

**March 20<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup>**

## **Religion vs. Relationship**

In this lesson you will learn three ways to move from religion to relationship.

**Intro:** Many in the Church have replaced information for intimacy. There is a big difference between knowing about Jesus and actually knowing Jesus personally. A difference between knowing God as a healer, redeemer, savior, and father; and actually, knowing him as your healer, your redeemer, your savior, and father. Jesus was never interested in building a fan base. He was searching for followers; men and women who would commit their all to follow Him for the long haul. Don't be a fan of Christ trying to get all of the benefits without a relationship. Surrender and commit your all to Him today. It's time to move from religion to relationship with Jesus.

### **I. Move from Obligation to Gratitude**

- A. It is so important that we move away from an attitude where we have to do something for God into where we get to do something for the Lord. When we start becoming too familiar with God and the church, we can take for granted his presence and his word. We then start to treat God and the things of God a bit too casually. This attitude of obligation and familiarity will breed discontentment. Let us not forget all of the benefits and the blessings that God has purchased for us (Psa 103:2). As we remember to give thanks to God, we will have more joy and enjoyment in God.

### **II. Move from Hypocrisy to Honesty**

- A. For several years now pretending has become the norm for a great many believers in the church. It seems that the automatic response to the question, "how are you?" is always "fine", or "blessed & highly favored". Even when we are struggling with serious issues in our lives, we tend to put on the masks of joy, contentment, or perfection. Jesus called out the religious leaders for their hypocrisy and phoniness several times (Matt 23:13). God loves it when we get real, open, and honest about how we are sincerely doing in our lives. When we submit to him in honesty and humility is when he can go to work in our lives.

### **III. Move from Enduring Religion to Enjoying Jesus**

- A. There is a huge difference between enduring and enjoyment. With one, you have to grit your teeth, strongly discipline yourself, and tolerate whatever comes your way. With the other; you get to delight in, relish, and love the time spent together. When you surrender and submit totally to Jesus, you can truly taste and see that the Lord is good. If you make the Lord and his word your delight, you will find that every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before. If you hold fast to religious rules and performance, you'll find yourself weary and heavy burdened. Jesus is the one who took our burdens so there is no reason to carry them anymore (Matt 11:30).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Is there any blessing in your life that you are taking for granted?
2. Do you find yourself wearing a mask at church?
3. What do you enjoy most about your relationship with God?