



Rejection and Acceptance

Desired Outcomes

1. To study how the scribes and Pharisees responded negatively to Jesus' behavior on the Sabbath.
2. To see how Jesus chose the twelve apostles after a night of prayer.
3. To think about our own response to Jesus' work and his call.

Session Key Verse

Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?" —Luke 6:9

Optional Materials

- Computer with Internet access
- *For free digital resources to enhance this lesson, go to <https://www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources>*

Sneak Peek

Jesus was rejected by the scribes and the Pharisees. But after prayer, he chose the twelve apostles, who accepted his invitation and followed him.



Get Acquainted



If there are any new people present, welcome them and provide introductions. Share any life updates since you were last together. Group members might also share how they have experienced God's call in their lives since your previous meeting.

- The "tribes" we are part of often have unstated cultural rules—things such as what is proper to wear or speak of in public. Think about your family of origin or the current community circle you are a part of. **What is one unstated rule in this group? How would others respond if you broke this rule?**
- Signs exist on the roads and inside buildings to communicate expectations and rules—"Do not turn on red" or "No drinks in the sanctuary," for example. **How do people respond when a stated rule is not being followed?**
- **Are the responses to broken rules and expectations different depending on whether those rules and expectations are stated or unstated? Why is this so?**
- **In what situations is there room for "interpreters" in a group—those who determine exactly when and how the rules apply? How do people come to fill such a role, and how are their decisions received by others in the group?**



Discover



Read and discuss Luke 6:1–16. The commentary sections can be used to generate dialogue, or for study prior to your meeting.

Luke 6:1–5

Commentary

The commandment to remember the Sabbath day is grounded in the creation story (Gen 2:2–3). Simply put, God's people are to rest on

this day because God did. The commandment is also tied to the people's release from bondage in Egypt (Deut 5:12–15). When they cease working every seventh day, God's people remember that the Lord delivered them from slavery.

The teachers of the Law debated about what exactly constituted "work," and what could and could not be done on the Sabbath.

Plucking heads of grain was generally agreed to constitute work. When questioned by the Pharisees, Jesus cited a scriptural precedent. In 1 Samuel 21:1–6, David did not simply "take" the bread of the Presence; Ahimelech offered it to him because there was no ordinary bread available. Feeding those who were hungry took precedence over strict adherence to the Law. Jesus applied the same logic; quite simply, his disciples were hungry and needed something to eat. The Sabbath is meant to be life-giving, not a slave master irresponsible to human needs.¹



Questions

Jesus referenced the time when David ate bread that had been consecrated for the priests. Read about this event in 1 Samuel 21:1–6. **Do you think the correlation Jesus used in his argument was a strong one? Why or why not? What was Jesus' point?**

Luke 6:6–11

Commentary

Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath, and a man was present with a withered hand. Jesus asked the scribes and Pharisees whether it was

1. Adapted from "Commentary on Luke 6:1–16," accessed on May 17, 2016, https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1561.

lawful to do good on the Sabbath. The answer to the question was obvious. In Jesus' view, there was no reason for the man to suffer one day longer.

Why were the Pharisees so threatened by Jesus? Perhaps they saw in him someone who could undermine their whole enterprise of sanctifying the people of God. He ate with tax collectors and sinners (5:27–32), his disciples did not fast (5:33–35), and he even claimed authority to forgive sins (5:17–26).



Are we like the Pharisees in Luke's story? Perhaps we have gone to the opposite extreme. The kids have multiple sports activities on our Sabbath day, the stores are open, and we catch up on chores around the house. Worship becomes one more thing to squeeze into a busy day. Instead of feeling rested and renewed, we begin another week exhausted.

The Sabbath is meant to be a gift, a time apart from the relentless demands of daily life, a time to rest in God's presence, a time to savor the goodness of God's creation and celebrate God's deliverance, a time to do what is good and what gives life.²

Questions

- **What do the Sabbath events in verses 1–5 and in verses 6–11 have in common? How are they different?**
- The Pharisees felt that the Law they held sacred was being violated. For Jesus, the “legalities” of the Sabbath were not the most important thing. **What values did Jesus uphold? If he truly is “lord of the sabbath,” how would he have us approach the Sabbath? What would he have us do, or not do, on our weekly day of rest?**

2. Ibid.

Luke 6:12–16

Commentary

Jesus already had disciples, but he chose from this group twelve “apostles” (v 13). These men would form Jesus’ inner circle, and some among them—Peter, James, and John—became “leaders among leaders,” called upon by Jesus at critical times and spending intimate moments with him.

The importance of prayer in Jesus’ decision is clear. The selection of the twelve apostles was not a popularity contest, and it was not done by vote; instead, Jesus sought to discern from the Father those with whom he would spend many of his last days on earth—men who would then be the first generation to share the gospel with the world.

Questions

- **What was Jesus’ process for making decisions when it came to choosing the apostles? How do you think he felt choosing Judas Iscariot, knowing that Judas would later betray him?**
- If possible, review the apostle information available at <https://www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources>. The first link is an overview of what we know about the twelve apostles based on the biblical text; the second contains additional information from tradition and early church historians. **What did these men have in common? How were they each unique?**

3 Experience



Option 1

Lawrence Kohlberg wrote a well-known ethical challenge called the Heinz dilemma. There is a link with more information at <https://www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources>. It states that a man named Heinz had a wife who was suffering from cancer and near death. In his town a druggist had created a cure but was charging ten times what the drug cost to make. Heinz attempted to raise the funds he needed, but he fell short. He then broke into the laboratory to steal the drug.

Should Heinz have stolen the drug to save his wife? Why or why not?

How might the Pharisees have interpreted this dilemma? How does their response compare to your own rationale?

What do you think Jesus would say?

Option 2

On YouTube or Vimeo, search out and view several movie clips that illustrate how people today make important life decisions. Suggestions are available at <https://www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources>.

Jesus went away for the night to pray in solitude before choosing the twelve apostles. **How does this approach of reflecting and centering on God before making an important decision compare to the approaches used in the clips you viewed?** Discuss with the group your response to this question.

4 Apply



Think about the last time you made a high-impact life decision. Perhaps it had to do with accepting a new job or deciding on a big purchase—something more grand than picking out which clothes to wear for the day.

What steps did you take before making your decision? Was there research involved? How much time did you allow before deciding? Did you consult with any key advisors?

Pair up with a partner to discuss how your decision process went and whether or not you would change anything about the process if you faced such a decision in the future. In the large group, seek to identify any similarities in the decision-making processes that were utilized. **How do you decide whether a choice is significant enough to require this detailed process or is small enough that it doesn't require such measures? How do prayer and talking with God weave into both your small and big decisions?**



5 Conclude



Our perspective on the interaction between Jesus and the Pharisees that Sabbath day is one of hindsight. Looking back on the situation, it can be easy for us to consider the Pharisees judgmental and to side with Jesus, who considered the heart of matters instead of the legality.

Reflect on today's passage from Luke 6:1–16 and ask yourself where you would fit in the story. It is possible that you will fit in more than one place. **Are there situations in your life where you tend to offer judgment instead of grace? Have you held yourself to a high standard that caused you to focus on your own steps instead of seeing others around you who are in need?** Ask God to reveal these areas of growth to you.

Discuss, as a group, what can be gleaned from today's session. In what ways can each of you respond through the actions, service, and attitudes you display to more closely align with those of Christ the Lord?

Close your time together in prayer, thanking God for accepting us.

Daily Bible Readings Week 9	<i>Sunday</i> Luke 6:1–5 <i>Rejection and Acceptance</i>	<i>Monday</i> Luke 6:6–11 <i>A Withered Hand Healed</i>	<i>Tuesday</i> Luke 6:12–16 <i>The Apostles Chosen</i>
	<i>Wednesday</i> Luke 6:17–26 <i>Jesus Teaches and Heals</i>	<i>Thursday</i> Luke 6:27–36 <i>Love for Enemies</i>	<i>Friday</i> Luke 6:37–42 <i>Do Not Judge</i>