

startingpoint[®]



Session 4

RULES

SUBMISSION IS NOT ABOUT AUTHORITY AND IT IS NOT OBEDIENCE; IT IS ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS OF LOVE AND RESPECT.

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PREPARATION

SESSION 4

We love loopholes. No, not the kind that are associated with roller coasters. A loophole is an exception to a rule, a way to get out of the thing that you're supposed to do because of a technicality or a unusual circumstances. Few people in the world love loopholes more than religious people.

Why do religious people love loopholes? Because their belief systems are full of rules. Judaism has the Ten Commandments, Islam has the 5 Pillars, even Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount. And because of these rules, we assume our central response is to do one thing: behave.

What is even more interesting is that many of these rules are similar. Every major faith tradition teaches some form of the Golden Rule: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*. So we would assume that because they all have the same basic rule as a foundation, they all lead the same direction.

However there are two types of relationships that lead to rules, and that changes everything.

First, there is a *club model* for rules. The club model says that if you will agree to or adopt a set of rules, then a relationship will be in place. When you join a health club, a country club, or even Sam's Club, you are operating within the club model. I will agree to these sets of rules, and, because of that, we will be in relationship.

There is also the *family model*. The family model puts a relationship first, and, since the relationship is in place, rules are established. A family doesn't give a newborn baby a set of rules on condition for being in relationship with them. No! That would be crazy! The relationship is firmly secured and the rules slowly come into play over time.

The important part of faith is not the similarity of rules or how well we keep them, the important part of faith is whether it is a family model or a club model.

1

In general, are you a rule-keeper or rule-breaker?

2

Which model, club or family, best represents your understanding or experience of rules and relationship in religion?

3

Is it easier to see God as a rule-maker or a parent with boundaries? Why?

MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE

John 1:10-12

Exodus 20:1-2



Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.

Albert Camus

NOTES

GROUPS

BOTTOM LINE: SESSION 4

1

Rules always assume a relationship.

2

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

3

You are not accepted or dismissed because of your behavior.

NOTES
