

## “YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID”: JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S LAW

Matthew 5:17-37

### Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What is the purpose of a law? How do we fulfill a law?
- What do you think people mean when they talk about the letter of the law vs. the heart of the law?

Talking about God's law can be intimidating. It may feel at times like a burden of restrictive rules. The religious leaders and teachers of Jesus' day had indeed turned following God's law into an exercise of external piety. But they missed the fuller understanding of God's law and it's that fuller understanding that Jesus shares with his disciples in his Sermon on the Mount. He reminds them what they've heard taught, and then he tells them what it truly means to follow God's law—we must transform our hearts and obey God in our thoughts and words, as well as our deeds. Join us in studying this important section of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and we'll discover the fullness of life God provides us and how we can flourish in the way he intended, not because we've earned it, but because of Christ's righteousness in us.

**Listen:** [\*"You Have Heard it Said" Jesus Teaches Us How to Understand God's Law\*](#)

### Reflection

After listening, consider:

- How is our character impacted when we follow God's laws with our thoughts, attitudes, and hearts, not just our external actions?
- In segment 1, hosts Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney observe how, with God's understanding of "do not murder," it is possible to "murder by tweet" (a short post on the social media platform, Twitter). Can you think of other contextual examples of ways our thoughts and attitudes might break God's command to not murder (even though we may never physically harm another person)?
- In segment 2, Scott and Darrell discuss the interwoven nature of our relationships with people and our relationship with God. They explore how our daily life impacts our ability to worship God properly. Think about your relationships. Have you ever experienced a broken or troubled relationship that interfered with your worship? Do you think Christians today are as intentional about reconciling their relationships as Jesus teaches they should be? Why or why not?
- In segment 1, Scott describes God's law as his "operating instructions for creation" and later in segment 3 as the "owner's manual for life" so that we can flourish and live lives of delight. What do these images help you understand about the purpose of God's law? In your experience, is this typically how the church teaches about God's law? If not, how does this perspective differ?

## Related Passages

- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Exodus 20:1-21
- Ephesians 5:3
- Romans 5:6-21

## Conclusion

In your own words, how would you summarize or explain the root or heart of God's law? Think about the ways you struggle to keep God's law in your inner life.

Close your time of reflection in prayer.

- Give thanks for God's gifts of grace—the gift of his law and the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ through whom we are granted righteousness we do not deserve.
- Confess your struggles and the ways you fail to keep God's laws and seek forgiveness.
- Ask for the Holy Spirit to help you follow God's law the way he intended, both through internal (heart and attitude) and external actions.

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