



June 20, 2025

Is it wrong to use electricity on the Sabbath?

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast of lower Alabama. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Many of you who know me well, know that I like to reminisce about history in my life, inclusive of people and events. And, oh yes, I like to tell stories, and my dear wife has rolled her eyes more than once as she has heard some of them so many times.

One month from tomorrow, 8 years ago, my wife and I were busily finalizing the details for our transfer, as we started loading the moving truck. Most of our belongings were in boxes, stacked all over our home. Furniture was stacked here and there. We both had forgotten how much “work” it was to move...a lot of details on both ends, there in North Carolina and to our new home in lower Alabama.

Ah the memories. We were then excited about the next chapter in our lives as we oversaw an additional congregation here in the U.S. from the original directives, all in 4 states along the Gulf of America.

During that move, a couple of interesting questions arose from one of the brethren we served that ties in with what I mentioned was a principle that can be applied many times to our lives as we seek to follow our Father in heaven and His Son.

The principle? Some Scriptures that have been taken out of context, misused, or applied in a way that is not intended.

Last Sabbath I also mentioned during the local announcements a comment about worshiping on the Sabbath. We as Sabbath keepers want to be careful in

respecting the Sabbath and applying the Biblical instructions pertaining to the seventh day Sabbath.

One question was “Can we cook on the Sabbath?”

Another question that arose in relation to the first was “Is it wrong to use electricity on the Sabbath?”

Some orthodox Jewish groups say that indeed it is, citing the Old Testament statute in Exodus 35:3 that forbids kindling a fire on the Sabbath. They claim that flipping a light switch or turning on a furnace or pushing an elevator button is creating a spark that is a form of kindling a fire.

I was asked, “How can your moving truck move your belongings when driving on the Sabbath, shouldn’t you require them to park at a rest area for that day?”

When I mentioned I really had no control over the moving companies schedule, and that to my knowledge most moving companies are not Sabbath observers. Further clarification was asked about the initial question for those of us who do observe the 7th day Sabbath.

Let's look at the passage and the one that precedes it. *"Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day."* (Exodus 35:2-3) The prohibition about not kindling a fire on the Sabbath is clearly connected with work being prohibited on the Sabbath. The logical exegesis is that it refers to not using a fire to do one's normal weekly work on the Sabbath.

The context of Exodus 35:3 was the beginning of Moses' relaying of the instructions for building the tabernacle, and is likely referring to the work being done on the tabernacle construction. God, it appears, was telling them to not kindle industrial fires-to melt silver or gold or forge other metals for the construction of the tabernacle-on the Sabbath. No doubt, people did some minor smelting in individual homes, which God also forbade by this proscription. Some evidently assumed it was acceptable to do this kind of "good works" on God's

Sabbath, but He made His will completely clear in this matter. All industry was to cease, even the special work concerned with the building the tabernacle, so people could give full attention to resting and worshipping God on the Sabbath as He commanded.

The statute does not refer to a fire used for acceptable cooking or warmth. This prohibition does not mean that God expects His people to be cold and eat cold food every Sabbath. Early on in my life my family lived in Nebraska. For a good part of that time we lived in an old farm house that was heated by wood and coal. We experienced some cold winters, getting down well below zero F at times. The house did not have very good insulation and we needed to have a fire going at all times during the winter to avoid being chilled and having water lines freeze up. That meant starting a fire in the morning and adding wood to the fire as the day progressed.

This principle should still guide us today. Doing our regular employment or work on the Sabbath would be a violation of God's law, like the person depicted in the statute who builds a fire with which to do his work. Even for building a cooking or heating fire, God's people avoided gathering or chopping wood on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36). Instead, they used *the day before* to gather and prepare extra fuel for their Sabbath fires. That principle is still important today, but I see many who no longer prepare for the upcoming Sabbath.

Keep in mind, God wants His weekly Sabbath day to be a blessing and a delight to us (Isaiah 58:13-14), not a burden as some make it out to be through their restrictive interpretations. The Sabbath is a time to focus on our relationship with God. The Scribes developed all sorts of do's and don'ts regarding observing the Sabbath. If we are not careful, the Sabbath can become a day of "don'ts". That's not what God ever intended.

Let's look at another account of the disciples eating a "snack" on the Sabbath. *"At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, 'Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!'"* (Matthew 12:1-2)

The disciples were not engaging in "harvesting" the crop. They simply gathered a handful or so of grain, winnowed it between their hands and ate it. They were not stealing the grain either. There were laws regarding the gleanings to be left for poorer individuals. (Leviticus 19:9-10) Other laws permitted a person to get a "snack" from the produce of the field and vineyard. *"When you come into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put any in your container. When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain."* (Deuteronomy 23:24) The action permitted was not the same as engaging in the work of harvesting. Jesus and his disciples were not breaking any laws. He clearly arrived at a proper understanding of the law and the circumstances.

So, based on a balanced and accurate understanding and application of God's Word, it's not wrong to cook or use electricity on the Sabbath. I hope this is helpful to you in your study of God's Word.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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