



Use the questions below to help extend the impact of the weekend message. They are not only useful in your LifeGroup, but try discussing with your family, friends, and co-workers for even greater understanding and spiritual growth.

### Opening Question (5 minutes)

- What's a rule or tradition that you have encountered that feels more restrictive than helpful?

### Context

- In the following passage we see Jesus and His disciples as they walk through the grain fields, eating some of the grain on the Sabbath. The Pharisees challenge this as against the Law of the Sabbath, which causes a response from Jesus where He will assert His authority over the Sabbath.

### Digging into the Text (15-20 minutes)

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 12:1-8

#### Observation:

- Why would what the disciples are doing upset the Pharisees?
- What does the response of the Pharisees reveal about their priorities?

#### Jesus' Response:

- In verse 6, Jesus says, "Something greater than the temple is here." What do you think He meant by that statement?
- In verse 7, He quotes from Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." How does this connect to the situation?
- What does Jesus mean when He declares that He is "Lord of the Sabbath" in verse 8?

#### Reflection (15-20 minutes):

- Have you ever felt judged for doing something you thought was good, but someone else thought was bad?
- Are there "rules" (religious or otherwise) that sometimes you feel are more burdensome than life-giving?
- How can we best balance respect for traditions with showing love and mercy in our actions with others?

**Application / Challenge:** Close with a group prayer, asking for guidance, strength, and commitment to discipleship.

- This week, look for a moment where you can choose mercy over judgment or rigid expectations. How might you act differently because of this passage?

**Closing Thought:** "The Sabbath was made for man, not the man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Jesus reminds us that God's laws are meant to bless us, not bind us.

**Prayer:** Share one way you would like God to help you grow in understanding His heart for mercy and authority. Pray for each other as group.