

Who Made These Rules?

The message for today is really quite simple. Those who wish to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven must be the slave or servant of all. That's not hard to understand, but it is awfully hard to do. Just as soon as we start to let others have their way, we begin to feel that we are being taken advantage of. There's the old saying, "give them an inch and they'll take a yard—give them a yard and they'll put a swimming pool into it." We are after all human beings. We possess the highest form of intelligence among all the other creatures we share air with. We can learn, we can grow, and we can build. We are gods compared to other lesser forms of life like insects or amoebas.

Our minds can dream up amazing things and then our hands can build them, why would God make up a rule that says in order for us to be great, we have to be the least? Aren't we powerful? Why shouldn't we extend ourselves and conquer everything we can?

Why? I believe it is because as human beings we lack control. God is looking for human beings who understand that just because they can do something, doesn't mean that they should. The Apostle Paul says a similar thought in I Corinthians 10: 23.
²³ "I have the right to do anything," you say-- but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"-- but not everything is constructive.

²⁴ No one should seek their own good, but the good of others. (1Co 10:23-24 NIV)

Our history shows that we have a hard time with that concept. We have never built a weapon that we haven't used. The only time we stopped conquering land was when we ran out of it. Then we began to conquer space, and the undersea

world. We are curious we want to know everything. We call it exploring, but we're really looking for the next advantage that will make us more powerful than our enemies. God made us that way and now it seems God wants to rein us in.

But is God really only trying to hold us back or is God hoping to get us ready for something more? The best way to reason this through is to look at Jesus Christ. Jesus was with God. In fact Jesus is God. Jesus is the second part of the trinity. If that's true, then Jesus was all-powerful, before he became a human being. And before he became like us, he made us like him. But we were only a reflection of him. Think of your image in a mirror. It looks like you. It moves like you. But it is only an image of you. It's not you. The image in the mirror has your eyes, your hair, your face, and looks and moves like you, but it is not you. In the same way, we are an image of God but we are not God. We have God's characteristics but not God's character. You see God can do anything. God can do everything, but there are some things that God has chosen not to do. As far as humanly possible, human beings have learned to do everything but so far we have not been able to stop ourselves from doing everything.

So what is going to happen to us? As a species, human beings are doomed. We are going to wipe ourselves out. It could be through nuclear war, or worldwide disease, or from the pollution of our natural resources...but eventually time is going to run out for us. That shouldn't come as a surprise to you. Jesus Christ himself predicted that things would get so far out of control that if God didn't step in and stop whatever is happening that there would be no one left alive. But God is going to step in. In fact God already has, when God sent us his son. Jesus Christ who was God, gave up his God-like-ness and

became a human being to show us what we could be, if we would be like him. The disciples learned from Jesus and became like him. They began to change the world around them. Others since then have also learned to be more like Jesus. But can we do it? In our time it seems that we are becoming less like God everyday. We are learning new and more hellish ways to kill each other. The North Koreans just exploded their own atom bomb and they claim they're making more. We have our own troops fighting wars in at least three places that I can think of, and there appears to be no end in sight. Conservatism in America appears to be losing its influence and is being replaced by a liberalism that says, "Let people do whatever they want as long as it doesn't hurt anyone—or as long as it doesn't hurt me." That wasn't the message of Jesus. Jesus taught his disciples that they had to put themselves in danger of being hurt. If someone strikes you turn the other cheek was what he said. Why would someone strike you if were leaving him or her alone? Can we become humble servants to everyone we meet but be servants with a life changing message? Can we become as powerful as God by allowing ourselves to appear to be weaker than everyone else? I believe we can. But even just saying that reveals my own problem. If I humble myself and esteem others better than myself, then I perceive myself as weak. But God says **Zephaniah 2:3** Seek the LORD, all you **humble** of the land, who do his commands; seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the LORD's wrath. God also says, **Micah 6: 8**
⁸ He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Mic 6:8 NIV) Jesus says **Matthew 23:12** ² All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who **humble**

themselves will be exalted. And in another place he says "the meek shall inherit the earth."

It sounds crazy, but God is the one who makes the rules besides if it was good enough for Jesus then it is good enough for me.