

SHARING SCRIPTURE

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A Day of Freedom

For use: July 14 - 20

Texts: Exodus 16:16-18; 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15, Matthew 12:9-13, Leviticus 25:1-7

It all began so innocently—a multi-family picnic at a beautiful park near Atlanta. But when a thunderstorm dumped several inches of water upstream, an adult and 10 children found themselves clinging to rocks in the middle of a river that suddenly became a rushing torrent. Firefighters were immediately called and showed up with water rescue equipment to save the eleven in danger. [1]

One child was about to be swept over a 10-foot fall when rescuers entered the water—tied together with ropes—and snatched the frightened youth as he swept past them. Life vests were given to the rest of the trapped victims as they waited for help. It took an hour for firefighters to finally bring all the children and one adult safely to shore.

The online report of the incident noted that signs were posted warning people not to enter the water.

The rescue reminds us of one of the purposes of the Sabbath. In this week's Sabbath school lesson, we explore the meaning of Sabbath in our lives. This gift from heaven teaches us several truths about God's interest in our lives. One of the primary messages we discover in the blessing of the seventh day is that God is our Creator as presented in the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:8-11. We were lovingly formed into the likeness of the Godhead for the purpose of relationship. Sabbath is a day to connect with heaven.

But more than that, the fourth commandment—as presented in Deuteronomy 5:12-15—shows us how the Sabbath reminds us that we were once in deep water, needing to be rescued. Like children, stranded in the middle of rushing river that was ready to swallow us up, Jesus waded out into our world of sin and snatched us from the grip of the enemy. What a powerful reminder each week of the daring love of heaven to risk all in order to redeem us forever.

~Curtis Rittenour

[1] <https://www.ajc.com/news/crime--law/children-adult-rescued-from-gwinnett-river/NeEZB70lsjq8zL6xqqQdQO/>

For Reflection

Connecting: Have you ever been physically rescued from a traumatic situation? What happened? How did you feel afterwards?

Sharing: What first comes to your mind when you think about the purpose of the Sabbath day?

1. It's a day for worship at church.
2. It gives me a chance to slow down physically and mentally from my work week.
3. I love to hang out with my friends and family.
4. I see it as a day to serve people in my community.
5. For me, Sabbath is a day to connect with God, the One who rescued me from sin.
6. Other...

Applying: The Junior Sabbath school class at your church is studying the Sabbath and has asked your class to summarize some of the special truths about the fourth commandment. Using the acronym S.A.V.E.D., share five key points about the Sabbath. For instance, "S" could represent how Sabbath teaches us about "salvation."

Valuing: Has the deeper meaning of Sabbath slid out of your life? Do you feel the need to recapture the freedom that God intends Sabbath to bring into your heart? Pray with one other member of your study group, asking the Lord of the Sabbath to renew this teaching in your mind today.

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Paul Richardson
Executive Director

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