



## Week Two – Jesus vs Religion

### CONNECT

- Which taxes do you dislike paying the most? which ones bother you the least?
- What subject is guaranteed to spark a debate in your house or Job? Sports? Politics? Religion? Other?

### WORD

#### **Mark 12:13–34 (NIV)**

<sup>13</sup>Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. <sup>14</sup>They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? <sup>15</sup>Should we pay or shouldn’t we?” But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. **“Why are you trying to trap me?”** he asked. **“Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.”** <sup>16</sup>They brought the coin, and he asked them, **“Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”** **“Caesar’s,”** they replied. <sup>17</sup>Then Jesus said to them, **“Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”** And they were amazed at him. <sup>18</sup>Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. <sup>19</sup>“Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>20</sup>Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. <sup>21</sup>The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. <sup>22</sup>In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. <sup>23</sup>At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” <sup>24</sup>Jesus replied, **“Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?”** <sup>25</sup>**When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.** <sup>26</sup>**Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’** <sup>27</sup>**He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”** <sup>28</sup>One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, **“Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”** <sup>29</sup>**“The most important one,”** answered Jesus, **“is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.** <sup>30</sup>**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’** <sup>31</sup>**The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”** <sup>32</sup>“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. **“You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him.** <sup>33</sup>**To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”** <sup>34</sup>When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, **“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”** And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.”

## THOUGHT

Love is the fulfillment of the Law and the desire God. God is not after behavior, he is after the heart. If he gets the heart he will get the behavior.

## DISCUSSION

- 1. What was dangerous about this trap? Why do you Herodians (Allied to the Rome) and the Pharisees make strange partners? How was Jesus to treat each?**  

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- 2. What if Jesus had said yes? If he said no?**  

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- 3. What do you give to Caesar (Uncle Sam)? What do you give to God? What prevents you from giving to God what is God's?**  

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- 4. What would you call the Pharisees and Herodians approach to Jesus?**
  - Sneaky*
  - Respectful*
  - Flattering*
  - Hypocritical*

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- 5. Which of the following do you think would violate Jesus' teaching in this story?**
  - Avoiding government safety or environmental regulation*
  - Inaccurately completing reports to the government*
  - Overcharging on government contracts*
  - Disobeying a government policy which is bad for business*

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- 6. Verses 28-34 in the passage above talks about three love relationships (with God, neighbors, and self). In which of these are you the strongest? The weakest?**  

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- 7. How do you show your love to God?**  

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## PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Take time this week to reflect on all the good things God has given to you. Start a list in your journal.
- Tell others what God has done!

## PRAYER

- Read 1 Chronicles 14:9-11. Where do you need God to break out against your enemies? Ask God for direction like David did.
- Ask God to use you to do big things.