
Matthew Chapter 12

☐ 1. Warm-up (5-10 min)

Choose one:

- a. Is the Sabbath your favorite day of the week? Why/why not?

- b. What do you think an ideal Sabbath would be like of? What would you do?

- c. What do you think Sabbath will be like in heaven? What do you think you will do? Why?

☐ 2. Engaging the Chapter (15-20 min)

In this chapter Jesus is continuing to teach His disciples about His mission here on earth. At this point they have spent time out on their own doing ministry (chapter 10) and now they are back together for more training and un-training. Un-training because they have to un-learn some of the things the Pharisees and other religious leaders of their day taught.

In this story Jesus and His friends love to live for God and go on his missions every day of the week—including Sabbath. For them the Sabbath was not a day to lay around and sleep—it was a day of active service. The Pharisees, on the other hand, made thousands of rules to keep the people from doing much of anything. In fact the religious leaders were so paranoid about someone accidentally working or sinning in some way that they often stood around almost like Sabbath police watching the people's every move. So, if you are wondering how and why the Pharisees saw Jesus and His disciples off in some random grain field eating a few kernels of grain that's how and why. In fact it's possible that the Pharisees may have even had undercover agents following Jesus and His disciples to watch for such a terrible crime as this!

How do you think the religious system of Jesus' day had gotten to be so legalistic? Do you think it may have been an over-reaction to all of the apostasies of the Israelites throughout their previous history? Why/why not?

Do you think you would have enjoyed or hated living under that religious system?

Do you think all the rules would have given you the security that you could know that what you were doing was right or would it have driven you crazy? Why?

Do you think that you live under a better religious system to day or worse? Explain?

What is the difference between living under a religious system versus focusing on a personal relationship with Jesus? What do you think Jesus' disciples were focused on—following rules or getting to know Jesus? Which do you think is better or is a combination of some kind ideal? Explain?

3. Applying the Chapter to Your Life (5-10 min)

Take a long hard look at your life and try to determine how much your spiritual experience revolves around rules and how much it revolves around relationships. Talk with your parents, youth leaders and/or pastor to try and determine how many rules you really need to help guide you into a better relationship with Jesus. Just like we talked about in lesson 7, it's important to have some rules, but too many can crush the relationship.

4. Prayer Time (3-5 min)

Pray and ask Jesus to help you structure your relationship with Him in a healthy way that will help you to grow closer to Him. Be specific as you pray through all the outreach activities, restful times in nature, time spend in scripture and other activities you engage in with Him.