

When Pattern Becomes Habit

James Palmer

Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings (Leviticus 23:3).

The phrase “Blue Laws” is a term of antiquity. It refers to laws restricting the sale of certain items at particular times. Sunday once was a restricted retail day. Nothing but prescriptions could be sold at pharmacies. Counters were draped with sheets covering merchandise that could not be sold legally.

Chick-fil-A once proclaimed proudly that they were closed Sundays because the founder and owner, S. Truett Cathy, believed the “day was worth more than the dollar.”

Our decision to close on Sunday was our way of honoring God and directing our attention to things more important than our business. If it took seven days to make a living with a restaurant, then we needed to be in some other line of work. Through the years, I have never wavered from that position.¹

They have lost that zeal for proclamation of the day and have now gone with a more nebulous list of reasons:

Why We’re Closed on Sundays

Our founder, Truett Cathy, made the decision to close on Sundays in 1946 when he opened his first restaurant in Hapeville, Georgia. He has often shared that his decision was as much practical as spiritual. He believes that all franchised Chick-fil-A Operators and Restaurant employees should have an opportunity to rest, spend time with family and friends, and worship if they choose to do so. That’s why all Chick-fil-A Restaurants are closed on Sundays. It’s part of our recipe for success.²

¹ http://www.thecross-photo.com/Chick-fil-A_Restaurants-Closed_On_Sunday.htm

² <http://www.chick-fil-a.com/#closedonsundays>

It doesn't seem that you should have to command people to rest, but God did just that under the Mosaic Law. Even then, some people too lazy to work on the designated days violated the Law by gathering on the Sabbath. They died as a result of their disobedience.

It is a fact that we are under a new and better covenant (Hebrews 8:6-13) today and no longer under the Mosaic Law. Likewise, it is a fact that there are very few restrictions on commerce as most businesses (certainly retail) are open on Sunday (many open for regular hours as if nothing else should take precedence over the marketplace). Our freedom may very well be our undoing. You boil a frog one degree at a time, and the same is true with getting people to consider common what once was sanctified as holy.

I still remember the first Sunday my older brother, sister, and I went to the “movies.” It was not without a little shame on my part, but I got over it. That's the way sin is. We singe our own conscience, and over time, we lose all sensitivity to the transgression. Whether missing the assemblies on Wednesday nights, Sunday nights, or yes, even Bible study on Sunday mornings, it still just takes that “first time” to begin a pattern that becomes a habit. Then before we know it, we have forgotten what we should have remembered.

As we exercise all the freedom that we enjoy as Americans, let us not violate our consciences as Christians. Some things are still worth more than the dollars or the temporary enjoyments (pleasures) of the moment (season). When is the last time you gave up “business” transactions and simply rested and reflected on the goodness of Almighty God?

Let's remember that our spiritual lives are at stake and sanctify ourselves in service and in living. Start the week right by keeping the Lord **first** on the first day of the week and then remembering Whom we serve all week long.