

***Errors of the Pharisees (Part 1)***  
***(Hypocrisy and turning away from the Love of God)***  
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***Introduction:*** What does it mean to love God?

- A. Jesus made this chilling observation of the religious leaders of His day. **(Jn 5:39-44)**
  - 1. God's love *is powerful* and can bring great changes in our lives.
  - 2. It is also possible to allow our love for God to dwindle. **(Rev 2:5; Heb 10:24)**
  - 3. How can men claim to love God but in fact have *turned away from it*?
- B. Why did Jesus speak out against the Pharisees and other religious rulers?
  - 1. No one wants to be called a Pharisee but *many do not understand their errors*. We can actually speak out against the Pharisees while acting just like them!
  - 2. What can we learn from the plain teachings of Jesus about these men?

***I. Jesus knew the heart of the Pharisees.***

- A. The sect of the Pharisees began because of their opposition to worldly Greek influence. They were *right to oppose such things!*
  - 1. True repentance only comes when *hearts are changed by God's word*. The fruit of repentance is a changed life both inwardly and outwardly.
  - 2. There are other "ways" to gain *outward "performance or appearance."* **(Mt 15:8-9; Jn 9:22; 12:42-43)**
  - 3. When we love God, we will trust that *His word is sufficient to bring change!*
- B. It is very difficult for men *to see themselves honestly*. God has always known this. In His mercy He seeks for us to know this too. **(Jer 17:9-10; Jn 2:23-24)**
  - 1. What is *a hypocrite*? - .... 2) an actor, stage player 3) a dissembler, pretender..
  - 2. If a man does not love and trust God, then *dishonesty* "makes sense."
  - 3. In the "here and now" who *obtains rewards and receives praise*?
  - 4. If I know God my view will be very different. Can we *pray like David*? **(Psa 26:1-7)**

***II. The Pharisees found purpose in their group identity***

- A. When Paul became a Christian, He threw away that identity. **(Phil 3:4-7)**
  - 1. We must never place a man or a group of men *between us and God*. **(Rom 3:4)**
  - 2. When we fall for "group think" then human doctrines will have *a priority over God's word*. We must slaughter our "sacred cows." **(Mt 15:2-3, 8-9)**
  - 3. How many have sought to learn "what we (the group), *suppose to believe*?"
  - 3. Look at how *quickly men changed* their outward stance when "the group's position" was brought into question. **(Acts 23:6-9)**
- B. How did they respond when their group teachings were *shown to be false*?
  - 1. What happened when Paul mentioned *bringing in the Gentiles*? **(Acts 22:21-22)**
  - 2. How did they respond to Jesus' *plain correction*? **(Lk 20:39-40; Mk 3:4-6)**
  - 3. How were their followers *taught to respond*? They had to follow the group or be cast out of the synagogue! "If you leave the Pharisees then you have left God!"

### ***III. The Pharisees made a priority in outward appearance***

- A. Both in word and example they had a powerful influence. (Lk 12:1-3)
  - 1. They crushed through force and not persuasion anyone considered a threat.
  - 2. They did duplicate themselves in the hearts of others. (Mt 23:15)
- B. They were constantly concerned about what men thought of them. (Mt 23:3, 5)
  - 1. It is easy to go through life and fool people! (Ex. Pretending to be a doctor)
  - 2. How many men serve to be seen? How many hide what they believe? (Mk 11:30-33)
- C. They lost the ability to think and act on principle.
  - 1. Dishonesty has a progressive effect upon the mind. (1 Tim 4:1-2)
  - 2. How many have told a lie so many times that they believe it? When you want something so bad your “thinking” will cease. (2 Thess 2:10-11)
  - 3. Jesus described these influential men as “blind.” (Mt 15:10-13)
  - 4. Jesus tells us to protect the heart! Just as drugs have a progressive effect and eventually enslaves, so does dishonesty.
- D. What was the worship of a Pharisee like? (Mt 6:1-2, 5)
  - 1. Why is “performance worship” so popular today?
  - 2. How can we worship “in spirit and in truth?” (Jn 4:23-24)

### ***IV. How did the Pharisees treat others?***

- A. They had built both within and without, an imagined view of themselves. (Ps 36:1-4)
  - 1. This describes the classic narcissist. There are other factors that feed deception. Signs and symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder: 1. Grandiose sense of self-importance. 2. Lives in a fantasy world that supports their delusions of grandeur. 3. Needs constant praise and admiration. 4. Sense of entitlement. 5. Exploits others without guilt or shame. 6. Frequently demeans, intimidates, bullies, or belittles others.
  - 2. God describes this one as having no fear of God and thus is given to deceit.
- B. If they had the love of God in their lives then they would have loved their neighbor!
  - 1. They did not know God and His character. (Mt 23:23-24)
  - 2. They used people for their own advantage! (Mt 23:14)
- C. They were quick to hatred and bitterness but sought to conceal it. (Prov 26:20-28)
  - 1. Jesus said they appear as a sheep but inwardly are ravenous wolves. (Mt 7:15)  
**Ravenous** - ἄρπαξ, gen. ἄρπος (1) vicious, ravenous, destructive, like a wild animal (MT 7.15); (2) violently greedy (LU 18.11); substantively robber, swindler (1C 6.10)
  - 2. If you become a threat to this one, he will discard you in a moment! Those that come under his influence will come to “live in the land of throw-away people.”
- D. They made judgements of others based on their potential “usefulness” to them.
  - 1. If you have experience and an ability to discern you likely will be considered a threat. They worked hard to destroy your reputation.
  - 2. If you are unstable or inexperienced, they will try to draw you closer by speaking to you based upon your perceived needs or interest. (Jer 9:3-4, 8-9)
  - 3. The love of God cannot exist in such a group.

**Conclusion:** May each of us find our identity in the cross of Christ. (Gal 6:14)