

Session Three

What Sorts of Rules Are There?

Thought Starter

Think about your family. What rules do you have in your family? Why do you think your parents made those rules?



**"The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.
The command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye."
(Psalm 19:8, 9)**

Catechesis (Teaching Our Faith)

God gives us rules to help us get to heaven

Last session we talked about why God gives us rules—that He wants us to be safe, to do our best, and to be like Him: He gives us rules for safety, excellence



and identity. Now we want to explore the kinds of rules He gives us. Let's remember why God made us in the first place. God created us because He loves us—He thought of you as a unique expression of Himself, and He loved the idea of you so much that He just had to create you! You are made in God's image and likeness. He loves you so much that He doesn't just want you around for a human's lifespan on this earth. He wants you to live forever with Him in heaven—not 500 years, not 5,000 years, not even 5,000,000 years, but forever!

Here's how we say all that in our *Catechism* (our official teachings of the Catholic Church): "God made us to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this life so that we can be happy with Him forever in heaven." This means that we are designed for heaven. We are called to be a saint in heaven. How do we get to heaven?

God wants us to be in Heaven—how do we get to heaven?

You can think of your life on this earth as being like setting out on a voyage across the ocean to the shores of heaven. In order to get to heaven, you have to have rules about three things:

1. **Your Goal**—are you heading in the right direction? God gives us rules to help keep us “on course” to His kingdom.
2. **Your Fellow Ships**—we are on a voyage as part of a group of ships, a fleet! We belong to God’s family and have a lot of brothers and sisters in Christ. We need rules to help us not ‘bump into each other’ and slow each other down.
3. **Your Own Ship**—we need our ship to stay afloat—to be seaworthy and “ship-shape!” God gives us rules to help us take good care of ourselves and prepare ourselves to be citizens of heaven.



To have a successful voyage, you have to have rules about all these things—it won’t matter if you keep your boat in good repair but then head off in the wrong direction! You can’t just take care of the other boats around you, you need to take care of your own ship, too.

God Keeps His Goal in Mind

God's dream for us is to live forever with Him in heaven. This is what God wants for us. Sometimes the rules God gives us might seem difficult. Sometimes we don't understand why we need to obey a commandment ("well, I'm not hurting anyone, why can't I?"). But remember that God keeps His goal for us in mind—that's what He is planning for when He gives us rules. God's rules help us understand how to voyage to heaven. He wants us to get to heaven, but He can't make us go there. We have to accept His gift. The way we accept His gift is to believe in Him and love Him. And Jesus tells us that if we love God, we will keep His commandments. Following God's rules is the way we love God.



"As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love... This is my commandment: love one another as I love you." (John 15:9-10,12)

Thinking and Reflecting on What I've Learned

1. Can you describe the 3 kinds of rules God gives us to help us on our voyage to heaven?
2. What sorts of rules help us "stay on course"?
3. What sorts of rules help us be a good member of the fleet?
4. What sorts of rules help us keep our own boat seaworthy?

Digging Deeper in Scripture

Deuteronomy 30:11-20

For this command which I am giving you today is not too wondrous or remote for you. It is not in the heavens, that you should say, "Who will go up to the heavens to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may do it?" Nor is it across the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross the sea to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may do it? No, it is something very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to do it.

See, I have today set before you life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I am giving you today, loving the Lord, your God, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and ordinances, you will live and grow numerous, and the Lord, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. If, however, your heart turns away and you do not obey, but are led astray and bow down to other gods and serve them, I tell you today that you will certainly perish; you will not have a long life on the land which you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the

Lord, your God, and obeying his voice and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you..."

Isaiah 58:6-11

"Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke? Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house; clothing the naked when you see them, not turning your back on your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for help, and he

will say, "Here I am!" If you remove the yoke from among you, the accusing finger, and malicious speech; if you lavish your food on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then your light shall rise in the darkness, and your gloom shall become like midday. Then the Lord will guide you always and satisfy your thirst in parched places, will give strength to your bones and you shall be like a watered garden, like a flowing spring whose waters never fail."



Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" -Matthew 4:4

Activity

Three Types of Rules From God

Make a drawing to illustrate the different kinds of rules God gives us:

<p>God gives us rules so that we keep going in the right direction</p>	<p>God gives us rules so that we don't damage other boats in the fleet</p>	<p>God gives us rules so that we stay seaworthy and can get to shore</p>
--	--	--

Word Find

A	O	J	T	L	A	H	N	D	R	O	S
C	R	P	E	T	R	M	H	E	A	R	T
W	O	R	D	S	G	E	S	O	P	U	N
I	S	M	Y	G	U	D	A	T	L	H	A
L	A	T	M	I	L	S	M	C	E	Y	C
C	U	N	H	A	T	S	U	H	R	T	S
E	H	A	R	T	N	O	G	E	A	H	E
B	T	O	Y	O	P	D	Y	A	T	O	L
O	D	S	I	H	E	S	M	V	D	U	T
D	U	T	N	C	H	O	N	E	M	G	A
Y	C	R	E	M	E	C	I	N	N	H	R
A	H	A	D	S	G	S	L	U	A	T	O
P	O	T	I	L	O	V	E	T	Y	S	M

ACTIONS, BODY, CHOICES, COMMANDMENT, HEART, HEAVEN,
HOLY, JESUS, LOVE, THOUGHTS, WORDS

Prayer

1. **Settle yourself and make the Sign of the Cross**—prepare to pray by quieting your mind and asking the Holy Spirit to be with you as you pray and hand over this time to God
2. **Begin by honoring and thanking God**—think about your day and give thanks for at least 5 things—they can be little things or big things.
3. **Talk to God** about what happened to you today. Share with God when you thought of Him and His rules, and ask forgiveness for any time you did not obey God's commands. Talk to God about what you have learned about the kinds of rules He gives us—to keep us heading in the right direction, to not hurt anyone else, and to keep ourselves in good shape.
4. **Ask God to open your heart** to learn His rules and follow them fully.
5. **Bring to God the intentions in your heart**—people and situations you want to bring before Him
5. **Move to worshipping and adoring God**—in this time, don't think about God, just be with Him, loving Him and letting Him love you
6. **Close by speaking to God about something you feel in your heart that God wants you to do**—maybe a word of encouragement to someone, maybe telling someone you're sorry about something you did, maybe choosing an action to bless someone in your life
7. **End your prayer with the Sign of the Cross**—make it prayerfully and with great awareness

