

Hiding behind the Pharisees

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Introduction: Every generation must struggle to find the truth of God.

- A. If we have truly found the Christ it is the result of struggle!
 - 1. We must constantly discern between truth and deceit, God's word human traditions. **(Col. 2:4-8)**
 - 2. Our goal is to equip and prepare every Christian to be grounded in the word of God. **(Eph. 4:14; 5:17)**
- B. An old problem in new clothes has arisen among us.
 - 1. Out of desire to *make the struggle easier* and to "eliminate division" among brethren, some have made a serious error.
 - 2. Have you ever been called a Pharisee?

I. Hiding Behind the Pharisees

- A. No one wants to be a Pharisee.
 - 1. They opposed and crucified our Lord.
 - 2. Jesus rebuked them severely. **(Matt. 23:13-16)**
- B. Our danger comes in not knowing what a Pharisee is.
 - 1. For years men have used "Pharisee!" as a label of intimidation.
 - 2. Those who don't want to be a Pharisee, but because of ignorance do not know why are a setup!
- C. The "Trojan Horse" approach of a false teacher. **(2 Pet. 2:19)**

II. Errors of the Pharisees

- A. **Pride. (Matt. 23:5-7; John 5:44; 7:47)**
 - 1. Pride exalts the one who holds it. Pride cannot stand rebuke.
 - 2. They could not stand for their positions to be questioned.
 - 3. Their interest was in maintaining a human movement and not in pleasing God.
- B. **Blindness. (Matt. 15:14; 23:23-26)**
 - 1. Blindness is a product of pride. **(Gal. 6:3)**
 - a. They could crucify Jesus but not want to be "unclean".
 - b. They could lie, cheat and gossip and claim to be doing right.
 - c. They could ignore their sins because they want only praise. They cannot see themselves.
 - 2. Those who have a loyalty to men and human movements hide behind labels and "great" men, appealing to "what we have always done."
- C. **Hypocrisy. (Matt 23:23)**
 - 1. A hypocrite wears a mask. They think they have fooled God!
 - 2. They focused on external things to the neglect of the heart. **(Matt. 23:23)**
 - 3. They despised others and lived for man's praise. **(Lk. 18:9)**
- D. **Their traditions voided God's Word. (Matt. 15:5-6)**
 - 1. If your goal is to blindly defend a movement, you will end up here.

2. What do you do when the Bible appears to contradict your beliefs?

III. Wrong Conclusions from the Pharisees

A. We do not need Bible authority.

1. The scriptures being complete furnish us to "every good work". What are the implications of this? (**II Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 3:17**)
 - a. If asking for Bible authority makes me a Pharisee then I am one!
 - b. The truth is the Pharisee ignored Bible authority.
- b. 2. Jesus expected His followers to make necessary conclusions. (**Mk. 12:24-27**)

B. We cannot press our conclusions.

1. What doctrine in the Bible is not based on a conclusion? (**Jn 5:39; 7:17**)
2. Standing upon the word of God will produce division from those who will not listen to God. (**1 Cor. 11:19; 1 Jn. 2:19, 4:6**)
3. (**Matt. 23:23**) - What did Jesus say? Many miss the point.

C. Human needs come before the law of God.

1. (**Matt. 12:1-7**) - David was blameless.
2. (**Matt. 12:11-12**) - There is a time to take care of the "ox in the ditch".
 - a. These verses do not meet the issue. Brethren wish **to push the Ox in the ditch and keep it there!**
 - b. Far too many think an "exception" eliminates the rule!

IV. Fruits of This Position

A. To the individual Christian.

1. **Pride** - They consider themselves as being above certain issues. They will not allow their positions to be questioned. And any studies of externals are considered "unspiritual". They look down upon the "patternist".
2. **Blindness** - Moral issues, such as social drinking, immodesty and adultery, become major problems. They attack the "legalist" while drifting further away from God.
3. **Hypocrisy** - While showing a very pious front and speaking swelling words of praise to those who agree, they are quick however to attack and use deceit to discredit those who may question them. Failures of brethren are often magnified while praising false teachers and denominational movements.
4. They, in fact, become a Pharisee!

B. Among churches.

1. This self-righteous spirit has a devastating effect upon our young.
2. A lack of teaching concerning bible authority and its application.
3. (**Acts 17:11**) - We **MUST** apply and stand on God's word.

Conclusion: (John 3:19-21)