



SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 3 March 5, 2023
"The Heart of the Law"

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for inviting everyone to participate in your kingdom and we thank you for your grace, your love, and your forgiveness. Father, help us as a church to make all people feel welcome and to remove any barriers that we create that keep people from a relationship with you.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Mark 2:15-17 (NIV)

¹⁵ While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶ When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹⁷ On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Mark 3:1-6 (NIV)

Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ² Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³ Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone."

⁴ Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent.

⁵ He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. ⁶ Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

Mark 2:27 (NIV)

Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

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INTRODUCTION

Whether it's school, sports, or religion, when we focus only on the rules, it can be difficult to remember the overall purpose of something. Jesus reminds us that when we focus so much on the letter of the law, we may forget why the law was written in the first place.

If your view of religion emphasized rules over a relationship with God and others, you're not alone. But Jesus came to introduce a new way of thinking. God loves you more than he loves rules. If you are a sinner, you are invited to follow Jesus. If you are a follower, you are invited to yield to Jesus.

QUESTIONS

1. What role, if any, did rule-keeping play in your religious experience?
2. Were you left with the impression that the rules were more important than the people expected to keep the rules?
3. Read Mark 2:15 - 17 on the first page. What stands out to you? What do you think Jesus meant by “healthy” and “sick”?
4. Read Matthew 11:28 - 30. What stands out to you? What does this invitation imply about the outcome of following Jesus? What does the term “yoke” imply?
5. Is there an area of your life where you are emphasizing rules over people? How would your spouse, friends, or kids answer that about you?

FINAL APPLICATION

“The kingdom of God is near, and everyone is invited to participate.” Who can you make feel welcome in the Kingdom of God this week?