

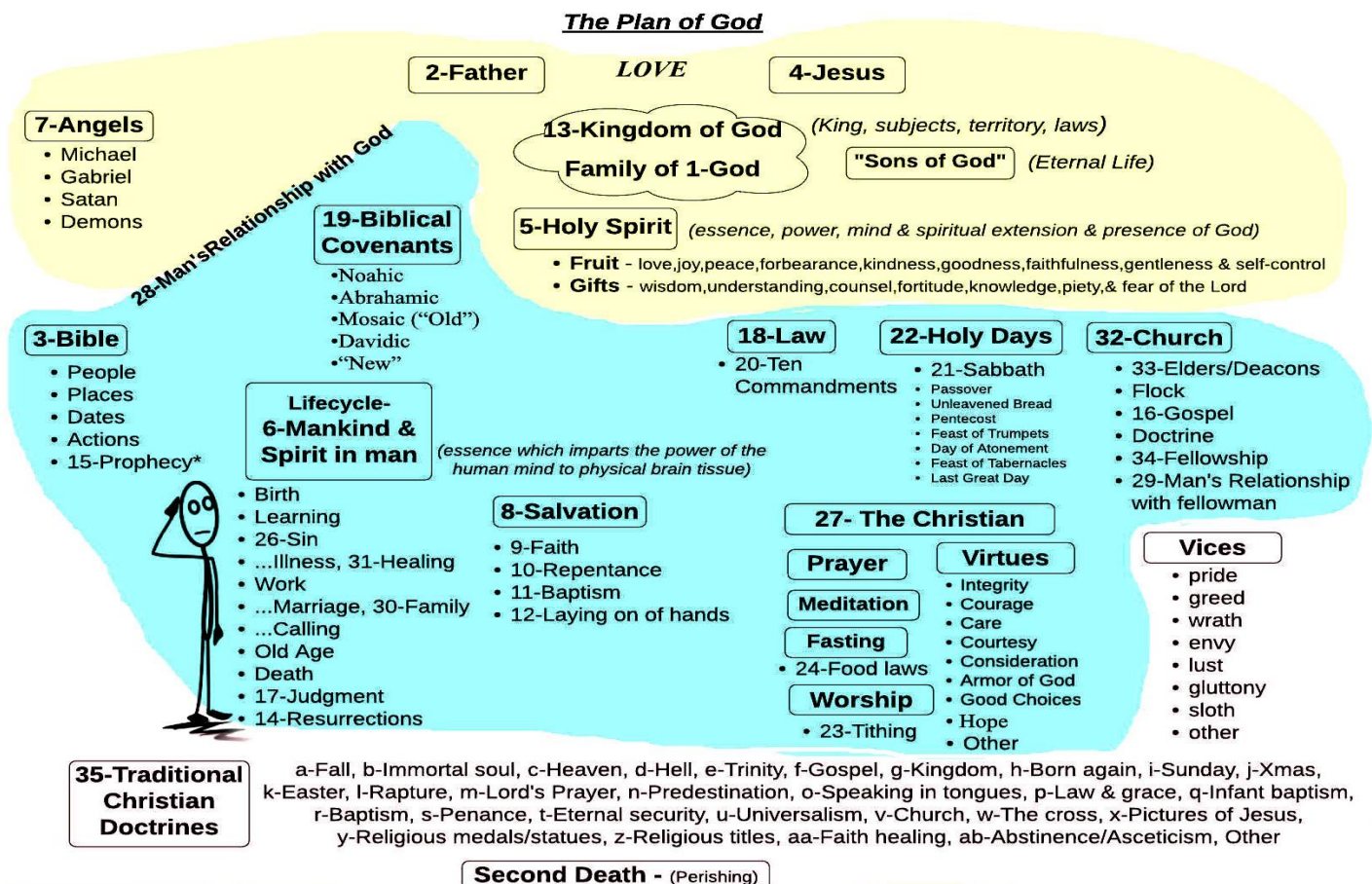
Are Sabbath Keepers *Better than* Sunday Keepers?

I was asked to speak on this subject by a member ... the phrasing of the question leads me to suspect some different ideas ... & I believe it is worthwhile to explore those ideas today!

Specifically:

- I believe they were frustrated by Church of God people having a smugness on this topic. Is smugness an appropriate attitude?
- Does Sunday keeping “automatically disqualify” someone from being a true Christian?
- Does Sabbath keeping “automatically” identify a true Christian?
- Is Doctrine important? Doesn't it just split & divide Christians?
- What is a REAL Christian? Is it worth the effort?

We will explore these questions ... and perhaps after the service we may have other questions or approaches to this question ... that I didn't think of!



Time: (Past - History - Creation, 25-Hebrew Calendar ... Present - (World events) ... (Future - 15-Prophecy*) ... Eternity ...)



Is smugness an appropriate attitude?

Scripture is clear we should have no “superiority posture” toward believers or unbelievers.

1Co 4:7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

Phil 2:3 In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

1 Cor 13:5 Love thinks no evil.

ie Refuse cynical interpretations of people’s motives. Think graciously about others

Col 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside.

ie Show thoughtfulness in how we engage non-Christians (& non Sabbath keepers)

Eph 4:32 Be tenderhearted

Col 3:12 Put on... tender mercies

ie We should feel compassion & soft-heartedness, not emotional hardness

Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering.

ie Gruffness from an egomaniac wins over few people ... Show patience & longsuffering

Col 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt

ie Speak graciously ... Tone matters as much as truth!

Dimension	Core Biblical Pattern
Think	Renewed mind, humility, wisdom toward outsiders
Feel	Compassion, patience, forgiveness, peace, sincere love
Act	Gracious speech, doing good, gentleness, integrity, peacemaking

Luke 12:42-48 And the Lord said, "Who then is that **faithful & wise** steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who **knew** his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he **who did not know**, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. **For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.**

Does Sunday keeping “automatically disqualify” someone from being a true Christian?

Does breaking **any** one commandment “automatically disqualify”?

Luk 23:38-43 And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Luk 23:39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

Luk 23:40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"

Luk 23:41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."

Luk 23:42 Then he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom

Luk 23:43 & Jesus said to him, Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise

Themes of this “Scriptural event” ...

- **Salvation by Grace/Faith:** His situation is seen as an example of salvation through faith in Jesus' finished work on the cross, as he had no opportunity for good works or baptism.
- **True Repentance:** His actions are interpreted as demonstrating true repentance through acknowledging his sin, the justice of his punishment, and Jesus' kingship.
- **The Contrast:** The other criminal remained impenitent and continued to mock Jesus, illustrating the contrast between salvation and rejection.
- **Availability of God's Mercy:** It is used to show that God's mercy is available even in a person's final moments.
- **No One Beyond Redemption:** The story suggests that redemption is possible even for those who have lived lives of crime.
- **Caution Against Delay:** While illustrating the possibility of a deathbed conversion, it is often emphasized that this should **not** be used as an excuse to postpone repentance. We don't let **exceptions** cloud us from understanding clearly what the “normal process” is.

On the other hand ... Someone who is a “Sunday keeper” normally has a large number of unscriptural beliefs & practices... (eg from this handout -page 1- list of doctrines):

- Immortal soul
- Going to heaven / hell
- God is a Trinity
- Observe pagan holidays
- Doesn't observe God's Holy days
- Wrong views about Law & Grace (Why call me ... Lord, Lord ...)
- etc

Can someone be deceived about so many things ... & still be “of God”?

ACTUALLY ... it **is** “our business” ... to **know** if they are part of our “mission field” ... If they are already “saved” we can “let them be” ... but ... if “nominal Christians” do not have saving knowledge, then they are part of **The World** we are reaching out to ...

Mat 28:19-20 Go therefore & make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them** to observe all things that I have commanded you; & lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age



Does Sabbath keeping “automatically” identify a true Christian?

- The **Jews** (part of God’s covenant people **Israel**) ... **do** observe the Sabbath ... yet ...

Act 4:11-12 This is the 'STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED BY YOU BUILDERS, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is **no other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved

- **Other Sabbath keepers** (7th Day Adventist, 7th day Baptists, etc) keep the Sabbath ... but are also Trinitarian, believe in going to heaven (after Jesus returns), etc

However ... We must acknowledge *the Sabbath is very important to God & His people!*

- **The Sabbath Was Established at Creation**

Genesis 2:2–3 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it...

- **The Sabbath Is in the Ten Commandments** ... (written by the finger of God)

Exodus 20:8–11 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy

- **The Sabbath Is a Sign Between God and His People**

Exodus 31:13 Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations...”

Ezekiel 20:12 Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them & Me



The Sabbath identifies: God as Creator, God as Sanctifier, His covenant relationship with His people

- **The Sabbath Is Called a Delight** (Holy, Honourable, A blessing, A source of joy)
Isaiah 58:13–14 If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath... and call the Sabbath a delight... Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord.”

- **Jesus Kept the Sabbath** ... & Declared Himself “**Lord of the Sabbath**” (**Mark 2:28**)

Luke 4:16 So He came to Nazareth... and as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day...

Jesus also **taught** on the Sabbath & **healed** on the Sabbath

- **The Apostles Kept the Sabbath**

Acts 13:42–44 Gentiles asked Paul to preach again “the next Sabbath.”

Acts 17:2 Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them... for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures. (*Sabbath observance continued after the resurrection!*)

- **The Sabbath Will Be Kept in the New Earth - The Kingdom of God**

Isaiah 66:22–23 From one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord.



Is Doctrine important?

Doesn't it just split & divide Christians?

Yes—very clearly. Scripture teaches that correct doctrine matters deeply, but it also insists doctrine must be held with love, humility, and a Christlike spirit. The Bible refuses the false choice between “**right belief**” or “**right heart.**”

It calls us to both.

1. Correct Doctrine Is Tied to Salvation Truth

Some doctrines are not optional

John 8:24 If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.

1 John 2:23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father.

Acts 4:12 Nor is there salvation in any other...

Principle: **What you believe** about who Jesus is and how salvation works is not a minor detail.

2. The Apostles Guarded “Sound Doctrine”

Right teaching was a pastoral priority

2 Tim 1:13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me.

1 Tim 4:16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

2 Tim 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...

Principle: The early church saw doctrine as **protective**, not pompous, nit-picking & hairsplitting

3. False Doctrine Harms People

Error is not morally neutral

Rom 16:18 By smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

2 Tim 2:17 Their message will spread like cancer.

Gal 1:7 There are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Principle: Wrong teaching doesn't just “diversify opinion”—it wounds faith & distorts the gospel

4. Love Without Truth Is Not Biblical Love

Truth and love are meant to travel together

Eph 4:15 Speaking the truth in love.

Rom 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy.

Principle: Biblical love is **not** affirming error; it's loving people while being **faithful** to truth.

5. Knowledge Alone Is Not Enough (Doctrine without love becomes dangerous)

1Cor 8:1 Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

1Cor 13:2 If I... understand all mysteries & all knowledge, but have not love, I am nothing

Principle: Right doctrine can become self-righteousness if not paired with Christlike character.

6. Jesus Himself Taught Correct Doctrine Matters (But rebuked doctrinal pride)

Matt 22:29 You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.

Matt 15:6 You have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

Yet He also warned: “Woe to you... hypocrites!” (Matt 23)

Principle: Jesus corrected wrong theology & condemned religious arrogance. He refused the choice between accuracy and humility.

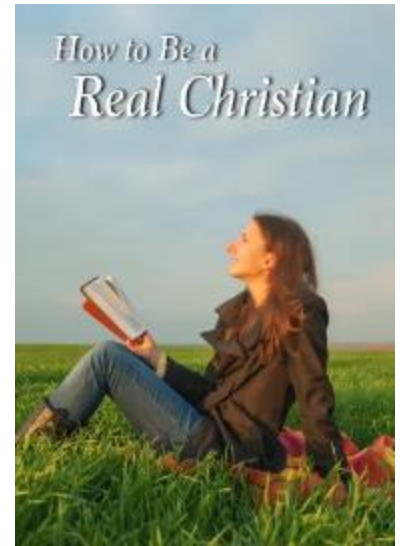
What is a REAL Christian?

2Co 13:5 **Examine** yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. **Test** yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

The **Bible definition of a Christian...**

Romans 8:9 Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

- If one does not have, possess, and follow the Holy Spirit of God, he is not a Bible-defined Christian no matter what he says, how he acts, or what he teaches.
- The Holy Spirit is the essence, power, mind, and spiritual extension of God. God begets Christians as His sons and daughters through this Spirit. It strengthens and fortifies a Christian spiritually, converts his mind, leads and guides him as necessary, and serves as an earnest or guarantee of eternal life (**Ephesians 1:13–14**).



Now that we know the Bible definition of a Christian... we must go on to ask, “**To whom does He give His Spirit?**”

Acts 5:32 And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, which God hath given **to them that OBEY Him**.

Act 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, & let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; & you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

The Christian walk is a direct calling of God. Christ tells us in a first-person quotation in **John 6:44** that “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” The Greek word translated “draw” is *helkuo* and means literally or figuratively to “drag, tug, haul, or tow.” It sometimes seems that God “drags us” kicking and screaming into His fellowship in the midst of problems, trials, and despair...or perhaps because of them. **Our calling is a divine act outside our control.** No one can come to God on his own terms. Our calling is something more than merely hearing the message of the Word of God. It goes much deeper than that. It is internal, and is the miraculous result of God the Father “turning on the lights” in our minds to understand the spiritual (**Acts 26:18; John 6:44**). God the Father specifically chooses and calls us, effectually drawing us to Christ, almost as though by a magnet, enlightening our minds, enabling us to receive and understand the truth (**John 6:45; Acts 16:14; Ephesians 1:17**). “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (**1 Corinthians 1:26**). What a privilege to be called of God! For double emphasis, Christ repeats again in **John 6:65**, “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”

We learn (through God’s Holy Days) of His Plan of Salvation for mankind. Everyone will have a fair opportunity for Salvation (“even Sunday keepers”) - But not everyone responds to God’s Call in this lifetime.

We know Satan has a role in deceiving the whole world ...

2Co 4:3-4 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the **god of this age** has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

God's Plan addresses this deception by putting away Satan the deceiver (Rev 20:1-2)

We understand in the Kingdom of God where Jesus rules ...

Isa 30:19-20 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; You shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; When He hears it, He will answer you. And though the Lord gives you The bread of adversity and the water of affliction, Yet **your (true) teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, But your eyes shall see your teachers.**

Jer 31:34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' **for they all shall know Me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

God's Plan addresses the majority of mankind -- that is deceived today ...

And it speaks to the **rewards** that are prepared for the "firstfruits" -- Real Christians who are faithful for their whole lives.

- **Resurrection**

1 Corinthians 15:20–23 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep... But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

James 1:18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.



- **Promise of Crowns & Reward**

2 Timothy 4:7–8 ...there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord... will give to me on that Day...

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation... he will receive the crown of **life**...

1 Peter 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of **glory** that does not fade away.

Revelation 22:12 And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me..."

- **An inheritance**

John 14:2–3 In My Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you.

1 Peter 1:3–5 ...an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

Colossians 3:23–24 ...knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance...

- **Glory after suffering** (Suffering is temporary. Glory is eternal)

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

2 Corinthians 4:16–17 For our light affliction... is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

1 Peter 5:10 ...after you have suffered a while, [He will] perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

- **Eternal Life & Reigning with Christ**

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Matthew 25:34 Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Daniel 12:3 Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament...

