



RUNNING ON EMPTY

Part One: Empty Religion

Do you ever feel like there's a barrier between you and God? There are all kinds of things that make us feel like we can't get too close to God. One of the most dangerous barriers is one that we might not even think to suspect: religion.

Scripture: Mark 11:12-21, Jeremiah 7:5-11

Bottom Line: Jesus breaks down barriers in order to build up character.

Discussion Questions

1. Have there been times when you felt like your relationship with God was really close? What are some of the things that you think helped you feel this way? Are there times when you felt far from God? What factors do you think contributed to that?
2. Read Mark 11:15-19. Why do you think Jesus is upset about the Temple? Read Jeremiah 7:5-11 to get some context. Study this section and categorize the things that God is upset about. What are some of the things that we might continue to be guilty of today in our religious practices?
3. The Temple was being used for people to access God's presence when they wanted it but ignored it when they didn't. Are there areas of your life where you are tempted to ignore God's presence? What kinds of things are easier for you to not involve God in?
4. Read 1 Peter 2:1-12. How does this passage describe what God's people are supposed to do and be? Is this different from what you normally think of when you think of church?
5. What does it mean when it says that Christians are built up as a Temple? What were priests supposed to do? In what ways should we act as priests for one another?

Moving Forward

As a result of what you've learned tonight, are there ways that you have been challenged to look at your role in this group differently? What kinds of things might you change about how you participate as a result? Spend some time sharing with one another and praying for each other's needs.