

The process of outlining an entire book of the bible, or doing word-studies because there are conflicting translations,¹ are part of *bible-study*, not journaling. This would include topical studies, history research, or in-depth text examination using commentaries, concordances, and lexicons. We don't want to do these during the week. They become distractions. God's word is sufficiently clear to derive a rule or truth without resorting to bible-study every morning. When we have questions, we write them down on the side so that we can study and resolve them at a later time. That later time is on the Sabbath.

Bible-Study on the Sabbath

Bible-study is reserved for the Sabbath because it is time intensive. But that's exactly what the Sabbath is for (Ex. 16, 20). Each Sabbath is a holy day, meaning it has been set aside for God. It is not for doing work, nor what we please (Lev. 16:31; Isa. 58:13). If we were strict about the Sabbath, we would even avoid shopping (Neh. 10:31). Ouch! The Sabbath was given to us as a sign of the covenant that exists between God and us. A sign is a visible display of an invisible reality. It is something we can do to acknowledge the covenant. We are to keep or observe it (Lev. 25:2). It is a day to remember and consider our freedom in Christ (Deut. 5:15). It is a sacrificial day (Num. 28:9-10). We delight in the time we spend studying God's word on the Sabbath, because the Sabbath is God's gift to us (Ex. 16:29). *Observing the Sabbath is a celebration, not an obligation.*

God himself rested on the seventh day (Ex. 20:11), and that probably means we should do the same. We don't argue over which day of the week is our Sabbath (Rom. 14:5), but we must set aside one day in seven for the things of God. It is a perpetual commandment of God (Ex. 31:16; Lev. 16:31). Remember your earlier lessons: the Mosaic code continues today (i.e. the ten commandments). The only codes that do not continue into the New Testament are the ceremonial code (which governed the system of sacrifices), and the civil code (which governed the nation-state of Israel – e.g. cities of refuge). Now we have been set free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). However, only the list of our offenses under that law was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14), not the law itself. We are not to abuse our freedom in Christ (1Cor. 8:9; Gal. 5:13), nor despise God's covenant (Ezek. 16:59).

How you celebrate your Sabbath is between you and God (because it isn't about who Christ is, or what he accomplished on the cross). But it appears from the bible, that an act of mercy is a good way to celebrate it (Jn. 7:23; 9:14-16). So is bible-study (Acts 15:21). We are taught by Christ on the Sabbath (Lk. 4:31). We are seen by others as we walk with him on the Sabbath, through fields which are ripe for harvest (Lk. 6:1-9). Try to visualize that. During the rest of the week, we practice what he taught us on the Lord's Day. It's a way to eat and digest the bread of life that he broke and gave to us on that Day, a visible remembrance of the covenant of his blood (Jn. 6:51-69; Matt. 26:26-29).

¹ Remember, we base our interpretations on the original language, not a translation. We don't have to be able to read Greek and Hebrew to do that. If we notice discrepancies between translations, we know we have a difference of opinion among experts. Now we go to our interlinear to identify the original Hebrew or Greek words. We get out our lexicon and review the several meanings of the words within the context. With that information in hand, we are better able to determine which is the best translation, if any. I often mark alternative translations in the margin of my bible, with the version. For example, at Col. 2:23, I wrote in the margin of my NIV "will-worship - KJV."