

# “Red Letter Words: Legalism”

Matthew 15:1-20

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## Reflect on the Text

\*Note: Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible itself. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

- Read Matthew 15:1-20. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

## Reflect on the Sermon

### INTRODUCTION

- 1 People can be just as legalistic about something like the environment as they can be about religion. Can you think of other things about which people tend towards legalism? Brandon described himself as a “recovering legalist.” Would you describe yourself that way?
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in **one phrase or sentence** (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, “What was the sermon about on Sunday?” what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

### THE DEFINITION OF LEGALISM

- 3 In your own words, what is the definition of legalism? How do you see legalism in Matthew 15? In Genesis 2 and 3? Can you explain the concept of putting a “hedge” around the law?
- 4 Brandon gave many examples of legalism today. Which one stood out to you? Are there any of which you have been guilty? Brandon said, “Don't hear what I'm not saying.” What did he mean by that?

## THE RESULTS OF LEGALISM

- 5 Legalism results in a) self-righteousness, b) heartless worship, c) misplaced priorities, d) increase in sin, and e) rejection of God and His church. How do you see each of these illustrated in Matthew 15? Which result stood out to you the most? Why?
- 6 Discuss one of the following quotes.

“You can know the law by heart without knowing the heart of it.” –Phillip Yancey

“The finer the net is woven, the more numerous are the holes.” –Hans Kung

- 7 Have you been bruised and battered by a legalistic past? What was the process by which God brought you out of that?

## THE CURE FOR LEGALISM

- 8 How is throwing out the rules all together just the opposite extreme of legalism? In other words, how is the gospel different from both religion and irreligion.
- 9 What do we mean when we say, we don't just have a sin problem, we have a heart problem?
- 10 What was the point of the balloon illustration?

## **Final Reflections**

- How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for God and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?