

“What’s going on?”

+ Missions Prayer Stations - Monday July 22nd from 6:30am-8pm LifePoint's doors will be open for you to come and pray for lost and hurting around the globe. There will be prayer stations in the sanctuary and multipurpose room to guide you through your prayer time and point to specific ways and places to pray for. The time is self-guided, meaning people/families are free to come and go as you please, visit the stations in any order you please, visit one, some, or all of the stations and spend as little or as much time as you'd like. Thank you for taking time out of your day to pray for the nations!

+ Camp Epic - Don't forget to mark your calendars for Camp Epic, July 31st-August 2nd from 6-8PM for kids entering kindergarten through 6th grade! Contact Rachek at rplattner@lifepointqcy.org if you are able to help serve or have any questions.

+ Guatemala - Please take a moment in your group to pray for our GO Trip team traveling to Guatemala on August 3rd. 15 people from LifePoint will be spending time helping in feeding centers, ministering around the Guatemala City dump, and serving at a special needs orphanage. Thank you for your prayers!

MATTHEW 5:17-20

ICE BREAKER

Question: What were some of the major spoken or unspoken family rules in your home growing up?

Question: Are you more of a rule follower or rebel? Give some examples of how this looks in your life.

CENTERING FOCUS

Have one person Psalm 119: 33-37 slowly and out loud. Use this a time of prayer, asking God to make these words a reality in your life.

Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes;
and I will keep it to the end.
Give me understanding, that I may keep your law
and observe it with my whole heart.
Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for I delight in it.
Incline my heart to your testimonies,
and not to selfish gain!
Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things;
and give me life in your ways.

LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Last week was our first week practicing the spiritual discipline of submission. Our challenge was to set apart some time and ask the Spirit of God... How can I reflect the attitude of submission that Jesus had today toward God? How can I reflect the attitude of submission that Jesus had today toward my church community?

Question: Were you able to set apart that time this week? If so, how did God lead you to reflect an attitude of submission?

THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTION

Question: What are some common thoughts about the Old Testament? Are you tempted to shy away from the Old Testament? If so, why?

Question: What is the importance of rules? Why do we need them?

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:17-20 (ESV): *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Read this passage again in the New Living Translation for better understanding.

Matthew 5:17-20 (NLT): *“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. 18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. 19 So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. 20 “But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!*

Question: What is Jesus referring to when he says the Law and Prophets?

Question: What is another word for *abolish*? If you have your phone, look up the definition and synonyms for abolish. How does this help you understand what Jesus is saying?

Jesus said that he has come to fulfill or accomplish the law. Listed below are a few ways that Jesus has fulfilled the Old Testament laws. Read these together as a group.
(resource: desiringgod.org; Piper)

- The blood sacrifices ceased because Christ fulfilled all that they were pointing toward. He was the final, unrepeatable sacrifice for sins. (Hebrews 9:12)
- The priesthood that stood between worshiper and God has ceased. (Hebrews 7:23–24)
- The physical temple has ceased to be the geographic center of worship. Now, Christ himself is the center of worship. He is the “place,” the “tent,” and the “temple” where we meet God. Therefore, Christianity has no geographic center, no Mecca, no Jerusalem. (John 4:21–23, John 2:19–21)
- The food laws that set Israel apart from the nations have been fulfilled and ended in Christ. (Mark 7:18–19)

Question: What stands out to you when you read about the ways Jesus fulfilled the law? What questions, thoughts, emotions do they stir up?

Most people are familiar with or have at least heard of the 10 Commandments. They serve as a summary or overview of God’s heart in the Old Testament law.

Read the 10 Commandments together.

Exodus 20:1-17 (ESV): *“And God spoke all these words, saying,*

1. “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. “You shall have no other gods before me.

2. “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

3. “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

4. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

5. *"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.*
6. *"You shall not murder.*
7. *"You shall not commit adultery.*
8. *"You shall not steal.*
9. *"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*
10. *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."*

Question: In what ways do we "relax" certain commandments? Do we rank some commandments as worse than others? If so, which ones are we more tempted to relax? Which ones do we take more seriously?

Question: According to Jesus in Matthew 5:19, what is the consequence of relaxing the law? What is the benefit of teaching and obeying the law?

Question: Jesus tells us that our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees. When you first read that, what do you think he means?

Who are the Pharisees?

The Pharisees were an influential religious sect within Judaism at the time of Christ and the early church. They were known for their emphasis on personal righteousness, their acceptance of extra tradition and laws that were passed down, in addition to the written Law. They were the religious elite at the time of Jesus, who were so committed to following the Old Testament law that they created and followed laws that protected them from accidentally breaking the Old Testament law. Not only did they hold themselves to these impossible standards, they also looked down on others who were unable to uphold the law and extra traditions.

In order to understand what Jesus is saying in regards to righteousness, let's read another passage.

Matthew 23:27-28 (ESV): *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.*

Question: According to this passage, how would you describe the righteousness of the Pharisees? What is wrong with the righteousness of the Pharisees?

Question: What then does it mean when Jesus says our righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees?

Question: Often the Pharisees are labeled as legalistic, which means excessively following the law or rules. Would you label yourself as more legalistic (rule follower) or as a minimalist (picking and choosing rules)? How does this influence your reading and obedience to God's Word?

Question: In what ways are you displaying outward righteousness without the inward, heart change?

Question: In light of these passages, what is one thing you learned? What is one way God is calling you to live differently in light of what you have learned from His Word?

NEW CHALLENGE

As we continue to practice the spiritual discipline of submission, we see that submission is just as much about our hearts as it is about our actions. God is seeking a submissive, teachable, correctable heart, not just our actions.

This week our challenge is to look for practical ways we can be taught by someone. With our constant need for information and the accessibility at our fingertips, we don't often see the need to be taught. But, it is a good and holy thing to submit and be taught by those around us.

So, submit yourself to someone this week and allow yourself to be taught. Lean in, listen, and receive teaching (assuming it is in alignment with God's word and not contradicting it).