

“You Have Heard it Said”: Jesus Teaches Us How to Understand God's Law

God loves us and wants us to live full, abundant, and blessed lives. With his law, he told us just how to live to make that possible. As Jesus continues in his Sermon on the Mount, he teaches the disciples how to correctly understand the laws from God’s perspective. He makes it clear that the condition of the human heart, what’s on the inside, is just as important as our outward obedience. To illustrate his point, he provides a more detailed explanation of the familiar laws about murder, worship, adultery, divorce, and oaths. Together, let’s study Jesus’ explanation of God’s law to gain a deeper understanding of both the letter and the heart of God’s law, so we might live as God intended in gratitude for the righteousness we’ve received by grace through our faith in Jesus Christ himself.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- 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?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [“You Have Heard it Said”: Jesus Teaches Us How to Understand God's Law](#)

READ [Matthew 5:17-37](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- 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 for further study

[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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