

# When Rules Become God

Week of October 23, 2016



*These Digging Deeper questions can be used the week following the Sunday message. You can use these questions for personal growth and development, or as a guide for your family or Connect Group discussions.*

## Message Recap:

**We are Masters at Missing the Point**  
Read Matthew 14:29-15:19

One of the crucial turning points of growing up in faith is rejecting legalism. Legalism is a cheap alternative to grace-based living from a broken heart and a life of trust. Legalism is like gravity. It's a relentless downward pull that stops the heart from soaring in the humility of total God-dependence. Legalism makes us control freaks. It's a false-god based life centered on a growing set of written and unwritten religious rules. These religious rules (and the religious cultures they produce) become a way for us to justify our worth and only look like we have a close relationship with God. Instead of living a life of legalism, soak in the love and grace of Jesus through a personal relationship with him. Don't miss the point—it's just relationship!

## Pray

Jesus, forgive me for being legalistic and for all the times when I relied on rules and lists to make me feel like I was following you. Help me, instead, to come to you broken and soak in your love as I experience the mystery of a growing personal relationship with you.

## Getting Started

- What kind of crazy rules did your parents have for you while you were growing up?
- Is there a time when you thought you understood something but you totally missed the point? What happened?

## Listening Deeply

1. How does the church culture cause us to be legalistic? What are some examples of this legalism?
2. Why do you think we fall back on rules and regulations when it come to things of faith?
3. Share with your group a time when you have been legalistic about things of faith. What was the result?
4. Read Ephesians 5:1 and explain this statement: The Glory of God can't fit inside the rules of men because we follow the living Word (in Jesus) and not a written code.
5. Review the focus passage for this week's message (Matthew 14:29-15:19) and answer these questions:
  1. Why did the pharisees get caught up on washing hands? What was Jesus' response?
  2. How does legalism blind us to the big work of God?
  3. How does legalism divide us?
6. How/where will you let go of legalism and live in a deeper relationship with Jesus this week?

## Living Wide in Jesus

It's far easier to settle for moralism and a life of religious rules than it is to live changing the world in the mystery of a growing personal relationship with Jesus Christ. But why settle for a life of missing the point? Instead, run from legalism and run to relationship with Jesus. Keep the main thing the main thing: the issue is Jesus. Just Jesus. What is he telling you to do? Where is he leading you? Where is he growing you? Embrace him on your journey and live the life you were created to live.