

What About “Sunday Christians”?



From
Living Springs Institute

Question #17 - *“As you teach that the true 7th day of the week is Saturday do you feel that ‘Sunday Christians’ are in rebellion/naive/uneducated and as such are disqualified from true blessing from God?”*

The first thing we must talk about is the definition of the phrase “Sunday Christians,” because this can mean very different things to different people. To some, this term may simply refer to all those who worship on Sunday. For others, this term may mean a specific belief about Sunday that not all Christians hold even if they worship on Sunday. For example, the wording of your question could be interpreted to mean that you think of the term as referring to those who believe Sunday as the original seventh day, but many Christians do not doubt the Jewish held Sabbath of Saturday is the original seventh day. What many will tell you is that Sunday replaced Saturday for Christians because Sunday is the day “Christ arose.” In truth, there are many different beliefs and thoughts out there when it comes to this issue, and because there is such a range of opinions, it must be understood that to use a term like “Sunday Christians,” we are covering a very wide group of people. Some, very staunch on Sunday, some, not so much, but for the sake of this question, I feel it’s only prudent to go with the broad definition. So, in this writing, “Sunday Christians” will refer to all those who primarily wor-

ship on Sunday, and from there we can start to break down the adjectives you have asked about.

I fully understand why this question gets asked. One of the things which frustrates me as a teacher of God’s Word, is the vehemency so many Saturday Sabbath believing people have toward those who hold Sunday. That being said, I will also point out there is plenty of hostility among those who hold Sunday, against those who hold Saturday, as well. Believe me, I know, but throwing accusations and judgments at people only creates hatred and strife. This, in turn, only serves to embitter people on even having a conversation about the facts. So, as we go through the adjectives of rebellion, naive, and uneducated, I hope no one feels I’m trying to put them down, because I believe many think of these words as coming with very negative overtones. On that note, let me say, in reality, only the word rebellion is a truly negative term. If ever we see that we fall, on any issue, into the description of the other two, we should refer to Proverbs 15:32-33.

Because it’s the easiest one, let’s start with the last adjective on the list, “uneducated.” Yes, I feel many Sunday Christians are uneducated. Again, let me stop right there and make it clear that I don’t mean this in a belittling way. I simply mean, the reason so many hold onto Sunday and completely ignore the Sabbath is because they have never been taught the truth of the Sabbath. Many Christians think nothing about the Sabbath issue because it has been overlaid for so many years by the church at large. Many laypeople, as well as ministers, simply know nothing but Sunday; and when this is the case, your question becomes very simple. The answer is given in James 4:17, where James explains, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

Now, this doesn’t mean the truth is subjective, or that it’s different for different people. The key to understanding is in Ephesians 2:8-9, where we are told that we are saved by grace!- not works, not even faith, but grace! We can’t earn salvation, or any kind of relationship with God. Faith is a gift of God! In this sin-filled world, we can have faith (a relationship with God) only because God has granted us grace. So, the simple rundown is that God loved the whole world so much that He gave His Son to die for all of us. (John 3:16) This means any human who desires or ever has desired faith can obtain it, not just in this life, but for eternity! So, the grace of God grants to every man the

measure of faith needed to believe. (Rom. 3:21-30) God did/does this because it's not God's will that any human perish, but that every human come to a place of repentance. (II Pet. 3:9) In this, we see God has done His part and what is left up to us is the question, will we come to a place of repentance or could we not care less? (Heb. 12:14-17)

If we choose repentance, we must understand that a place of repentance is not a place of immediate perfection. To repent is to turn from the broad road of destruction and put your feet on the path to righteousness and holiness. (Matt. 7:13-14) We often refer to this as simply, the straight and narrow. When we are repentant from sin, it's not our actual righteousness which God looks at, but our desire for God and His righteousness. (Matt. 6:33) The scripture tells us our faith is counted as righteousness. (Rom. 4:3-5) So, as we walk this road, not in perfection, but simply headed in the right direction, we may find ourselves differing on some issues. As we do, we must be considerate of others, but also understand there is still a right answer to every issue! We need to seek that right answer; but the fact all true believers are seeking and learning is why we must all be saved by grace.

In the beginning there may not have been so many of these issues. However, as more and more humans populated the planet, their many different choices and opinions caused distortions of the truth for future generations. Thus, it became/becomes more and more difficult for children to grow up with the inherent knowledge of righteousness needed to make righteous judgments - provided they desire to. This phenomena is why God confounded the language of men at the Tower of Babel and why God established the nation of Israel. Sinful man needed to be separated so the leaven in one would not leaven the whole lump of humanity. (I Cor. 5:1-8) Confounding the languages of men gave, at least, some truth a chance to survive in every group. Later on, God intervened by establishing one group among men which He would specifically entrust with the truth. (Rom. 3:1-2) Developing a people who physically held the guidelines of righteousness was/is a great help to the world. The children of Israel were chosen for this task; and right up front, God gave them ten basic laws which were written in stone. God asked them if these commandments were things they would follow, because if they couldn't follow these simple ten items, then there was no reason to go

further! (Duet. 5:1-29) Israel agreed to these laws and the instructions that followed. This is the reason Israel's history is so prominent in the Bible. By agreeing to be the people of God, Israel demonstrates many truths to us all. One of those truths is, even among a people who were physically given a law to help them live in righteousness, it's still possible for that law to get lost without God's constant reinforcement. (II Kin. 22:1-23:25)

This is why God made a covenant with Israel. The rest of the world may reject God, but Israel made an agreement that God would always be allowed to intervene in their lives! So, God sent prophets and teachers time and time again, even after cases where the people simply killed them. (Matt. 23:29-39) This clearly shows us how much we all need God's grace to have a chance at salvation. (Rom. 5:19-21) We, even with the Bible under our arm, have a lot of wisdom we need to obtain; (James 1:5) but thanks be to God, He first looks for desire and not completion in us, because obtaining righteousness in all areas of our life will be a long road home! (II Tim. 3:13-17)

Now, many people know those most basic laws God wrote in stone, simply as "The Ten Commandments," and this is why the Sabbath issue is so large. It's number four of these well known ten. It comes ahead of things like murder, adultery, stealing, lying, and coveting. This leaves no doubt that this is one of the big issues in serving The Lord, yet it gets debated. Why? Because even though God wrote the most basic commandments down for us to literally read, the devil has been working overtime to distort them.

It's important we understand, these commandments are a list of warnings about the kind of actions and inactions that are directly against those ways in which God created us to live. Anytime we fail to follow these commandments, it will impede and, if continued, eventually, take us from any chance at a true relationship with God. So, of course, the devil fights hard to dampen these instructions in our lives and world. The devil hopes we all will someday be so uneducated as to all the laws of God that the knowledge of God will simply cease to exist among men, and he has the complete cooperation of many people in this task. (Rom. 1:20-23)

The devil wants us to think the luxuries of this

world are something we are entitled to; therefore, they are not luxuries we covet because others have them, they are "necessities." Many believe there are such things as white lies. These are not bearing false witness; they are attempting to be helpful - right? We don't really steal in our society; we just heap up the world's resources and parcel them out to the highest bidder, leaving the poor in the cold. (Amos 2:6-8, Prov. 22:22-23) We don't commit adultery; we simply don't see anything wrong with loving one another. We don't kill; we just give women the right to choose; and we end the suffering of those who are terminally ill. (As if we don't all fall into this category!) Sure, we honor our parents, as long as they leave us alone. We remember the Sabbath - or do we? You see, the closer we get to the top of the list, the harder it becomes to find that good sounding explanation as to why we really are in the right about what we choose to do. This is why it helps the devil's cause greatly if he can get people misquoting even one small word in a commandment. When it comes to the fourth commandment, people will often replace the word, "remember" with "honor." This makes the excuse go down easier. On Sunday, we "honor" the idea of "a Sabbath," but is it remembering? I'm afraid not.

This brings us to your second word, "naive." Naive basically means you lack the sophistication required which would keep you from following a certain path. This word comes with a more negative connotation, because it's to say you are unable to keep yourself from being fooled into something. However, even this should not be looked at as always the person's fault. Children are very naive. They are only learning the ways of the world, and often they do not have the mental ability to defeat, or in some cases even think to defeat, a temptation someone puts before them. This is why Jesus said if someone offends a child, it would be better for them, "...that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Matthew 18:1-6 How many times have we heard stories of children, who were told over and over again not to talk to strangers, being lured off by the story someone needs them to help find a puppy? In the child's mind, all they hear is "puppy," and the prospect that one may be lost or hurt is unbearable for them. Children have a need to be loved, and what better love is there than finding a puppy? All this is playing on emotions which the predator knows, in many cases, is just too much for the child's brain to

overcome with the simple knowledge they aren't to talk to strangers.

The devil plays this same card all the time. He tries to get people to do things without even consulting or connecting to the knowledge in their minds which would tell them they shouldn't. When he feels that isn't working, he tries to confuse people about the basic information. "My name is..." Now you're not talking to a stranger, you're helping a friend! This again is why God gives us grace. You see, the curses God laid out, after man took of the tree He told them not to, were not really curses in the way we have come to think of the word. It was tragic that God had to do what He did, but it was necessary to help us not be so naive. Instead of asking God for the real understanding of why He told them not to take of the fruit, man naively believed Satan's explanation. In taking of the fruit, they stepped out of innocence, and there was no going back. Humans now had extensive knowledge of good and evil, and they needed to learn not to be so naive. So God cursed the ground for man's sake. (Gen. 3:17-19)

God wants us to be as little children before Him so we can learn from Him, just as a child learns from a parent, in many ways; but being like a little child doesn't mean playing all the time. We must study to show ourselves approved. (II Tim. 2:15) We need to learn our lessons well and grow out of our naive state. What separates uneducated from naive is that we can learn the truth, but that doesn't automatically cause us to understand why it's truth. This is what Eve failed to do before taking of the fruit. She knew she was not supposed to do it, but she was easily convinced otherwise, because she did not take the time to understand the real reason why God told them not to! If we will ask God to help us understand why righteousness is what it is, we will not be so easily fooled. Because there are many who have not yet done this when it comes to the Sabbath, I must admit that, yes, many people are naive. However, there is no excuse to stay naive!

This is what makes our last item so important. Rebellion is a serious thing! In I Samuel 15:23, the scripture tells us, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,..." Anyone know why? The shorthand answer goes back to knowing to do good and doing it not. There are many reasons people may not be perfect in

many actions they take; but when we do something knowing it's wrong, we are truly on the side of sin! God wants us to repent and turn from those things which keep us from a deeper walk with Him. This is why God wrote the law: to reveal sin. (Rom. 3:20) Once sin is revealed, it becomes not just an uneducated or naive situation but an obstacle we can avoid. So, if The Lord brings the truth to your heart and mind and you still refuse to even examine - much less follow - the truth, you are then living in rebellion. Rebellion will not only deprive you of a walk with God here on this planet, but it will deprive you of ultimate salvation as well. Sadly, there are those who fall into this category. They simply do not care about the seventh day Sabbath God commanded us to observe, many times, because they have the first day sabbath man created. (Acts 5:29) The question of rebellion is simple. Do we want to be dead to sin or do we want to live therein? (Rom. 6:1-2)

Sunday Christians may be uneducated; they may be naive; they may even be in rebellion; and while I believe many Sunday Christians fall into one of these categories, I don't believe we can, or ever should, judge a person's standing simply based on the fact they worship on Sunday. However, the second part of your question asks, if we believe Sunday Christians are disqualified from true blessings of God by being one of these things; and again, we have come to a bit of a subjective term in, "true blessing." This could mean to some that we are talking about ultimate salvation. To others this could mean simply daily blessings. So, for this, let's talk a little about the dynamics of living for God, once again.

There are those who believe in a theology best described by the term "prosperity." This theology teaches, the more faith you have the more success and prosperity you will receive. Simply put, this is not a teaching supported by the Word of God! In Matthew 6:24, we are told we can't serve God and mammon. The true blessing of God is not measured in financial or physical wealth, it is measured by the presence of God in our lives. This is why others cannot judge whether you are serving God or not, based on things like - how rich or poor you are or how sick or healthy you are. Prosperity teachers tell us we do not have to be poor to serve God, but we can't make this blanket statement. A true believer will allow God to put them in the circumstances which serve God's will the best.

This is not always a wealthy situation. Christians in places where the Bible is rejected by government authority are, many times, called to serve under very harsh conditions; and the ability for them to have wealth or even financial success is simply nonexistent in many cases. When we serve The Lord, we must seek His will for our lives and then be content with whatever situation we find ourselves in! (Phili. 4:10-11) We must not grow weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Gal. 6:9) I don't know about you, but the treasures I wish to reap are not here on this earth but in that place Jesus went to prepare for us! (Matt. 6:19-21, John 14:1-3)

So, when we talk about the true blessings of God, we are talking about two things. One is the ultimate blessing of life eternal with God (this is true salvation), and the other is the presence of God in our lives, in the here and now. Lets start with the eternal life one, because it's the easiest. We have already talked about the, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin, truth. (James 4:17) This makes it clear that being uneducated about something like the Sabbath cannot deprive us of God's ultimate salvation. We will not be held accountable for those things which we have never been told. However, the Bible clearly tells us to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. How can anyone who reads the Bible simply not know about the Sabbath? This takes us to the naive part!

Exodus chapter 20 verses 4-6 is where we find the second commandment about not making graven images. However, in the fifth and sixth verses we are given some great information about the nature of God. Our God is a God who visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of those who hate Him, but He is a God who shows mercy to thousands of those who love Him and keep His commandments! What a great scripture! So many people do not understand this scripture because they have, for generations, been led astray about the true nature of The God we serve. Our God is a loving God who desires to be close to us so badly that He looks beyond our faults and sees our needs! When we are told that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, it does not mean God holds the children accountable for the sins of their fathers. We know this is not God's way, by looking at Ezekiel 18:19-20, which makes clear the sins of the father are his and the

son's are his. One shall not die for the sins of the other. God is trying to lead us into righteousness! This is a righteous stipulation. God is not going to put the sins of one generation on the other. God will judge both small and great, rich and poor, by those things they have chosen in their own lives. (Rev. 20:12) What this scripture in Exodus is telling us is, again, that God gives grace!

When a generation knows something is wrong, then it's sin unto them. Make no mistake, they will be held accountable, not just for their actions but for their responsibility to teach righteousness to the next generation. However, the fact one generation has the responsibility to teach righteousness to the next does not mean they will do it, anymore than the fact they know something is sin means they won't do it themselves. If one generation doesn't do well, then what can be expected of the next, and the next? An action which, to one generation, is obviously sinful, may not be as obvious to the next. Some because the next may not have been taught, and some because the next may not have listened. This means there may have been some in the first generation which, at the very least, tried their best to teach the truth, but their children just didn't listen. However, many times, these believers in righteousness will still have an opportunity to affect theirs as well as others' grandchildren. Grandchildren would be the third generation. People may even get the chance to affect great grandchildren, which are the fourth. Thus, God is pointing out a truth going in both directions. First, the knowledge of righteousness does not vanish in one generation! This shows us how wrong it is for people to change for the worse as quickly as they do today! I've literally had a minister tell me he believed the Bible taught certain things, but in his words, "You just can't preach it like that anymore." In reality, not only can you preach the truth but we are obligated to. (I Tim. 4:13-16)

The opposite point is, in spite of the best efforts of some, it's possible for the knowledge of righteousness to eventually fade away among certain groups. This is why God uses the term "fathers." The same righteousness may not fade in all groups at once. (This is an example of how the Tower of Babel Effect serves to help those who truly seek truth!) However, the fact righteousness can fade at all, even within a group, shows us there will be generations down the road which may simply never get the chance to hear or understand certain truths. If they come to God, their

road home will be even longer yet! This is why God will end this world. Someday the road will simply be too long, and God's spirit will not always strive with man because man is flesh. (Gen. 6:1-3) However, God will not simply leave future generations nor will He forsake them. (Heb. 13:5-6) The answer will be to end man's ability to create them in the first place. (Rev. 21:1)

The Sabbath is a great example of knowledge fading. God told Israel to remember the Sabbath, and He was not talking about a Sabbath of their choosing. That's why God used the word "remember." God was talking about remembering a Sabbath which already existed. That Sabbath is the one which God created when He created the rest of the world and universe we know! Israel had their times when they did not hold the truth well, but ultimately, through God's continual prodding at those who would listen, the truth has made it through many, many, generations. This longevity, which a nation like Israel could bring to the truth, is exactly why God not only established a chosen nation but has been so hard on them when they have faltered. As believers, our comfort is far outweighed by our need to hold on to the truth. (II Cor. 12:7-10) Israel was entrusted with the oracles of God. This is why The Messiah came through them. The truth of salvation was first brought to Jerusalem, then unto Judea, unto Samaria, and out from there unto the uttermost parts of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Whether the early Christians looked at Sunday as a special day or not is irrelevant to the Sabbath issue. The early church was mostly Jewish, and they knew the Sabbath; thus, they went to the synagogues on the Sabbath to teach Jesus Christ and Him crucified, first to the Jews. (Acts 13:14-51, 17:1-2, 18:4) Quickly the message also went out to those surrounding the Jewish nation (the Gentiles), and there is no evidence that the Jewish Christians taught the Gentiles to forget the Sabbath by holding another day. However, Sunday was a special day to the pagan Gentiles. Once the story of the gospel message was used to start a religion, religious church ordinances were created. (Rev. 13:11) One of those ordinances was that for Christians, Sunday would be the new sabbath.

Now, all this was done far more than three or four generations ago. In our world today it's almost unquestioned that Christians look at the first day of the week as special, in spite of the fact Jews still recognize

the seventh day. It only makes sense when looking at the scripture which tells us to remember the Sabbath, we should also look to the people who were entrusted with that commandment, for guidance in following it. However, the truth that Israel was entrusted with the oracles of God, is also a fact lost on many Christians; and in their naivety, Christians simply follow the rituals of a church, even thinking, many times, that simply going to church on Sunday is remembering the Sabbath! If this is something they do simply because they lack understanding, it will not keep them from heaven, but it will still affect their ability to have the second category of true blessings, which is the presence of God in their lives. This is true of all sin. It may not be held against us, but that doesn't mean it's not impeding our relationship with God!

It should be obvious to us if God sets aside a day for us to commune with Him while taking rest from the cares of this world, not taking that day will have an effect on God's presence in our lives. This should be especially true when we stop and think about the fact God made this day before man ever fell to sin. Even in a sinless world where God was free to come and walk with man in the garden, God still wanted a day in which man would set aside the physical tasks he had taken on and simply spend with God. Now, some would argue any day will do, and when we think of the truth about God being omnipresent, (Job 34:21) this may seem to make sense. However, the Sabbath is not just about us taking one day to spend with God, it's about taking the day God already set aside. It's part of our created life cycle to work the six days God made for work and commune on the last day, which God created for us to commune.

There is nothing magical or mystical about this. It's very similar to the idea of the Garden of Eden in general. No matter where man went in the universe and no matter how caught up on physical adventures man got, there would always be a place where man could return, and there - in a very physical way - God would be. Think about it, even considering the omnipresence of God, can any Christian deny the blessing it would be to walk with Jesus the way the apostles got to? Most of us have a very hard time possessing the kind of faith the Roman centurion had. (Matt. 8:5-10) When man rebelled against God, we lost that very physical place, but we never lost the very physical time! The Sabbath is that time where, no matter what

is currently in our lives that may be hindering our communion with God, if we set aside the day, God will be near us! So, yes, being uneducated about the Sabbath is going to affect the true blessing of God's presence in our lives. In fact, all sin is keeping us from having God's presence in our lives in the way God would like. This is why we need to grow and learn: putting off those things which hinder our faith and putting on those things which help it. That is what our lives should be focused on!

God put the Sabbath commandment in those first ten written commandments. He put it at number four because anytime we are struggling with feeling God's presence, remembering the Sabbath is a direct link to regaining our faith! This shows us, in a very simple way, if we will not be rebellious, we can, through the Word of God, learn and grow. Then we will no longer be uneducated or naive enough to simply let the excuses of men keep us from having one of the true blessings God created us to have!

In closing, let me be crystal clear about this issue. Worshiping on Sunday does not make you uneducated, naive, or rebellious! The issue is about not knowing or simply ignoring the true Sabbath. God will never put limitations on what other days we may worship Him, or gather with others of like precious faith to share in the blessing of our God! Thus, being a "Sunday Christian" is not automatically a bad thing, but it's a grave atrocity if, in anyway, it serves to keep us from being a "Sabbath Christian"!

**Questions submitted to the Institute, answered by
Philip E. Busby.**

This Q&A is an excerpt from the book *A Sabbath By Design*. For a more complete look at the issue of the Sabbath day, copies of *A Sabbath By Design* are available for free through Living Springs Institute, along with other free materials available now!

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