation, and the Sabbath rest that follows.

Several years ago I heard a “saying” that I’ll never forget and that has helped me to better understand God’s creation of mankind, to be like Him:

“Think about your life as if it were a bank account.

Yesterday is a canceled check, you can never spend it again.

Tomorrow is a promissory note, you can’t receive its value yet.

Today is cash, spend it wisely and it will pay great dividends.”

Our bankers want us to make wise decisions to make sure our account is balanced, with plenty of reserve to sustain us in times of uncertainty and the possibility of depression. Our Heavenly Father also wants us to “balance” our account with him, with a reserve of faith to carry us through the times of trial that He permits for our strengthening. A major factor He gave to mankind, to help us stay “balanced” in life, is the Holy Sabbath day.

Our Spiritual Bank Account

“A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight” (Proverbs 11:1).

“Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good” (Proverbs 20:23).

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever” (tomorrow) (Hebrews 13:8).

Yesterday (history)

“And Jesus said unto him, `No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

Today (overcoming)

“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).

“For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation” (Hebrews 3:14, 15).

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Tomorrow (Kingdom of God)

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34).

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19: 16 -17).

“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (John 12:25).

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Revelation 14:12 -13).

Let's look at the Sabbath command from the book of Deuteronomy: *“Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee? Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day” (Deut 5:12-15).*

We see from the Scriptures that we are to cease from our labors, the carnal works of mankind. This ceasing from our labors and doing the works of God is what the Sabbath is about, for eternity.

God's people were slaves, in bondage to a people that did not know God. Just as He took them out of physical bondage, He is calling His creation to cease from the works of unrighteousness and do His works, with Him and Jesus for eternity. No more works of men; instead, His born-again children doing His will in love, joy and peace.

The universe will see the results of the “Sabbath rest” for eternity. Just like the prodigal son, His children have come home, wanting to do His will.

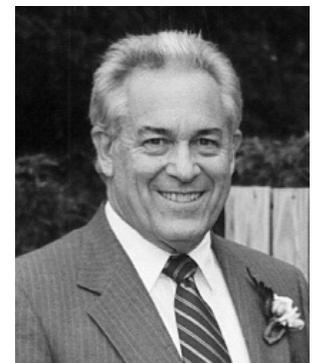
“And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry” (Luke 15:21-24).

“Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:4-8).

As we think on Verse 8, we know that “these things” will be a part of the Sabbath rest now and forever. The Sabbath is a “shadow” of great things to come!

Bill Fowler
Dedicated Servant of God

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