

# 07 LORD OVER SICKNESS

KEY TEXT: JOHN 5:5-16

## CENTRAL truth

Sometimes we can become so focused on the rules that we completely miss the One who made the rules. When Jesus miraculously healed a man who'd been paralyzed for decades, those who were present didn't rejoice. They cared about the appearance of rule-keeping more than they cared about people. However, **Jesus has compassion for the sick and authority over sickness.**

## key question

What does it reveal about the Jews that they were more interested in this man's "work" than in his healing?

The Sabbath was designed to be life-giving, so the healing Jesus offered on the Sabbath is completely consistent with God's law. But the people missed it, choosing to care more about their interpretation of the law than a life-giving act of God. They thought they knew God because they'd studied God's law, but they actually completely misunderstood His character. Unfortunately, we, too, are prone to care more about looking perfect than about people.

## keep in mind

This passage describes a man who was disabled. Some may find this term offensive, because in today's culture, we try to use words that celebrate what a person can do rather than label them by what they can't. Try to find a way to exude compassion on this subject without downplaying the wonder of this miracle. This man needed healing, and Jesus offered it!

Today's text contains some evidence that the man who was healed did not believe in Jesus. This could open the door to some big questions, particularly as it relates to spiritual healing. It's okay to engage with these questions, but you can also invite students to remember core truths we learned in John, such as in John 3:16-18, which makes it clear that eternal life is given to those who believe, not those who do not believe.

## application

How have you seen legalism—depending on strict obedience to rules for salvation—hurt people?

## the win

**FOR THE STUDENT:** Students can begin to explore what it looks like to cherish God's law without overlooking God's character. They can meditate primarily on who God is and let this inform how they live God's law.

**FOR THE LEADER:** Be on the lookout for legalism within yourself, your church, your student ministry, and your students. Just like other sins, this will hurt people. What can you do to be an agent of healing?

WINTER  
2022-23