



# RULES

# 4

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

### WEEKLY WIN

Participants understand that God's rules are designed to protect and provide for us, which is evidence of a loving relationship.

### BOTTOM LINES

- Rules always assume a relationship.
- God's rules didn't establish his relationship with Israel. They were a confirmation of his relationship with Israel.
- God's plan, beginning with Abraham, always included us.

## BEFORE THE MEETING

### PRAY

Continue to pray for your group members individually. Ask God to help them trust him in spite of their circumstances.

### LEADER DEBRIEF

Address the following:

- Evaluate the third meeting with your co-leaders soon after it's over. Talk about what you feel went well and what you think needs to be adjusted for the next meeting.
- Decide who will be facilitating each part of the discussion for the next week.
- Clarify which leader will follow up with any group members who you feel need individual attention.
- Ask yourselves, "Are group members experiencing a conversational environment where they can explore faith and experience community?"

### CONTACT GROUP MEMBERS

Contact your group members individually by email, phone, or text. Continue to invite them to coffee or a meal. Remind those who are sharing stories this week to come prepared.

You can use the email template provided for Session Four at [startingpoint.com/leaders](http://startingpoint.com/leaders).

## DISCUSS SECTION ONE: RELATIONSHIPS AND RULES

### SECTION WIN

Participants understand that God wants a relationship with them based on the family model. His rules are evidence of that relationship, not a requirement to start it.

### LEADING THE DISCUSSION

Question 1: In general, how do you respond to rules? Do you tend to keep them or break them?

This question allows participants to indicate if they are generally disposed to keeping or breaking rules. Consider this follow-up question: *“How do you think your posture toward rules in general impacts how you view religious rules?”*

Question 2: Which of these models describes the churches or religious traditions you’ve been exposed to?

- In the family model, the relationship comes before the rules. Disobeying may have consequences, but you’re always part of the family.
- In the club model, you have to agree with the rules to get in. If you break the rules, you’re kicked out.

This question gives you the opportunity to reinforce that God has always desired the family model regardless of what the participants have experienced.

## DISCUSS SECTION TWO: GOD’S RULES

### SECTION WIN

The win is for participants to understand that God’s rules for Israel—specifically, the Ten Commandments—were a result of an existing relationship.

### LEADING THE DISCUSSION

Question 1: What are some of the things you’ve previously assumed or been told about the Ten Commandments?

This is an opportunity for participants to reflect on and articulate what they think about the Ten Commandments and, more generally, God’s rules. *You may want to have someone read the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20:1-17 aloud to familiarize everyone with them.*

Question 2: Have you considered that God declared a relationship with the people of Israel before giving the Ten Commandments? What do you think of this?

God gave Israel rules *because he was already committed to them*. The Ten Commandments were confirmation of, not condition of, Israel’s relationship with God. Consider comparing this to the way parents create rules for their children.

## DISCUSS SECTION THREE: YOUR ROLE

### SECTION WIN

Participants understand that God views all of humanity through the family model.

## LEADING THE DISCUSSION

**Question 1: Is it easier to see God as a “rule maker” or a loving parent with boundaries? Why?**

This question surfaces people’s default view of God. A significant step of faith for many Starting Point participants is choosing to see God as a loving heavenly Father even if that doesn’t align with their family history.

**Question 2: What would change if you saw God as a loving father and yourself as his child?**

This question helps participants explore how their thinking and choices would change if they believed their relationship with God was a parent/child relationship. Be prepared to share from your personal experience.

## WRAP-UP

### REVIEW THE BOTTOM LINES

- Rules always assume a relationship.
- God’s rules didn’t establish his relationship with Israel. They were a confirmation of his relationship with Israel.
- God’s plan, beginning with Abraham, always included us.

### PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

- Read Chapter Five in the Conversation Guide and complete the questions.
- Listen to Episode Five of the Starting Point podcast which can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or [startingpoint.com/podcast](http://startingpoint.com/podcast).

### TALK ABOUT THE GROUP EXPERIENCE

You are halfway through your group experience. Now is a good time to review the purpose of Starting Point. Ask group members:

- Are they enjoying it?
- Do they feel like they are exploring faith?
- Are they developing relationships and experiencing community?
- How can I make the group meetings more beneficial?

### STORIES

If you’re not finished with stories, ask for volunteers to share at the next meeting. Remind them of the Appendix: *What’s Your Story?* to help them prepare.

### PRAYER

It may be the right time to ask your group members if they have any specific prayer requests to share with the group. As you close in prayer, remember that you are modeling prayer for your group.