

Fulfilled | Matthew 5:17-20

Was Jesus really God?

“Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world.”

-Don Stoner

Lesson Overview

The Old Testament law contains 613 commandments from God. The Pharisees believed that strict obedience to the law would earn them God’s favor and a place in heaven. Similarly, many Christians today can fall into the trap of trying to earn God’s love and approval with performance and moral perfection. However, this isn’t the case, *no one* is perfect.

In this lesson, we examine The Biblical prophecies of the Old Testament to explore Jesus’ declaration that He is the Messiah. The goal of the lesson is to show that perfection is just about impossible, but Jesus lived a perfect life so that we can rest easy in His grace.

Lesson Objectives

What: The Old Testament prophecies, all fulfilled in Jesus Christ, provide overwhelming evidence that He is the promised Messiah and that Scripture is divinely inspired.

Why: You can’t prove God’s existence, but it would be foolish to reject the evidence Jesus was who he said He is. God’s Word is true, and we can be confident in our devotion to Him.

How: Your group will play a game that emphasizes just how difficult it is to be *perfect*.

Primary Scripture

Matthew 5:17-20: *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”*

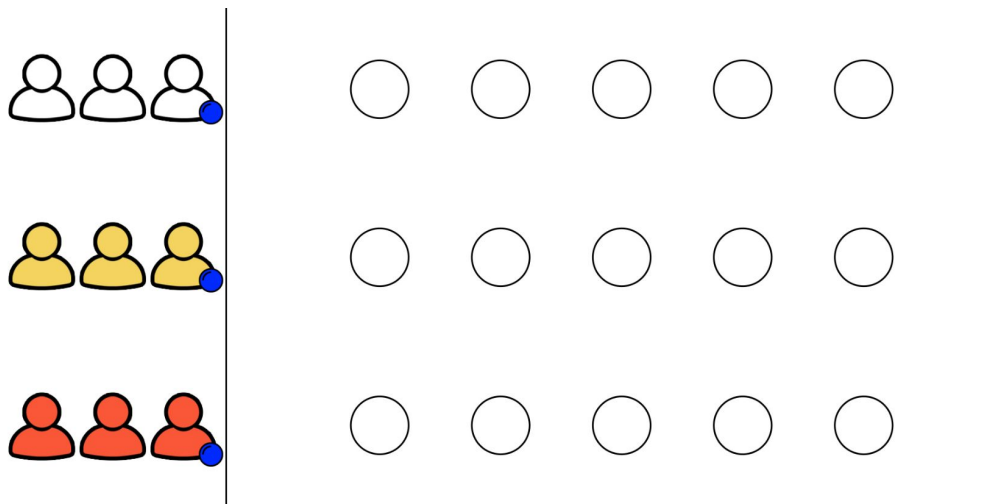
The Game - Hoop Rollers (20-30 min)

- Overview:
 - # of Participants: **Any**
 - Where to Play: **Indoors**
 - Age of Participants: **Elementary / Middle / High School**
 - Materials: [Painter's Tape](#) (optional), [5 hula hoops](#) and [1 dodgeball per team](#)

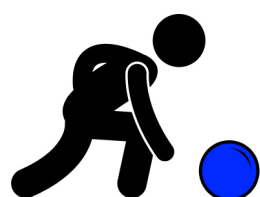
This game has a video tutorial if you would prefer to watch a visual explanation, click [here!](#)

Not only is this game a fun competition, but if a team plays *perfectly* they'll have a chance to take home a MAJOR prize...

Split your group into teams of 3 to 5 people, and have each team stand behind an established line. Every team is given a dodgeball and has a line of 5 hula hoops placed in front of them, like in the picture below.



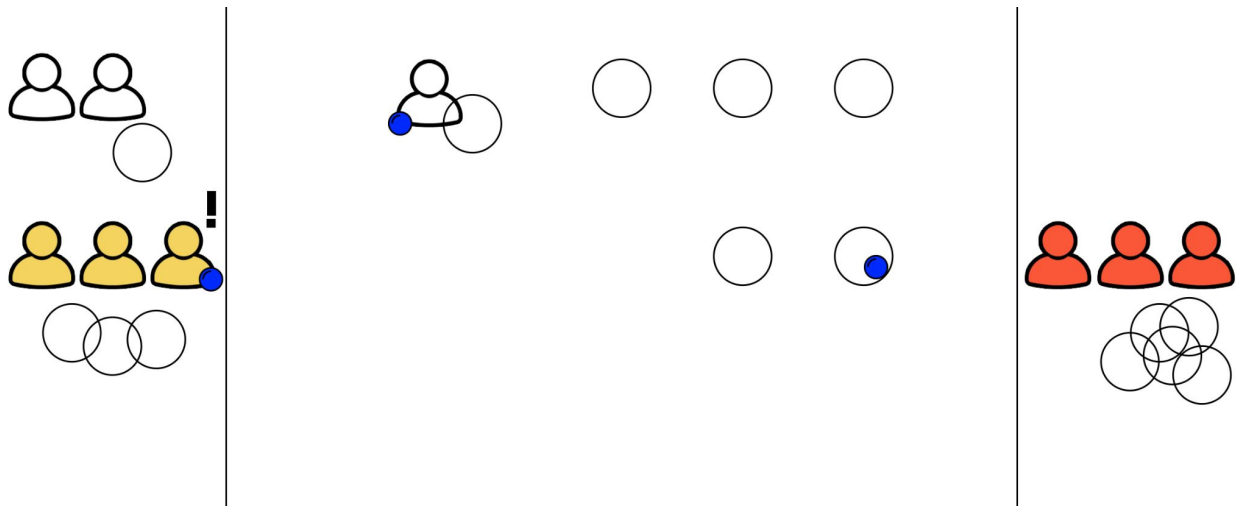
The goal of the game is to roll the ball on the ground with *exactly* enough force for it to rest inside one of your team's hula hoops. If a player is successful in their roll, they can run out to retrieve their dodgeball, and bring that hula hoop back to their team. If they miss, they return



with only the dodgeball, and leave the hoop in place. Players take turns rolling, trying to perfectly place the dodgeball in each hoop down the line.



You should also set up a second line on the opposite side of the hoops. Once a team has collected all 5 of their hula hoops, they will be given the opportunity to stand behind this line, and roll into opposing teams' hoops to try to steal a few extra points. Once all of the hoops have been collected, add up how many hula hoops each team has, and reset the play area for the next round.



You should play three rounds in total, and it's recommended to add a twist to each round to keep it interesting. For example, you could make the hoops worth two points each in the second round, or three each in the third. You could also give teams more than one ball to roll, or change what type of ball they have to use. At the end of three rounds, the team that has scored the most total points wins! But that's not all, because there's a special side-challenge you should offer your group that will tie into the lesson...

While the game is going on, any team that completes the following extra challenge gets to take home a huge prize. If any team is able to go 5 for 5 on their hula hoops, throwing exclusively from behind the original line, *all three rounds in a row* (i.e. 15 perfect rolls in a row), then they get \$100.00 each! (This doesn't need to be the prize, although it's very unlikely anyone is going to be able to do this). Of course, every team will try their luck, although it's almost certain they'll be eliminated from contention within their first few throws. If, against all odds, a team starts doing really well, the last round can feature a hula hoop that is incredibly far away (and maybe you even set up some obstacles to make it even harder). This extra challenge is designed to go unbeaten, so don't worry about dangling a pretty nice carrot in front of your members!

The Breakdown (30-40 min)

- Overview:
 - # of Participants: **Any**
 - Where to Play: **Indoors**
 - Age of Participants: **Middle / High School**
 - Materials: **Some way to watch a video (laptop, tv/projector, speaker, internet connection, etc.)**

Ask the following questions:

- **In this game, you were told to roll the ball into 5 hoops. Was anyone actually able to get all 5 in a row? What made this so challenging?**
 - Likely it was difficult for each team to judge the right speed and distance for each shot and fell short of the hula hoop.
- **We challenged you that if you got 5 in a row for all three rounds, you'd win a special prize. Do you think it's even possible to get 15 perfect throws in a row? What would it take to pull that off?**
 - It is extremely unlikely to achieve 15 out of 15 perfect throws. For all intents and purposes, it was basically an impossible challenge.
- **Now, what if I told you that someone actually made all 15 shots perfectly on the first try? How would you react? Would you believe it, or would you be skeptical?**
 - Clearly, they *must* be cheating or lying about it being their first time.
 - Some of us might get 2 or 3 in a row, but it's impossible to be perfect.

Say:

- **Perfection, even in something small like this game, is nearly impossible to achieve. However, let's take a look at this excerpt from The Sermon on the Mount. In it, Jesus talks about what it really means to fulfill God's law perfectly.**



Have someone from the group read the following scripture:

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **18** For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. **19** Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **20** For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:17-20

Ask:

- **The Torah, or ‘the Law’, is the first five books of the Old Testament where God gave his commandments to the Israelites. If you had to guess, how many commandments do you think there are in the Torah? (Not just *The 10 Commandments*, but all of the instruction that was given to the Israelites)?**
 - In the Old Testament Law, there are a total of 613 commandments from God. These include moral laws, like the Ten Commandments, as well as very specific rules, such as avoiding certain foods or not wearing clothes made from mixed fibers.
- **The Pharisees believed it was possible to follow the Law perfectly. They were known for their strict devotion to the Torah and even added extra oral traditions to try to obey every detail. Do you think it’s actually possible for someone to keep all of God’s commandments perfectly? Can you fulfill the law?**
 - We might be able to keep some of God’s commandments, but eventually all of us fall short. Keeping all 613 commandments is simply impossible.



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- **So if nobody can keep all of God's commandments perfectly, what should we do?**
Should we remove the commands we can't follow, or keep striving for perfection?
 - Jesus tells us he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it perfectly, where we fall short He lived it in complete obedience to God.
 - Jesus also disapproves of anyone that would remove even the smallest letter or stroke of a pen from the law.

Say:

- **Jesus taught that He came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. God's Law demands moral perfection, something no human can achieve. Yet Jesus declared that He alone would fulfill it perfectly.**
- **That sounds almost too good to believe, so how can we trust Him? What proof do we have that He truly came to fulfill the Law? The evidence lies in His birth, life, death, and resurrection, which together fulfilled more than 300 biblical prophecies spoken centuries before Jesus's life.**

To get a better idea of just how improbable this is, let's take a look at a video about the probability of Jesus fulfilling this many Biblical prophecies...

Watch the following video: *The Mathematical Case for Jesus* by Revive Boston (~5min)

<https://youtu.be/GU6h1uxDXIc>

Say:

- **Did you catch that? Scientists estimate there are about 10^{78} atoms in the entire known universe, that's a 1 followed by 78 zeros. Now think about this: the probability of one person fulfilling just 48 of the biblical prophecies about the Messiah is 1 in 10^{157} . That's a 1 followed by 157 zeros! A number so big that it is beyond comprehension. And yet, Jesus didn't just fulfill 48 prophecies, he fulfilled over 300! Let's look at some examples.**



Birth and Early Life

- **Born in Bethlehem:** Micah 5:2 foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, fulfilled in the birth of Jesus.
- **Born of a Virgin:** Isaiah 7:14 predicted a virgin would give birth to a son called Immanuel, fulfilled through Mary's conception of Jesus.
- **Flight to Egypt:** Hosea 11:1 spoke of God calling His Son out of Egypt; fulfilled when Joseph and Mary took Jesus there to escape Herod's decree.
- **Descendant of David:** Prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah declared the Messiah would come from David's lineage, fulfilled in Jesus's family line.

Ministry and Death

- **Triumphal Entry:** Zechariah 9:9 described the Messiah arriving on a donkey's colt, fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem.
- **Betrayed by a Friend:** Psalm 41:9 anticipated betrayal by a close companion, fulfilled through Judas's betrayal.
- **Sold for 30 Pieces of Silver:** Zechariah 11:12 foretold the Messiah would be valued at thirty silver coins, the price paid to Judas.
- **Died with Transgressors:** Isaiah 53:12 and Luke 23:33 spoke of the Messiah counted among sinners, fulfilled when Jesus was crucified between criminals.
- **Buried with the Rich:** Isaiah 53:9 said the Messiah would be buried with the wealthy, fulfilled in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb.
- **Resurrection:** Psalm 16:8–11 and Isaiah 53:10 are interpreted as pointing to the Messiah's resurrection, fulfilled when Jesus rose from the dead.

Ask the following questions:

- **How could Jesus possibly have fulfilled prophecies tied to events beyond His control such as the place of His birth and the events after His death?**
 - The fulfillment of these prophecies are very strong evidence that Jesus is truly the Son of God.
 - The evidence is clear, no one outside of Jesus could have fulfilled the things that He did. Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God.



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- **Since Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies, we can trust that everything He says about Himself and about humanity is true. What are some of the things Jesus taught or declared?**
 - “Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.” - John 14:6
 - “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” - John 3:16
 - The list is endless, but Jesus consistently affirms that He is God, demonstrates His love for the world, and calls everyone to repentance and to come to Him.
 - **So why did Jesus come to fulfill the law?**
 - Because of YOU! Jesus came to fulfill the law that we were unable to uphold.

Say: Jesus came so that we might be justified and made righteous before God. He perfectly obeyed the law, accomplishing what no one else could. Through Him, we are set free from the heavy burden of religious performance and brought into the light and easy rest of His grace. Jesus’s life fulfilled the law completely, so that we can experience true relationship and peace with God. By believing in Jesus’s finished work on the cross we can stop striving for perfection and rest knowing that Jesus has made us perfect before God on our behalf.

Ask:

- **How can you find rest this week knowing that Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law on your behalf?**
 - As the leader maybe share an area in your life that you can rest in knowing Jesus has fulfilled the law for you.
 - Help guide your group into the knowledge that Jesus came to put an end to our striving so that we may rest in his finished work on the cross.



Closing Prayer

"God, thank you that the law was perfectly fulfilled through your Son, Jesus. Thank you that we no longer need to strive for perfection to know you, but that we have been made your sons and daughters through Jesus' finished work on the cross. Help us to trust and rest in you this week as we continue to draw closer to you. Thank you, Lord, for your peace, your love, and your grace. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Fulfilled (adj) - bring to completion or reality; achieve or realize

per [Oxford Languages](#)

