

startingpoint

— the series —

PART 4: The Role of Rules

INTRODUCTION

Practically speaking, rules are often the centerpiece of religious life. Many people think the Ten Commandments are rules that make a relationship with God possible. If you follow the rules, God will be happy. If you don't, he won't. But what if a relationship with God doesn't depend on our obedience? When it comes to your relationship with God, what is the role of rules?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is it about a rule that makes it feel controlling instead of caring?
2. What happens to a relationship when someone breaks a rule?
3. In general, how do you react to rules? What rules are the hardest for you to keep?
4. Talk about a time when you made rules for someone else. What was the purpose of those rules?
5. Growing up, did you feel like religion was based on the family model, the club model, or the neighborhood association model?
6. Have you entered a relationship with God through the door of faith, or have you been trying to behave your way in?

MOVING FORWARD

You can find out a lot about a person by the rules he or she imposes. They tell you what the person values. They tell you *who* the person values. This is true of God's rules too. They're not a *condition* for a relationship with him, they're *confirmation* of that relationship. They provide us with a framework for healthy relationships with God and others. His motive is one of provision and protection for the people he loves.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 1:12