

# Rules | Family Worship Guide

Mark 2:23-3:6



**MAIN IDEA:** Do not let manufactured religious rules make you a spiritual slave.

## **PREPARATION:**

Have you experienced someone that is overly sensitive to the rules? Perhaps someone who has lost sight of who created the rules and why the rules were created in the first place? Have you ever been that person? What boxes did calling out someone else on the rules check for you?

## **EXPLANATION:**

If you have ever played, parented through, or been a part of sports in any way, you have experienced extreme rule-following. You have also encountered people calling out (often loudly) one another in front of God and everybody regularly. I recently experienced this at a t-ball game. T-ball, mind you, is meant to foster a love for the fun of baseball while teaching kids the fundamentals of the sport. It is not meant for gaining prestige or for reliving an Uncle Rico-type fantasy of '82 (which it most often turns into). We had a great season. We won some games. We lost some games. The most important thing was that all of the kids had a great time and improved. We had come to the end of the season, which means it was time for the tournament (which I call the Rico Revealer). We were the third team in the standings, so we had to play the fourth team. We were playing well that night. The other team was not doing great. Coaches from the other team kept yelling and calling our team out for things like our short-stop being too close to the baseline, dropping the ball after someone had already been tagged out, etc.

The last straw was when their scorekeeper called us out for batting out of order. Now mind you, we were down a coach (he was called out to work because he is shockingly not a professional t-ball coach). Also, the score was 14-5 in our favor. To be fair, one of our players (also not professional... just six years old, in fact) walked out of the dugout and started batting before his turn; however, we had not strategically planned this. This mishap was not the reason for our success that night. These rules were not what the game was about. Honestly, most of our parents wanted us to lose anyway, so we didn't have to return! I wonder what the kids learned that night?

Jesus knows all about extreme rule-following. The beginning of the book of Mark is full of controversies with religious leaders opposing Jesus. The religious leaders complained about Jesus forgiving sins (Mk 2:1-12). Next, they were upset that he shared time and table with sinners (Mk 2:13-17). They could not believe he did not fast according to religious tradition (Mk 2:18-22). Now they take issue because He does not honor the Sabbath the way they believe He should (Mk 2:23-28 and 3:1-6).

The idea of the Sabbath is in the ten commandments. God intended for us to rest on the seventh day as He rested in creation. The Jews were to abstain from all forms of work. However, the fourth commandment is not precisely clear on what that means exactly. Where there are no rules and humans are provided the opportunity, we quickly turned the ten commandments into a Mad Lib. The Jews created an intricate Babel-like tower of regulations and statutes that made following the commandment nearly impossible. They quickly turned blessing to burden. The rule designed to give us time to be in awe of the Maker had become a joyless contest of human invention with human reward. Dr. Danny Akin said it best, "The Pharisees relied on their own traditions for guidance, and in doing so, they missed the Lawgiver entirely."

## CONVERSATION:

- Do you have more of a tendency to find faults in other people or find ways to encourage them? Is there any situation where it is our right and our responsibility to find flaws in others?
- What rules do you find yourself using to judge the spirituality of yourself and others?
- Who makes the rules? Why does that matter?
- How can a person follow the rules (honoring the Sabbath, etc.) without becoming legalistic?

## APPLICATION:

- God created rules for His glory and our good. Jesus releases us from legalistic pressure and frees us to joyful obedience. In what ways is Jesus calling you to obey him this week? How can we see the things we are currently doing as joyful obedience?
- Legalism is taking what God did not command or prohibit and making those things mandate. We can also characterize legalism as looking for shortcomings in others without looking within ourselves. Ask the Lord to help you identify and mortify the legalistic things in your life. Do you need to make amends with anyone you have wronged?

## SUPPLICATION:

Father, help us to be joyful in our obedience to you. Help us not take what You have made and distort it for our sinful purposes. Help us to be in awe of you and keep the Sabbath holy. Help us to worship you, the Lawgiver, rather than ourselves.

## EXULTATION:

[Trust and Obey by Big Daddy Weave](#)

When we walk with the Lord, In the light of His word, what a glory He sheds on our way. While we do His good will, He abides with us still, And with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey

For there's no other way

To be happy in Jesus

But to trust and obey

But we never can prove, The delights of His love, Until all on the altar we lay. For the favor He shows, For the joy He bestows, Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet, We will sit at His feet, Or we'll walk by His side in the way. What He says we will do. Where He sends, we will go. Never fear, only trust and obey.

Lord, I love You. Please help me to trust and obey. Lord, I love You. Please help me to trust and obey. Lord, I love You

Please help me to trust and obey