



DISCUSSION GUIDE

True Devotion (Mark 2:23-3:6)

GETTING STARTED

What is one thing you are thankful for this week and what is one thing we can pray for you this week?

Remind each other of our simple expectations for meeting together.

In what way have you experienced someone (perhaps yourself included) where someone has failed to separate the “letter of the law” from the “spirit of the law”?

QUICK REACTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?

What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?

What idea, context, Scripture do you think could have been expanded on, or included in the message?

Dave made two important implications from this passage...

1. *Jesus exposes how we can become more devoted to our love of the law than the needs of others, which reveals how little we understand the heart of the law.*
2. *If you want to know what it means to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, watch what He does as much as what He says. If you want to know what it means to follow in the footsteps of a Pharisee, watch what they do as much as what they say. (Jesus says so much in Matt. 23:3).*

In what way could we be accused of following in the footsteps of a Pharisee, rather than Jesus in how we live out and apply Scripture in our relationships toward others? How can our devotion to keeping in step with Scripture become an obstacle to God’s greater purposes?

Why is it so important that the application of Scripture/God’s commandments be centered in the heart of the Scripture/commands?

In what way, today, do we need to exercise caution in “getting in bed with Herodians” in order to advance our moral objectives that has nothing to do with advancing the gospel of Jesus?

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE [Read Mark 2:23-3:6]

(Yes, these questions can seem silly, however, good discussion and interpretation of the Bible begins with having a proper understanding of the basic facts; who, what, when, and where in the text.) Work through this quickly, the answers are fairly obvious.

- What is the setting of the story, and why is it significant? (2:23)
- What did the disciples do that outraged the Pharisees? (2:24)
- Why did the Pharisees confront Jesus about the actions of His disciples? (2:24)
- What was Jesus’ response to the Pharisees’ accusations? (2:25-27)
- According to Jesus, why were the disciples of both David and Jesus justified in breaking the Sabbath? 2:25-27
- Why did Jesus say He was “Lord even of the Sabbath”? (2:28)
- What happened after the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees? (3:1)
- Why were some of the Pharisees watching Jesus so closely? What was Jesus watching closely? (3:2)
- What was notable about the way Jesus performed this miracle? (3:3)
- Why the use of the word critics, instead of Pharisee? (3:4)

- What was it about the Pharisees that so distressed Jesus? (3:5)
- What significance do you see in the fact that the Pharisees were willing to plot with their enemies, the Herodians, to kill Jesus? (3:6)

QUESTIONS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT

Where have you seen rules-only spirituality in the church today?

In what areas do you think your church, or ourselves might be following the "letter of the law" rather than the "spirit of the law"?

How should we respond to suggestions that it only matters how closely we keep the letter of the law?

When have you ever experienced a time when the requirements of your Christian faith seemed to conflict with a human need?

What should we do when a requirement of the faith seems to conflict with a human need?

In what areas of your faith do you tend to be too rigid with rules or traditions?

What is Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath?

In what ways can we follow in the footsteps of Jesus and not the Pharisees? (see Matt. 23:3)

What difference does it make that "the Sabbath was made for man"? In what way ought this be a guiding principle in our life?

What is significant about the Pharisees now pursuing a relationship with the Herodians to our day and age?

APPLY THE PASSAGE

What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?

How can we pray for each other?