

Rules.

Week 4 of 8 : StartingPointGroup.org

INTRODUCTION

Practically speaking, rules are often the centerpiece of religious life. Many people think the Ten Commandments are rules that make a relationship with God possible. If you follow the rules, God will be happy. If you don't, he won't. ***But what if a relationship with God doesn't depend on our obedience?*** When it comes to your relationship with God, what is the role of rules?

LISTENING GUIDE

Faith Has a Starting Point.

- Every religion has a set of rules and a rule-maker.
(5 Pillars of Islam, 10 Commandments, Sermon on the Mount)
- Rules always assume a relationship.
- **Family Model:** your parents set the rules the family. You don't keep the rules to become part of the family, you keep the rules because your a part of the family.
- **Club Model:** you agree to keep a set of rules to get into the club and to stay in the club. If you keep the rules you're in . . . if you break the rules you're out.
- **Neighborhood:** you never know where you stand.

Ten Commandments. (1446 BC)

- **Abraham** > Ishmael > Arab Nations
- **Abraham** > Isaac > Jacob > 12 Sons > Nation of Israel

- **Joseph** moves to Egypt as a slave but eventually becomes the prime minister of Egypt.
- **Nation of Israel:** spent 400 years in slavery to Egypt.
- **Moses** says to Egyptian Pharaoh, *“Let my people GO!”* Pharaoh said, *“NO”* . . . so God sent the 10 Plagues.
- Moses leads people of Israel out of slavery and into the desert.
- Nation of Israel hadn’t know freedom in 400 years and didn’t have a set of laws to govern their nation of 2 million people.
- God met with Moses on the top of Mt. Sinai to give him the 10 Commandments - a set of laws for the nation to live by.

Exodus 20:1-3

And God spoke all these words: *“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.”*

God was saying, “TRUST ME.”

First Commandment: *“You shall have no other gods before me.”*

The Ten Commandments were a confirmation of, not a condition of, Israel’s relationship with God.

With God, relationship precedes rules.

The Rules are confirmation of, not a condition of, a relationship with God.

A relationship with God is based on the Family Model.

Q: What if God plays favorites?

Q: What if the standard isn't clear?

Q: How good is good enough?

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Exodus 18:18

"All the nations of the earth will be blessed through you."

Isaiah 49:6

*"I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."*

John 1:12

*"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God."*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In general, how do you respond to rules? Do you tend to keep them or break them?
2. What happens to a relationship when someone breaks a rule?
3. Growing up, did you feel like religion was based on the family model, the club model, or the neighborhood association model?
4. Is it easier to see God as a rule maker or a parent with boundaries? Why?
5. What would change if you really saw yourself as a child of God?
6. Have you entered a relationship with God through the door of faith or have you been trying to behave your way in?

“Salvation isn’t something you ACHIEVE . . . it’s something you RECEIVE.”

MOVING FORWARD

You can find out a lot about a person by the rules he or she imposes. They tell you *what* the person values. They tell you *who* the person values. This is true of God’s rules too. They’re not a condition for relationship with him, they’re confirmation of that relationship. They provide us with a framework for healthy relationships with God and others. His motive is one of provision and protection for the people he loves.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

John 1:12 - “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

HOMEWORK: Read Chapter 4 | Answer Reflection Questions

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