

*Series: A Life That Actually Works*

Part 2: Stop trying to be a good person.

Matthew 5:17-48 - [Watch online](#)

### **Summary:**

Just about everyone thinks they are a good person. But simply being good enough doesn't seem to be enough to have a life that actually works. Maybe the life we are made for isn't just about being a good person. There's something better and something more we can be.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What thoughts, questions, arguments, or hesitations do you have about this passage and/or message?
2. Compare a 'good' person with a "God Person." What are some key differences? Do you sense any invitations or challenges in this distinction for your own life?
3. Read Philippians 2:12-13. Jon described the process of the Holy Spirit changing our hearts as a dance or a hand in a glove. How would you describe this dynamic? Have you seen this play out in your or someone else's life?
4. What pushback(s) do you have towards Jesus' teaching this week? Why do you think that is?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

### **Main Points:**

- We all have a list of "rules" we believe make someone a good person.
- We all think we are a good person, but we don't all experience a life that actually works.
- Following rules doesn't get us to a life that actually works.
- A right relationship with God and others isn't based on following the letter of God's law, but living out God's love.
- Jesus didn't come to make you a good person. He came to make you a God person.
- How we love others is more important than the laws we follow.
- If you have to find a loophole you're not loving.
- God People care more for the person who hurts them than for their right to hurt them back.
- Following the Law of Love is simple, but it's not easy. It's not complicated but it is demanding.
- Jesus gives us new hearts, not new rules.

### **Weekly Challenge:**

ASK:

What pushback(s) do I feel to Jesus' teaching? What's up with that?

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### **Transcript:**

**IN:** You're a good person. Maybe not as good as some but definitely not as bad as others, right?

So is it working? Has being good enough given you the life you actually are wanting?

Or is there something missing? Is there more you are wanting to experience/be?

Maybe life is about more than just being a good person... maybe there's something better we can be...

So let's talk about it together.

**WE:** You ARE a good person. How do I know that?

Well first of all you're watching a church youtube channel.

But also I know you have a code/set of life rules you do your best to live by...whether it's official or not...

**We all have a list of "rules" we believe make someone a good person.** [00:54]

- Could be official like- 10 commandments/doing what the Bible says
- Or maybe more of a general rule of living...

Either way... You don't break the law/rarely get arrested... try to be kind to people and respect those who give you respect.

Not a murderer/abusive. Not hitler. Not a rep/dem

But, if we're honest...

**We all think we are a good person, but we don't all experience a life that actually works .** [01:25]

I mean if being a good person were enough we'd all be perfectly happy/content. The world would be at peace and we wouldn't have this feeling that there's something missing.

So what's the deal? What are we missing?

Well, Jesus had an uncanny and genius ability to see right to the heart of issues/human nature..

He taught the life we are actually made for is found in the Kingdom of Heaven...God reigning in the hearts/minds/lives of people now...

Which we assume means following the right list of rules, being good enough... making sure our good outweighs bad.

Jesus also knew we would go there... so in his most famous teaching he sets it straight... **Following rules doesn't get us to a life that actually works.** [02:22]

**GOD: V. 17-20** "Uh Wait... completely contradicts what just said Jon, Jesus just said that if we want to experience KoH we have to follow all the rules in the OT... 10 coms and... eating kosher, clothes w/o mixed fabric, sacrifices"

And our righteousness needs to exceed the religious leaders?

- They had all the Scriptures memorized. Followed law word for word. So dedicated even created more rules in order to not even get close to breaking God's laws.

*"That's the opposite of what you said... AND seems impossible? How could anyone be better than that?"*

1st Jesus is saying the OT is good. Very good. Points us to righteousness... a right relationship w/ God/others.

**A right relationship w/God and others isn't based on following the letter of God's law but living out God's love.**

[04:09]

Jesus saying... Religious leaders think they are good people b/c they follow the law but their ❤️s aren't changed... Follow rules on the outside but inside they are dead... "White washed tombs."

Jesus- "The law/prophets are good... were given to point you to the ❤️ of God..."

I'm here to show you God's ❤️ and make it possible for your ❤️s to be changed to experience and the life that actually works."

[05:00] "I have come to accomplish (other trans fulfill) God's law..."???

1st- b/c the Jewish Scriptures point to someone coming to restore humanity to God and restore our true humanity to ourselves... "I am here".

2nd- Accomplished them by living out/exemplifying the true meaning/❤️ of God's law... LOVE.

- Love the God w/ ALL your
- Love neighbor as self

3rd- He is the fulfillment of God's promise through the prophet Jeremiah... **Jeremiah 31:33-34**

He began this new covenant(agreement between God/humanity) through his D&R what we celebrate w/ Communion.

Jesus makes it possible for us to fulfill the law... not by giving us new rules but a new heart.

Tim Mackie- OT Law = Music scales New heart = possible to make our own songs w/ those scales

**Jesus didn't come to make you a good person. He came to make you a God person.** [07:01]

Then he gives examples...

**V. 21-22** "You have heard (10 commands)... BUT I SAY"... Whoa that's a big deal. Claiming authority over Moses...

"I say..." This is what that law was actually getting at...

Most people can say, "I'm good person, it's not like I've murdered anyone!"

Jesus says, "*Great job*. Not very difficult... You're like 98% of human population... but what about your *heart*?"

The point wasn't just to keep you from murdering but get to the root of the problem...

Murder doesn't just happen all of sudden... It comes out of the hatred in our hearts.

A desire to destroy someone/their humanity... b/c what YOU want is more important than the human in front of you...

Which is the root of all division.

Jesus says... God People, choose to love their neighbor b/c their hearts have changed not b/c they read a book of rules that told them not to kill.

So much so that it changes their daily life...

**V. 23-24** Jesus- Your relationship w/each other/ your heart towards each other is more important than your pious religious sacrifices.

**How we love others is more important than the laws we follow.** [09:17] Gives another example...

**V. 25-26** The law is there to protect the innocent and punish the guilty- avoid dealing w/ the law all together by simply loving others and reconciling w/them.

Just to make sure you get it... here's another example.

**V. 27-30** For most people it isn't difficult to not cheat on your spouse... But every affair starts where? The heart.

The root is... What YOU want is more important than THEM... Indulging your lustful cravings becomes more important than honoring their humanity/dignity... whether you physically act on it or not.

Uses hyperbole to get the point across... This inside rot is so ruinous that ruining your body to avoid it would be better.

"I get that Jesus... but what if I can find a legal loophole?"

**If you have to find a loophole, you're not loving.** [11:23]

**V. 31-32** Patriarchal society, women few rights/protections... if shamed by their husband divorcing them would either have to go back to father's house and shame their family or live on street doing whatever they could to survive...

Men would divorce their old wives for younger wives and make themselves feel "like a good guy" by saying... "Hey I followed the law... It's legal! I gave her a written notice!"

"I'm following God's law so it doesn't matter how I treat them."

Jesus says... "The point isn't whether you did the right paperwork! The point is you are mistreating her/using her/abandoning her..."

What's crazy is this passage is that even now it's used to be a new RULE that must be followed to the letter.

Women have been told God wants them to stay in abusive relationships b/c the husband never cheated and therefore Jesus says divorce would be a sin...

It's crazy that Jesus protecting women in that culture has been turned into a hard/fast rule that has harmed countless women in hundreds of cultures.

**V. 33-37** Trying to get out of oaths b/c they didn't swear it... that's like kids saying... "I didn't *promise*" or "My fingers were crossed"

Jesus says God People live in such a way that when they say something it can be trusted because they are so dedicated to honoring others that they have no intention of finding a loophole in order to go back on their word.

This kind of life is so radical that it begins defying common sense and starts transforming the world.

**V. 38-47** Saying even if it IS your legal RIGHT to retaliate... **God People care more for the person who hurts them than for their right to hurt them back.** [15:13]

Then sums it all up...

**V. 48** Wait... again? Perfect? That's impossible... Not when Jesus gives you his perfection.

Don't look at Perfect as never messing up... but to be complete/whole- spiritually mature. B/c Jesus was actually perfect he's able to impart to us a complete/whole heart of God

You allow Jesus to live through you, to give you his righteousness... allow the HS to transform your heart while you are seeking to understand and live out the heart of God... It's a life that is formed in God's law of Love.

It's like a dance... Jesus gives us his perfection and we choose to use it... both working together. Or like a hand in a glove.

**Following the Law of Love is simple, but it's not easy. It's not complicated but it is demanding.** [16:36]

It is having the law of God written on your heart, not just having some laws written on a list.

It is Choosing to love without trying to find a loophole.

Choosing to love even if there's no law that says you have to

Choosing to love even if it seems to go against someone's list.

**WE:** Argument... *"oh this is exaggeration, assume ideal, nice pearls of wisdom... doesn't actually work in the real world."*

What do you mean by work? Do you mean having your rights protected? Keeping your power/position/strength? You mean all the things the other kingdoms, other people hold so dear?

No you will probably "lose" more than you will "win"... But you will gain more... **Matthew 16:25-26**

What is a life of trying to be good enough, and expecting others to be good enough actually getting you? Fighting for your RIGHTS, fighting b/c they aren't following your list of "good"?

How's that workin for you?

The life Jesus is describing, though it sounds crazy, is truly the only way to live that brings true life... It's the life that actually works.

This is not a new list of things we need to try to do... that's just replacing a set of life rules w/another list of rules.

This is a description of who we CAN BE...

Who we WILL be when we choose to pledge allegiance to Jesus and his kingdom/choose to accept Jesus as our God and King... choose to allow him to live in us and through us... Choose to allow the HS to shape/change us one choice at a time... as we are given a new set of God instincts to act out of from our heart.

**ASK:** [19:10]

**What pushback(s) do I feel to Jesus' teaching?**

**What's up w/that?**

- For some, they're afraid the idea of LOVE is too loose... if people don't have the rules then they will do whatever they want...
  - why do you feel that way? True love isn't based on rules.
- For others you are afraid of trying this and losing. That it won't "work."
  - What you have to lose is nothing compared to what you can gain.

**WE:** Jesus didn't come to make you a good person. He came to make you a God Person.

He offers this counter intuitive life to anyone who wants it.

A life where things are actually right between you and God

Where things are actually right between you and your family, your co-workers, your neighbors.

A new life where you don't have to worry about what rule to follow or not follow... a new life where the law of God is written on your heart and you develop new instincts based on the Law of Love.

It all starts w/accepting Jesus' invitation to join his kingdom... to trust/enjoy him as your king.

And the moment you do... the transformation begins... because

**Jesus gives us new hearts, not new rules.** [20:42]