

# 119

## MINISTRIES

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### **Parashah Points: Vayakhel – Don’t Neglect Simple Obedience**

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Vayakhel (Vy-ahk-el), which is Hebrew for “He gathered,” and it goes from Exodus 35:1 to Exodus 38:20.

This Torah portion gives some laws governing Sabbath observance in addition to telling about how Israel built the Tabernacle.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to present just a thought on the importance of the Sabbath.

#### **Exodus 35:1-3**

Moses assembled all the congregation of the people of Israel and said to them, “These are the things that the Lord has commanded you to do. Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day.

This is one of several places in the Torah where the command to rest on the Sabbath day is reiterated. In this passage, Moses gives this command at the beginning of his instructions for building the Tabernacle. But why was there a need to remind Israel to keep the Sabbath again—especially right before going into the instructions for building the Tabernacle? Doesn’t that seem a little random and out-of-place?

The reason for this is actually quite profound: The Torah teaches us not to neglect simple obedience.

Think about it. Israel is given the monumental task of literally making a home for God on earth. They were constructing the place where God’s holy presence would dwell among His people. And no doubt about it, this was a big deal. And yet, they still had to cease from this most important work when the Sabbath arrived. The importance of building the Tabernacle did not minimize the importance of resting on the Sabbath.

On a side note, this is likely the reason that the Torah says not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath day. Contextually, this Sabbath regulation was specifically in relation to the construction of the Tabernacle. That is to say, Israel was prohibited from making a fire intended for metalworking or smelting in relation to the work required to build the Tabernacle.

That's possibly why this particular Sabbath regulation seems to come out of nowhere. It's the first time not lighting a fire is mentioned in regards to the Sabbath and it appears directly before all of these instructions about building the Tabernacle. In essence, Moses was saying, "Don't even think about lighting a fire to work on the Tabernacle."

In either case, the point is that we are not to get so caught up in the bigger picture of what we're called to do that we neglect simple obedience. To the Israelites who were building God's house, it might have been easy for them to justify breaking the Sabbath in their minds to do work on the Tabernacle. That's why Moses reminded them to keep the Sabbath.

In the same way, we might get so caught up in something we're called to do—even important ministry work—that we neglect the simple obedience God still requires of us. For instance, we could get so focused on the "more important" things that we neglect spending quality time with our spouse and children. Or perhaps we justify our refusal to take advantage of opportunities to serve others in our community because we have "more important" things to do.

Even when Yeshua ranted against the Pharisees for neglecting the weightier matters of the Torah, He reminded them not to neglect the weightier matters, while still not neglecting the lighter issues (Matthew 23:23).

Indeed, it's important that we remain faithful to God in the straightforward things He's called us to do. After all, if we can't honor God in the simple things, what's to say that we'd be faithful in other ways?

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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