

New Hope, New Joy

Study 6 – “Opposition to Authority”

1. Take another look at verse 17. How does this opener help you to anticipate what’s ahead?
2. Imagine yourself a part of the religious establishment, including their body language suggested in 5:17. How would Jesus’ growing popularity have threatened you?
4. Compare the Pharisees’ questions in 5:21, 30, 33 and 6:2, 7. They are implicit or explicit charges. What progression can you see from 5:21 to 6:11?
5. Jesus saw that religious legalists of his day taught a distorted view of God. What religious legalisms can keep us from enjoying the Lord and his true sabbath today?
6. What skills in answering religious critics can you learn from Jesus?
7. In these six episodes Jesus is exercising authority over basic areas of life (in respective order)—personal sin and guilt, relationships to fellow human beings, social life, religious lifestyle, sabbath observance. Over which area of your life do you sense a possible absence of Jesus’ authority? What is the first thing you should do to remedy this?
8. What do you most appreciate about Jesus in these encounters? Thank Jesus for your fresh views of God in him and practical implications for you.

Now or Later

Sabbath observance was one of the sharpest disagreements between Jesus and the Pharisees. Sabbath means “to cease, to desist.” See how it began, why it’s important, and examples of good and bad observances:

Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13; Amos 8:5.

Contemporary legalisms unfortunately still distort some people’s view of God. Ask at least six people, in or out of the church, what they consider religious legalisms. Be prepared for possible strong criticisms, but don’t argue with them. Be open to possibilities for opening a discussion that might help someone correct a wrong perception of God and the Bible.