

The Idolatry of Things



“*Shabbat* is the antidote to the Golden Calf”

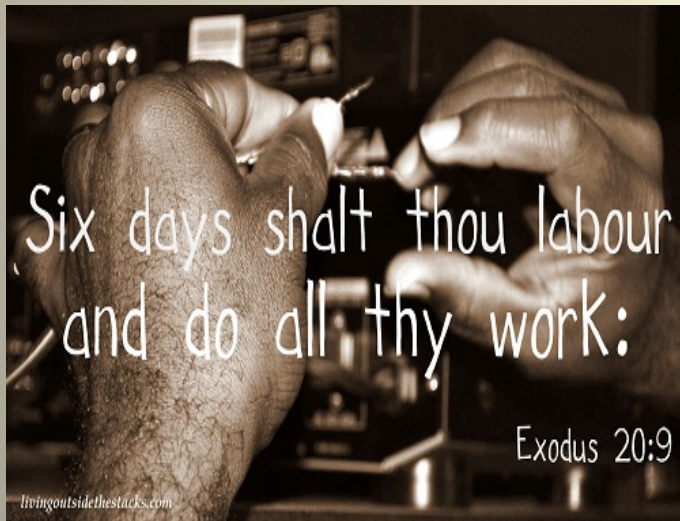
“Through constant creation of dissatisfaction, the consumer society is in fact a highly sophisticated mechanism for the production and distribution of unhappiness. *Shabbat* is our refuge from a consumer culture, the new religion.”



“The most important contribution of *Shabbat* to the late capitalist societies of the twenty-first century is that it reintroduce the idea of limits. There are limits to our striving, our labours, our consumption of the earth’s finite resources. Any culture that loses its sense of limits eventually self-destructs.”

The Idolatry of Work

Their land is full of silver and gold; there is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses; there is no end to their chariots. Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made. (Isa. 2:7-8)



“Now is it possible for someone to do their work in six days? The meaning is, rather, Rest as if all your work has been done. Alternatively, rest from thoughts of work.”

Rabbi Ishmael, 2nd. cent.

Does Paul Condemn Sabbath Observance?

- “Therefore let no one judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect to a feast or a new moon or sabbaths (weeks), which are a shadow of the coming things. But the body of Christ.” (Col 2:16-17)
- “These things seem to be a matter of wisdom, with their self-imposed religious practices and humility and severe control of the body, but they are of no value against sensual indulgence.” (Col. 2:23)
- Is the Sabbath an “empty deceit that comes from human tradition, from the elemental forces of the cosmos” (Col. 2:8)?

Shabbat: Training in Righteousness

“Every Sabbath, return to God His universe, acknowledge the Lord your God, and remind yourself yet again that this universe is borrowed from God. Remember who is its Master, that this borrowed universe belongs to the Lord, and that He, not you, rules everything.”

R. Samson Raphael Hirsch (1953)

“Maybe it is middle age, but I can actually feel my body beginning to shut down as I make my way home each Friday afternoon in anticipation of Shabbat. I can push all week long—early mornings and late nights—but, come Friday, I am ready to completely unwind. It isn’t just the bodily rest that I crave: it is the deep spiritual nourishment the Sabbath provides. By separating myself from the frenzy of the world that surrounds me all week long, I can focus on the needs of my soul throughout Shabbat. It is an island away from the secular intrusions on my spiritual world”

R. Kerry Olitzky (2007)

“For me, the spiritual discipline of not spending money and not socializing in ways not related to the Sabbath provides me with benefits that transcend the transient joys of a party or a movie. In consistently observing the Sabbath, you can feel an ‘intuition of eternity,’ as Heschel calls it.”

R. Daniel Judson (2007)

If you hold back your foot on Shabbat from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call Shabbat a delight, YHVH’s holy day, worth honoring; then honor it by not doing your usual things or pursuing your interests or speaking about them. If you do, you will find delight in YHVH.

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 58:13-14

Shabbat Shalom!

