

Session 7 Loopholes

We all like loopholes. They're our way of getting around rules or laws. Looking for them comes naturally; nobody has to teach us. We're always searching for them.

Christians love loopholes, as all religious people do. Every religion has a book or a list, and every religion has theologians to help people get around actually doing the stuff written in those books or those lists. Religion gives you a belief system that you don't really follow; when it gets really difficult, you find a loophole.

Loophole Christians really love theology. Theology is where we build the barricades that keep us from having to do what the bible actually says. All kinds of horrible things happened in the name of theology.

But the truth is, where you're a follower of Jesus, you quit searching for loopholes. And you start looking for something else. You start asking a completely different set of questions.

In a conversation Jesus had with some experts and loopholes, we discover something that should make us rethink our whole approach to Christianity as it relates to these things.

Discussion Starter

What are some of the loopholes you've seen other people come up with and take advantage of? Did their reasoning behind this strike you as clever, humorous, aggravating—or something else?

And how about you? What loopholes have you found yourself looking for and making use of?

Video Overview For Session 7 of the DVD

Jesus doesn't like it when we use his Father's words to avoid doing his Father's will.

We all do this when we ignore the truths in the Bible we find inconvenient. We make lists, but our lists never fully match the lists in the Bible. We pick and choose.

Jesus pushed back against this. He takes us back to what God first had in mind when he gave his commandments in Scripture.

Journey CHURCH

Pastor James Greer

James@jcpineville.com

www.jcpineville.com



This was in his thinking as he told his disciples: “A new command I give you: Love one another” (John 13:34). He knew God wanted this to be primary. Then Jesus added, “As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

More than twenty years later, Paul echoed this as he wrote to the Jesus followers in Rome: “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8). In other words, we should pay our debts—but this debt of loving one another is one we can never pay off. We owe it to the people around us to love them, because we owe it to our heavenly Father in light of how much he loves us.

Paul went on to say that all the commands in the Old Testament “are summed up in this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ (13:9).

This is what Jesus taught as well. The religious leaders asked him, “What’s the greatest command?” He responded, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your mind and with all your strength.” Then he added, “The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30-31). He was saying that everything else is secondary.

Loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself—this is the filter through which we’re to make every decision. The rest of Scripture is simply commentary on how to love in this way.

Disciples of Jesus use the Scriptures as a mirror. Each day they ask, “What does love require of me?” Not simply, “What does the Bible say?”

Living and loving this way is much harder and more complicated than being a loophole Christian. We reach out toward people we don’t like, because that’s what Jesus did. This can lead us into uncomfortable places and new kinds of relationships.

This approach has nothing to do with abandoning your faith or compromising. It has everything to do with looking at others and asking yourself, “What does love require of me?”