



Learning To Dance

Matt VanCleave
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GROUP ICE BREAKER

Would you describe yourself as a rule follower or a rule breaker and why?

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- Today I am receiving Jesus as my Teacher.
- I am committing to learn and apply the teachings of Jesus from the sermon on the mount.
- I will approach the sermon on the mount like I get to learn from the wisest person who ever lived about how to live life to the fullest.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Religion can produce people who know the Book and do the Book, but have no grace, producing rule followers instead of Jesus followers, being known mostly for what they're against. Jesus knew all about this problem, and it gets to a question that haunts the human race; what makes a truly good person?

Jesus said, "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:20) He is not saying the religious leaders had a lot of righteousness, but you need even more. He's talking about what it means to be a good person.

To seek to become a truly good person in and with God is the most important thing you can do. The law of God, rightly understood, humbly studied, and practiced through the power of the Spirit is a gift of God to the human race. It's not about following or breaking rules; it's about following Jesus. The loud and clear call of Jesus is in Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Righteousness is simply what your life looks like when you're living in the reality of the kingdom of God, because the goal of your life is not rule following. It's not sin avoidance. It is fullness of life.

This week, live in the abundance of the kingdom of God and practice surpassing goodness. Your aim is to have God change the automatic flow of thoughts and desires inside you to be truthful, and humble, and generous, and hopeful, and brave so that good words naturally come out.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you define or describe a “good person?”
2. Read Matthew 5:20. What is your reaction to this verse? Now read Romans 10:3-4 and Philippians 3:9 and discuss how they help us understand what Jesus said in Matthew.
3. Read 1 Samuel 16:7 and Proverbs 4:23. Why is it easier to focus on external compliance but neglect the inner condition of the heart? What have you found effective in your life to refocus your heart?
4. Share an experience when you were a spiritual rule follower or rule breaker rather than a Jesus follower. What did you learn about yourself and what impact did it have on your spiritual journey?
5. What does it mean or look like to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness?” (Matthew 6:33) What would it look like for you to pursue righteousness at this level, as Jesus desires?
6. This week, how can you live in the abundance of the kingdom of God and practice surpassing goodness and will you commit to doing it?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will explore what my glittering vices are.
- I will pursue righteousness not by trying to avoid sin but by living life to the fullest.
- I will pursue surpassing goodness, not rule-breaking or rule-keeping.
- I will pursue a transformed heart, not behavioral compliance.
- I will do good and not ask, "What is the least I can do."
- I will work as if I'm working for the Lord, not a human boss.
- I will memorize Scripture so I can think the kinds of thoughts God thinks.
- I will offer surpassing goodness with my time and money.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Matthew 5:17-20
- Matthew 23:25-28
- Matthew 6:33
- Colossians 3:23
- Matthew 12:34-35
- Matthew 11:16-17

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

- [A Deeper Look At the Sermon on the Mount: Living Out the Way of Jesus](#)

PRAYER REQUESTS

Take time to share how you can be praying for each other over the next week:

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