



THE ROLE OF RULES | WEEK 4

* Some of this material comes from the Starting Point discussion guide from North Point Ministries.

The perception many people have of the Christian faith is that it is primarily a code of conduct that you must adhere to if you want to be on good terms with God. If you can do it, you're in. If you can't... you're out. This leaves people with a picture of God that looks more like a spiritual police officer than a loving father. So, what role does our behavior play in our relationship with God?

CONNECT

In general. How do you respond to rules? Are you a rule-follower or a rule breaker/challenger?

What is it about a rule that makes it feel controlling instead of caring?

TALK ABOUT IT

Which one of these words do you most quickly relate to when you hear this phrase, "God is..." (Lord, mystery, friend, scary, father, comforter, other)?

Which of these models describes the churches or religious traditions you've been exposed to?

- 1. In the **family model**, the relationship comes before the rules. Disobeying may have consequences, but you're always part of the family.**
- 2. In the **club model**, you have to agree with the rules to get in. If you break the rules, you're kicked out.**

Have you considered that God declared a relationship with the people of Israel before giving the Ten Commandments? What do you think about that?

APPLY IT

Have you ever thought about the idea that, within the Christian faith, the rules are intended to confirm our relationship with God rather than being a condition for it?

How does that change the way you view the rules in the New Testament?

Talk about a time when you made rules for someone else. What was the heart behind those rules?

Read John 1:9-13.

What's the difference when our relationship with God is built on rules compared to Jesus?

PRAY

It's the end of the discussion time, and you are likely feeling rushed to let everyone go. Maybe it went longer than you planned. Maybe the kids are past restless. **HOLD ON!** Don't overlook this crucial part of living life together. We get closer to people the more we know who they really are and what they are dealing with.

- Pray together before you go home.
- Take requests, email them to the group, ask them to pray this week.