

## Relationship Before Tradition

### Description

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Matthew 15:1-11

When we talk with children about Jesus, often we say things like, “Jesus is your best friend.” In addition to talking about how Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins, we use this terminology to describe the kind of relationship He wants to have with us. Songs have been written to describe this relationship with Jesus. I grew up singing, “Friendship with Jesus.” Later, Israel Houghton wrote, “I Am a Friend of God.”

Friendships can struggle when we begin to focus on things rather than the relationship. For instance, in Matthew 15:1-18, a group of Jewish people clung so strongly to their traditions that they forgot what was truly important. Beyond that, they were missing out on an opportunity for fellowship with the same Messiah they had waited for their entire lives. These religious leaders were so focused on their rules and traditions that they had forgotten about the reasons behind those rules and traditions. Keeping traditions, they sadly missed out on a relationship with the One to whom all those traditions pointed.

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