



Part 2: Good Grace

Jesus has some harsh and confronting words for religious people who learned how to game the system. By creating pious-sounding loopholes, they reduced obedience to the bare minimum and missed the heart of God entirely. That's bad religion, but there is a better way that Jesus calls us to: the way of grace and love.

Discussion Questions

1. When you hear the phrase “*loophole Christianity*” or “*looking for the minimum*,” where do you see that tendency show up most easily in everyday life (work, relationships, faith, etc.)?
2. Read Matthew 23:13-15. What accusations does Jesus make against the Pharisees in these verses? What images or phrases stand out (e.g., “shut the door,” “child of hell”), and what do they reveal about the effect their religion has on others?
3. In Matthew 23:16-22 what distinctions are the Pharisees making between the temple/gold and altar/gift? According to Jesus, what does their logic show about their priorities and their understanding of what is truly sacred?
4. Jesus connects truthfulness and integrity to the *spirit* of the law rather than technical rule-keeping. How is “let your yes be yes” different from managing oaths or technicalities? What does that reveal about what God actually wants from His people?
5. One of our biggest loopholes is to treat forgiveness like a safety net or license to sin. Where might you personally be tempted to think, “God will forgive me, so it's not a big deal”? How does Romans 6 challenge that mindset?

Moving Forward

Jesus says all the law hangs on loving God and loving others. If love—not loopholes—became your guiding principle, how would that change a current decision, habit, or relationship in your life this week?