

PART 2: YOUR CHOICE IN THE MATTER

Many of us spend our lives measuring ourselves by whether we're keeping all the rules. But the apostle Paul reminded the early church that rules don't have the power to change us. The way of Jesus is a reorientation from "I promise" to "I surrender," from "I will" to "I can't, but you can, through me."

CONNECT

Have you ever tried to keep a resolution or new habit on willpower alone? How long did it last?

LEARN

You will watch a shortened version of a message from this series to set up your group discussion. Watch the full message sometime this week as a reminder of what you talked about today.

APPLY

After sharing what stood out from the video, discuss the following questions as a group:

1. Andy's friend said, "I'm not disciplined enough to be a Christian." Have you ever felt that way? What made you feel like you didn't measure up?

2. In the video, Andy said, "Rules don't empower you to keep the rules." Where have you experienced the gap between knowing what's right and actually doing it?

3. Andy described God as a father, not an officer of the law. How does the way you picture God affect the way you respond when you fall short?

4. Read Galatians 5:22–23.

   But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

   - Paul calls these qualities fruit, not the result of our commitment or willpower. Why does that distinction matter?
   - Andy described kindness as loaning someone your strength rather than reminding them of their weakness. Who has done that for you? Who could you do that for this week?

5. What would it look like to begin your day, a difficult conversation, or a tense meeting by praying, "I can't, but you can, through me"?

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WRAP UP

In this series, we've seen that God's love for us doesn't depend on us—we have no say in the matter. But we do have a choice in how we respond. As Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." Each day, we can stop trying harder and instead invite Jesus to live through us. Slowly and surely, he will bring about the changes we could never make on our own.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us before we could do anything to earn it. We confess that we can't live this life on our own. We can't, but you can. Give us the humility to surrender to you every day, and when we take back control, help us to lay it down again. Produce your fruit in us, and help us love others the way you have loved us. Amen.

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