**#4. THE SABBATH**

Exodus 20:8-11 (pg. 54); Genesis 2:1-18 (pg. 2)

**Takeaways for Life:**

1. The Law of Intended Purpose can’t be violated with impunity. Be as creative and productive as God gives opportunity.
2. The Sabbath concept of rest and breaking the cycle of our own workings is built into creation. How’s your Sabbath?
3. All work is sacred if dedicated to the glory of God. Who or what do you serve?
4. Regardless of income or reward considerations, are you a taker or a giver? A consumer or a producer in life?
5. Are you experiencing rest of spirit? The Sabbath rest of knowing your relationship with God is secure and right?

# UNDERSTANDING EASTER

Easter is the time of year when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. While all the events of Jesus’ life are significant, Jesus' death and resurrection are foundational to God's redemption plan. Celebrating Easter is not mandated in the Bible, so it is not an ordinance like communion or baptism, but it is a good opportunity to focus on the defeat of sin and death that the cross and resurrection represent. The word “Easter” is not a biblical word so some prefer “Resurrection Sunday” instead. Eggs and bunnies are not directly connected to Jesus’ resurrection but do celebrate spring and new life.

All four Gospels contain the story of the last week of Jesus’ life on earth. Palm Sunday remembers the day he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey with the crowds calling him King. Maundy Thursday remembers the Passover feast that became the Last Supper. Good Friday commemorates the day that He actually died on the cross. And Sunday is Easter (Resurrection Sunday), thereby completing “Holy Week.”

Crucifixion, the method of Jesus' death, was a form of capital punishment that the Romans, who ruled Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, adapted from the Persians. It was reserved for those who were not Roman citizens and was done in public to warn others. While the Bible reports the physical pain of the cross, it also focuses on Jesus' agony at being identified with sin and thereby alienated from The Father.

The early Christians celebrated the resurrection weekly on the first day of the week because Jesus rose on that day. That is why the day of rest (Sabbath concept) for Christians is usually associated with Sunday, the first day of our week, rather than Saturday, and is called The Lord’s Day. The reason for making it a special annual event is that the Jew’s already celebrated Passover in the spring and the European pagans celebrated spring itself with holidays already on the calendar.

Prior to AD 325, different Christian communities celebrated Easter at different times. In that year the Council of Nicaea issued the Easter Rule, fixing the annual resurrection celebration based on the moon and the spring equinox. So now Easter is always on a Sunday between the dates of March 22 and April 25. Eastern Orthodox Christians still use a different date and the Jewish Passover is also governed by the moon but can fall on any day of the week so long as it’s the 14th of Nisan on the Jewish calendar.