

# Station #1

Subject: Rules/Relationship with a Holy God

Icon: A Rule Book (either a manual from the DMV or a Little League Rules Book)

Focus: God's provision and path

*Nobody likes rules. In many ways, people think that rules restrict one's freedom. But rules serve a very real purpose, especially when people are trying to move toward the same goal or objective. Have you ever tried to play a game when there were no rules? Rules create the boundaries and help people know what they can expect from each other. People wonder why God seems to have a lot of rules, a lot of "do not's." But think of it this way - since God is the Creator of life, He is best suited to assist us with the best way to live. Because He wants us to have an intimate relationship with Him, He has given us some guidelines to live life to the fullest. More often than not, God's guidelines are in place because He cares about us and knows what will happen if we choose to disobey His best for us.*

Pick up the rule book and thumb through it. Someone took a lot of time to write down all of these rules in such an organized fashion. As you read a couple of the rules in the book, consider the purpose of the rules.

## Contemplation/Prayer

- Why are these rules important? What significance do they have to the activity or game that they were written for?
- How would the game or activity change if these rules were disobeyed or ignored?
- How would people get along if half of them obeyed the rules and half of them didn't?
- Consider the more important relationships in your life. Are there rules or guidelines (even unspoken) that you both abide by?
- It's been said that "rules without relationship leads to rebellion, but relationships without rules leads to chaos." Do you sense any chaos in your relationships because someone didn't abide by the rules? Is there any chaos in your relationship with God?
- In following God's guidelines, what do you think He is protecting you from? What is He trying to provide for you?
- As you get ready to leave this first station, consider your own attitude toward God's guidelines. We often don't like rules until we realize why they are there in the first place. Take a moment to offer your gratitude to God for offering a way to know His best for your life.

When you are ready, move to Station #2

## Station #2

Subject: Purity

Icon: Bar of Soap

Focus: Cleanliness of the heart

*Hopefully you are familiar with the item that is there in front of you. It's soap. People use soap on a daily, sometimes hourly basis. Soap is used to clean things. It removes dirt and germs. People may take a moment to wash with water, but it is soap that really gets rid of the dirt. Soap is usually made out of fats and oils and alkali. You can get some dirt off with water, but you need soap to get yourself really clean. The only drawback with soap is that it cleans you on the outside. What about the inside? God desires to give us clean hearts. Consider this passage in Ezekiel 11:19-20 (NIV) "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. [20] Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God." God wants to clean us on the inside. Through the power of God's Spirit, He cleans our hearts, those parts of us deep on the inside that we're unable to clean ourselves.*

Consider the enemies of soap: dirt, grime, grease, impurities. Hold the bar of soap in your hand. Do your hands become clean just by holding the soap? What's missing? What else do you need? Imitate the motion that you would use with the soap if you were washing your hands. Think about all that's involved in the process of cleaning the dirt off.

### Contemplation/Prayer

- What role does water play in washing your hands? What role do you need to play?
- How clean can your hands get if you just use water?
- In the passage above, God says He will put a new heart in people. What does it say the people will do?
- In order for God to clean you on the inside, what do you need to be willing to do?
- Are there areas in your life where you know that God needs to cleanse, purify, clean up? Are there dirty parts of your spirit or soul that you've been holding on to?
- Take a moment and consider how it feels to be completely clean on the inside and out. God has promised to do that for us. Express your gratefulness to God for His willingness to cleanse our hearts.

When you are ready, move to Station #3

## Station #3

Subject: Complete Devotion

Icon: Lit candle (with smaller candles that can be lit)

Focus: To live in God's light and not in darkness

*Light is an amazing thing. It will travel as far as it can, as fast as it can in order to push away the darkness. There is light from distant stars that has traveled for over millions of light years to reach our eyes. Light gives us a picture of complete devotion in that it gives itself fully and reaches as far as possible. In Matthew 5: 16, Jesus refers to his disciples as "the light of the world." He is offering them an example of how powerful they can be if only they are willing to completely sell out to God's best for their lives. God desires His people to be completely devoted to Him because He is completely devoted to us. The light from the flame of a candle puts out an amazing amount of light in a completely darkened room. God wants to shine His light through each of us. We are like candles that hold the flame of God's love out for all to experience and feel.*

Look at the flame of the candle. What makes it burn? What makes it glow? If you put your hand close to the flame (don't touch it) can you feel the heat? Reach over and take one of the unlit candles and put it to the flame of the burning candle. Notice how the flame passes from one wick to the other. Place the candle in on the floor next to the other candles.

### Contemplation/Prayer

- What do you think Jesus means when he tells his disciples (and it's for us as well), "You are the light of the world?"
- What does light do to darkness? Another way to think about this is if light and darkness are in a room together, who wins?
- Are there any dark places in your life? What do you think happens to these dark places when they're exposed to God's light?
- Are you more afraid of the light or of the dark? Why do you think that is?
- Christ has called us to live in God's light. In what ways can you spread the light of God into the world?
- Where are the dark places in the world? Offer a prayer to the Lord asking for His guidance in being His light in dark places.

When you are ready, move to Station #4

## Station #4

Subject: Christ-likeness

Icon: Mirror

Focus: Reflecting the image of God

*God did an amazing thing when He created the world - He created people. Amongst all of the wonders of His creation, there was nothing more wonderful than humanity. God made man and woman in His own image. He breathed life into them and gave them authority over everything else that was within the created order. God created people with the capacity to love - to love each other and to love God. Because God loved us so much, He sent Jesus into the world, He showed us more and more what He was like and how we could be more like Him. All we have to do is follow the example of Jesus. To be holy is to be like Jesus. Jesus modeled what it meant to have an intimate relationship with God. He was an example for all believers and He invited us to follow His example. To be a Christian is to a follower of Christ, to actually be "little Christs." We allow Christ to live His life both in and through us. Think about this, the moonlight doesn't come from the moon, it comes from the light of the sun reflected off of the moon. In much the same way, the love of Christ comes from Christ and is reflected through people who have given their lives to Christ.*

Pick up the mirror. Look at your face and think about what you see. You don't really see yourself, but a reflection of yourself. It is most likely an accurate reflection, but it is not you, not all of you at least. There are parts of you that the mirror doesn't show. You can't look in the mirror and see a person's heart, or thoughts, or soul. We can only get to know those things as we spend time with people and see how they act, see what they care about, and see what they're willing to die for.

Contemplation/Prayer

- Do you like the person that you see in the mirror?
- When people look at you do they see Christ reflected in your life? Sometimes, we receive Christ's love in our life, but we don't do a very good job of reflecting it out toward others. Do you keep your Christ life hidden?
- Are the parts of you that people can't see, your heart, your thoughts, your soul reflective of a life lived for Christ?
- Have you allowed Christ to invade every part of your being and to live His life in and through you? Be still and listen to deep parts of your heart. Consider the secrets that you keep hidden far from anyone. Have you ever given those areas to Christ?
- Take a moment to pray that your life would be a reflection of Christ living in you.

When you are ready, move to Station #5

## Station #5

Subject: Set Apart

Icon: Small Rocks/Bowl of Water

Focus: Responding to live differently

*People set aside special things all the time. Perhaps you've seen people set aside a special treat they receive to enjoy and savor it later. People set aside money for a trip or vacation. People set aside time in order to accomplish an important task or project. In the same way, when we give our hearts wholly to God, He sets us apart for a special purpose. When the Scriptures talk about sanctifying something, they are referring to it's unique qualities being used for a blessed and significant purpose. Like your mom's finest china that only comes out when company comes over, God sees your life as an important part of bringing about His Kingdom on earth. God sanctifies you through and through because He believes in you and has need of you in this ongoing work. You are special and God recognizes just how special you are. He doesn't want anything to get in the way of that and will continually refine you into a masterpiece.*

Pick up one of the small rocks from the pile of rocks. Consider what makes this rock different from all the rest. Place it beside the pile. How does one small rock look in comparison to a pile of them? Hold the rock in your fingers. What can one small rock do? As you consider this, drop the rock into the bowl of water. What happens to the water? Did you see the ripples? Did you notice that the water level rose a little bit? It did.

Contemplation/Prayer

- What difference can one small rock make?
- Have you ever felt small or insignificant? How does it make you feel to know that God wants to set you apart for a special purpose?
- Even the smallest of rocks has an effect on the bowl of water. The ripples from the rock moved the water all the way to the edge of the bowl. What do you think God can do through a life that is willing to be everything He designed it to be?
- Look at the rock now. It's surrounded by the water. The water is touching every part of the rock that is exposed to it. How much are you allowing God to touch you? Spend a moment and consider His presence in your life right now.

When you are ready, move to Station #6

## Station #6

Subject: Perfection

Icon: A Circle

Focus: Fulfilling our purpose moment by moment

*When Christ came to earth, he lived a perfect life. There was never any sin in him. To be holy means to be perfect. But not necessarily in the way you think. It doesn't seem possible does it? We all make mistakes, we all mess up. But what if perfection wasn't defined in a way that meant you made a mistake or never did anything wrong? What if, instead, perfection meant that you were being perfected, you were becoming more and more like you were created to be? What if being perfect meant that you were fulfilling your purpose? For example, one could fill a cup full of water and if the cup held the water and you were able to drink from it, we could say that the cup was perfect because it fulfilled its purpose as a cup. What if, through God's power and cleansing, He began to remove all the roadblocks in your life (sin, selfishness, pride, etc) that kept you from fulfilling your purpose? Then, you'd be able to say with confidence that you were being perfected each and every day.*

Throughout the centuries, the circle has been identified as a symbol of perfection. Notice how it has no beginning and no end. It has no corners. The circle represents one continual path (are you getting dizzy?) with no detours or alternative routes. In ancient times, three circles were integrated into each other to represent the Holy Trinity - God, Son, and Spirit - each one perfect in every way.

Contemplation/Prayer

- How does the idea of being perfect make you feel?
- Do you think God would ask something of us that wasn't possible? Do you think anyone can be perfect?
- Does the definition of perfection written above change the way you think about perfection? Do you believe that you can fulfill God's purposes in your life?
- If we are "being perfected" then that means that there is still room for improvement. In what areas of your life are you being perfected in order to perfectly fulfill your purpose?
- It may seem overwhelming to think about living a perfect life, but what about a perfect moment? As you sit here, receive God's Spirit that wants you to be completely God's and consider what it means to live fully for God in this moment.

When you are ready, move to Station #7

## Station #7

Subject: Spirit

Icon: Breath

Focus: Awareness of the Spirit moving in and through us

*The Scriptures say that God is Spirit. The Hebrew word for spirit can be translated to mean "breath" or "wind." This gives us some powerful insights into the work of the Spirit in our lives. Much like the wind, we can't see the Holy Spirit (not visible in the physical realm) but we can see the effects of the Spirit. When you see the leaves of a tree rustling you realize that the wind is at work. The Spirit moves in and through our lives and creates an awareness that God is at work. The Spirit convicts and influences us. Often it is like a soft breeze that blows over the impulses of our hearts and minds. The Spirit doesn't force Himself upon us, but continually beckons for us to slow down and listen (even feel) to His presence and persuasion seeking to guide us. Christ lives within us through the power of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus encounters the woman at the well in John 4, he tells her that true worship is the kind that worships God "in spirit and in truth." Have you sensed God's Spirit speaking and moving in your life as you've moved through each of these stations? Perhaps now is the time for you to really listen.*

There is no item for you to touch or look at in this station. Here is the place that we invite you to simply breathe. Close your eyes and take deep slow breaths. Fill your lungs as full as they can go and slowly exhale the air out. In some ancient spiritual traditions, breathing was considered a spiritual discipline.

1. As you exhale, confess your sins and claim God's forgiveness in your life.
2. As you inhale, you are asking the Holy Spirit to have control of your life and empower you to become more like Christ in all that you do.

Contemplation/Prayer

- Take a few moments and simply breathe, listen, breathe, listen.
- Pray a prayer something like this: *Heavenly Father, I confess my need of you. I realize that I have selfishly tried to control and direct my own life apart from you. I am forever grateful that you forgive my sins and that you sent Jesus to show us how to truly live. I ask that you fill me with your Holy Spirit. I ask this in faith, knowing that it is only through You that I can receive such a gift. Please direct my life through the Spirit that works and breathes life into me. Amen.*

When you are ready, move to Station #8

## Station #8

Subject: Community

Icon: Links of a chain

Focus: Tied together

*You are not alone. The call of Christ on your life was never meant to be lived out in isolation, but in community. It is the role of each generation to rebuild and reshape the Christian community into a dynamic force at work building the Kingdom of God. You are a part of that community. People who are a part of this community want to be a part of this community. Can you imagine life without it? It is a place where caring and concern where independence is put aside for a spiritual interdependence. It is a community where people of varying backgrounds, skill levels, capacities, and scarred paths congregate as pilgrims on a journey together seeking God. We really do need each other. The Church is the only place where we can truly tell our stories of life with God, celebrating our victories and acknowledging our tragedies. This is a community that was and is initiated, held together, and strengthened by God. When you come to Christ, you accept a call to be a part of a people who accept that call with you. You don't just go to church, you are the Church. You cannot be Christian apart from it.*

Before you are some links of a chain. Some of these links are connected, some are not. The chain links serve as a symbol of what a community can be. Pick up some links...pick up the chain. Consider your own desire to be independent.

Contemplation/Prayer

- What can you do with a chain link? With many chain links connected together?
- One chain link isn't even considered a chain...it's just a link. What happens to the strength of community in the Church if everyone simply acts like a lone link instead of hooking into the chain?
- What kinds of things keep people from connecting into the community of faith? How connected are you? Are you reaching out to connect anyone else in?
- Holiness apart from community often ends up becoming self-righteous piety. Why do you think holiness is best lived out within community?
- How can a community of people be holy?
- Think about your connections to the Christian community. Where have you linked up with other people in order to strengthen and lengthen the reach of the Kingdom into the world?

When you are ready, move to Station #9

## Station #9

Subject: The dance of holiness

Icon: Music with headphones

Focus: Moving with God's leading

*Throughout this journey around the circle, you have encountered different facets of what it means to be holy. Here at the end, we hope to tie it all together. Some might think of holiness as something that God asks from us, yet doesn't do anything to provide a way or the means to accomplish it. This ends up leaving us feeling guilty if we mess up or makes us feel like God asks the impossible. But consider this, holiness is more like a dance - a dance that involves both God and ourselves as partners. God, of course, takes the lead, but times His movements and his guiding help us to create a beautiful dance that grows more exquisite as we learn and grow in this partnership. We also learn from the others around us who have accepted the "Lead Dancer's" request to join in the dance of holiness. We listen to the advice of those who danced with the Lead Dancer for a long period of time and offer our own advice to those who have only recently begun. As time goes by, we are slowly changed by the dance of holiness into dancers. Before we simply wanted to act as if we're dancing, but now we are becoming true dancers. Holiness is like a dance with God, where He invites us to join Him and we respond with a "yes!"*

Pick up the CD player and put on the headphones. If the CD isn't already playing, then push play. Stand up. Imagine that God has invited you to dance with Him. He will lead, you will follow. How will you respond? Close your eyes and begin to imagine God and you dancing together. Sway with the rhythm of the music. When you feel ready, take your seat again and spend some moments in the next section.

Contemplation/Prayer

- How does it feel to dance with God? Does it even seem possible?
- How does holiness feel different if it's accomplished "with God" versus "for God?"
- As you prepare to leave this room and this meditation exercise, reflect on the moments that you will take with you from this experience. How has God been with you all the way along? Where have you felt Him most closely to you?
- Pray the following as you leave: *Father, my desire is to be holy as You are holy. It is only by You, in You, and through You that I can be holy. Make me holy as You are holy. Amen.*

When you are ready, leave the meditation exercise room. Go in God's grace and in the assurance of His love.