

Start Your Week By Stopping

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The front-page headline in an issue of *USA TODAY* awhile back reads, “24/7 almost a way of life.” The article begins with, “The nation has an unofficial new motto...24/7. 24/7 isn’t just an expression, it’s a cultural earthquake that is changing the way we live.”

In times past we had to arrange our lives so we could shop and run errands before places closed. Now we have the “convenience” of shopping at increasing numbers of stores that stay open around the clock. We can get the latest news or find something interesting on TV twenty-four hours a day. Email piles up in our inbox day and night, and entire galaxies of useful websites wait to be explored in the ever-expanding universe of cyberspace. Partially because of such unprecedented opportunities provided by technology and prosperity, we also suffer with less sleep than any previous generation. Eventually, though, the need for sleep keeps us from staying busy a full twenty-four hours of every day.

But the “7” part of the 24/7 is another matter. Years ago the culture still provided a change of pace on Sunday. Few merchants opened their doors, which meant few people worked, little was bought and sold, and hardly any folks were scurrying around in order to go to work or to buy things. In general, everyone had a slower, simpler day than on other days. Today, almost nothing restrains us from being as busy on the Lord’s Day as on the other six days of the week. Virtually everything available to us Monday through Saturday is available on Sunday. And for many Christian, other than church attendance and (perhaps) not going to work, Sunday is now no different from any other day.

That’s a big reason why the lives of almost everyone seem so complex: in a 24/7 world there’s no sense of when the

week begins or ends. There’s no longer a day when we *have* to stop. As a result, there’s no more desperately needed way of simplifying the spiritual life of Christians today than delighting in the Lord’s Day.

The Bible designates Sunday as “the first day of the week” (Matthew 28:1). Our week does have a beginning. And on that day we should enjoy a sense of closure to one week and the freshness of another. For that to happen, however, we must *choose* to stop. We must erect walls that hold back the unfinished backlog of life on one side and the appealing opportunities provided by technology and prosperity on the other, and live within that restful space for one day. And we must do it for the health of our souls and bodies, for the blessing of our families and relationships, and for the building of the church and the kingdom of God.

Let the world live 24/7; I want weeks with ends and beginnings. The Lord gave us an example when, after the “six days [in which] the LORD made the heavens and the earth...He rested” (Exodus 31:17). On the Lord’s Day, let’s delight in following His example.