

## 7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

**Lesson Plan:** Christ Fulfills the Law (Matthew 5:17-20)

**Learning Goals:** Students should understand basic ways of reading the Bible and be able to articulate what it means to read the Bible in a Christocentric manner and that Jesus fulfills the law for us.

**Opening Question:** Who is the most holy and Godlike person you can think of? (or Alternate Activity)

Prayer

Discuss Question on Board

Activity: "Make Your Own Religion"

Divide the class into groups of three and give them ten minutes to create, design, and describe a new religion. Tell them to be creative and to give it a name. They should list rules, holidays, rituals, beliefs, and leaders. Have someone in each group ready to present the religion to everyone else (approximately 1 minute each).

Follow Up Questions:

- What was the most fun or most interesting part of making this new "religion" ?
- What was the best idea of any of these new "religions" ?
- In general, how did most of these "religions" tell us to connect to God?
- What would you think if someone took your religion and changed the rules?
- Why did many of the people of Jesus' day think he was trying to change their religion?

Read Matthew 5:17-20

Jesus did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it.  
(Whether we mean to or not, we often read this in reverse.)

## How do people read the Bible? (Hermeneutics)

Define hermeneutics: a method or theory of interpretation.

- *Formationally* - read Bible ready to hear from God in a spiritual, intuitive, devotional, and relational level
- *Informationally* - read to know what it said
- *Canonically* - reading in light of the whole Bible  
(Canon: a collection or list of sacred books accepted as genuine.)
- *Historically* - only interested in what it meant in Jesus' context or Matthew's context
- *Sociologically (Socio-pragmatically)* - read it to foster their own political, theological, ideological, or social agenda
- *According to what their guru says* (whoever they are reading through)
- *Christ-centered* - Jesus needs to be the lens through which we read everything else

(Illustration: looking at the world through red-tinted glasses. As we look through these glasses, everything is seen through that. In the same way, we should read all of scripture through the lens of who Jesus is. Give students a chance to try on the glasses and look at things.)

We read the beginning in light of the end. Because we know where everything is going, it “colors” the way we read what came before.

### Summary:

- Jesus fulfills the Torah (Law) and Prophets (5:17)
  - How?
    - Salvation-historical manner
    - Theological manner
    - Moral manner
- Everything in the Torah is true (5:18)
  - looking to Jesus means following him and through him the Torah (if we follow Jesus, we will fulfill the heart of the Torah)
  - We are living in a world of more and more biblical illiteracy. People don't even know the basic stories of the Bible. We must be people who read and know the whole thing - Genesis to Revelation (not just our favorite parts).
- Everything must be observed (5:19)
  - following Jesus really means following Jesus
  - We must live the story, not just know the story (James 1:22 - “be doers of the word, not just hearers only”)
- Your obedience therefore must surpass the experts (5:20)
  - Pharisees were the height and prime example of those who knew and kept the law down to the letter. (It's like saying, “If you want to get into heaven, you have to better than Billy Graham, Mother Theresa, <insert person from opening question>, etc.”)

### Lesson Summary /Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Hermeneutics
- What does it mean to read the Bible in a Christ-centered manner?