The Well of Living Water: **Part Two**  
Light + Life Group Conversation and Study Guide

Based on *Life-Giving Holiness* by Bishop Linda Adams  
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**Part Two: An Outside-In Approach**

This is the second study guide in a series of four. Be sure to download [part one](#), [part three](#) and [part four](#).

> For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.  
> *(Romans 3:28)*

In our last session we discussed what it means to be holy as God is holy. Now we will look at the *law* and why it is not effective in bringing about holiness in our lives. Let's pick up where we left off in Bishop

**The Letter Kills**

At the outset, we need to admit that those of us who have been in this denominational family for many years have at times seen a pursuit of holiness that was not life-giving. If we picture the *Highway of Holiness* winding through varied terrain with generations of Free Methodists traveling along it, describing it and teaching others about it, we'll notice some veering off into the *Ditch of Legalism*. (Other movements have steered off-course into the opposite ditch of either License or Liberalism, but that hasn't been our error.)

Following John Wesley’s “General Rules for Christian Conduct” and adding a rule against buying, selling or holding of a human being as a slave, the first Free Methodists adopted rules for holy living. Definition brings clarity and objectivity, they reasoned, so sinful actions and attitudes were forbidden, and behaviors of holy living were defined and required. For instance, the rules forbade the use of tobacco, opiates and alcohol, worldly amusements, membership in oath-bound lodges, and profane language and evil speaking. They required plain dress, business integrity, and careful observance of the Lord’s Day in addition to classical expressions of Christian devotion such as attendance at worship, prayer, Scripture reading and tithing. Relational accountability structures were created to aid new believers and seasoned saints alike in living the life of holiness as defined in these terms.

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What is the difference between rules and a rules-based approach? Name some rules we all live by every day. Name some rules that are helpful and create a way of life for us all that provide life-giving boundaries.

Consider Bishop Linda’s statement, “One of the problems with a rules-based approach is that rules and prohibitions multiply.” Talk about ways you’ve seen rules and prohibitions multiply in our society. Why do rules give way to more rules?

Why do you think people are enticed to break rules?

Go all the way back to the Garden of Eden (read Genesis 2:15–17). God sets forth one rule — a “don’t do this” statement. What is it? What goes wrong? Why do you think things went so wrong so fast?

All rules begin with a reason in mind. Here’s a classic example: Are you allowed to be noisy and disruptive in a library? Have you ever been asked to leave a library because you were noisy? Can you envision a librarian with their finger over their mouth sounding out an indignant “Shhhhhhh”?
Why? Why is that rule in place?

What becomes of a library when it’s a noisy environment?

When we forget the reason for a rule — simply obeying it “because” — it becomes legalism. What rules exist in your church about which you’re not sure why those rules are in place?

Bishop Linda describes legalism as a ditch. Do you agree? Why or why not?

A rules-based approach to holiness is an outside-in approach. Praise God that there is an alternative. In fact, His design has always been an inside-out approach. In our next session, we'll drink from a well of Living Water.

Let’s Pray:
Lord God, help us to forsake legalism. We know that rules are helpful in their place, but in the end, You and You alone give life! We want that life — that Living Water! In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.