

## Community Group Discussion Questions

“Kingdom Precepts”    Matthew 5:17-20    August 24, 2019

### Getting Started

The tension between the “Law of God” and the “Grace of God” is never solved with an either/or mindset, but rather a both/and lifestyle.

### Going Deeper:

1. **Corrects a Misunderstanding** (Vs. 17): *“Do not think that”*
  1. His Motive: *“I have not come to abolish the Law OR the Prophets”*
  2. His Mission: *“but to fulfill them.”*

Religious people of Jesus’ day actually thought they could earn their way to a right standing with God by fulfilling all of the commandments of God. They had even taken the 10 Commandments, and further expanded them into 613 commandments. I don’t know about you, but I can barely remember the first 10, much less 603 more!

When Jesus says that He didn’t come to abolish the Law or Prophets, but to fulfill them, He is speaking truth. He is the only person in history, as fully God & fully Man, who could possibly fulfill them, and do it perfectly.

Take a few minutes with your group and think about a few example of how Jesus perfectly fulfilled some of the 10 Commandments...

2. **Clarifies the Message** (Vs. 18): *“For truly, I say to you”*
  1. Affirms the Law: *“until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law”*
  2. Accomplishes the Law: *“until all is accomplished.”*
    1. The Law demanded Perfection
    2. The Lord delivered Perfection

While Jesus was sometimes accused of denigrating the Law, in these words, He explains that He actually believes every single part of it, down to the punctuation marks!

If there was one part of the Bible you wish weren't there (because it's so hard for you to obey), what part would that be? (What topic or verse?)

The good news for you is that you don't have to obey it in your own power.

You can ask Jesus, who lives in you, to live it out in your life :-)

3. **Challenges the Mindset** (Vs. 19): *"Therefore"*
  1. Statement of Examination: *"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"*
  2. Sets the Expectation: *"but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*

We don't get to redefine or relax God's law. We don't get to 'do what is right in our own eyes'. What are some things people say today when their lifestyle comes up against God's word?

Notice that doing right comes before teaching right. If we understand this, we can eliminate a lot of the criticism Christians rightly receive for being hypocrites.

4. **Confronts the Misleading** (Vs. 20): *"For I tell you"*
  1. Earned Righteousness: *"unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees"*
  2. Imputed Righteousness: *"you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."*

Earned righteousness is something you can do for yourself. You see a standard and you try to meet it. Imputed righteousness means that you can never meet a standard but someone else gives you the results of their effort that then allows you to experience what you are looking for. Remember playing a video game

and when you came to a really hard level, you would hand the controller to your brother or sister who was really good at it so they could get through it. Then, they handed the controller back to you so you could go on? That's imputation.

When Jesus uses this example of the Pharisees' righteousness (whom everyone thought were the most holy people around), it shocked His listeners. If I have to be more righteous than them, I'll never make it! (And by the way, the scribes and Pharisees won't make it either.) No one can make it on their own. No one can earn their way. Everyone has to depend on God's grace toward sinners.

Was there a time in your life that you thought you just had to be a 'good person' to be right with God? If so, what changed your thinking?

**TAKE AWAY:** PRAY THAT GOD GIVES YOU GRACE TO: 1) TREASURE GOD'S WORD, 2) AIM TO KNOW GOD'S WORD, 3) DESIRE TO OBEY GOD'S WORD

**Prayer:**