



Scriptures and Doctrine :: Pitfall of Pharisaical Legalism

Pitfall of Pharisaical Legalism - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2012/6/14 15:04

The people who battled against Jesus the most were not the politicians or the common people, it was the religious crowd, especially the Pharisees. They were legalists, placing outward behavior and performance above matters of the heart. They sought to become holy by acting holy. Jesus said man brings forth goodness out of the treasure of his heart. Holiness is something that starts from within (heart) and works itself outward (behavior). The following is an excerpt from a book by Dudley Hall entitled "Grace Works."

But perhaps the most dangerous pitfall of the legalistic mindset is that it reduces a tender relationship with God to a formula.

It is interesting that legalists often make the accusation that stressing grace leads to license. But it is the legalist who presumes on the grace of God with an emphasis on right actions, right rituals, and right restrictions.

This is made very clear in the original Old Testament passage that Jesus quoted to the Pharisees. Hosea's statement that God desires mercy, not sacrifice, was spoken to a people who had broken their covenant with God and then tried to "bribe" him with sacrifices. God's people had been disobedient by not responding to him in love and faith, so he had allowed the discipline of hard times to come upon them. Things were so tough that they decided they needed to do something to gain relief. They had seen God's acts in the past and concluded, "If we say all the right words, God will relent of all this pressure he is putting on us and restore us to our original condition."

Hosea used the image of romantic love to dramatize Israel's faithlessness. He pictured God as the husband and Israel as a bride who had not only committed adultery but had become a harlot. As a nation, it had sold itself to other gods for protection, provision, and guidance. And then, when God's people were reaping the whirlwind of the the wind they had sown, their solution was "Let's do the right thing to get God to respond to us."

See how they are undervaluing the relationship? Do you see the revealed legalistic mentality the "what I do determines what God does"? God is reduced to a button to be pushed so that relief can come our way. His whole kingdom is reduced to principles that can be applied so we can experience life without hassles. This is, in essence, religious idolatry. It is a human being saying, "I am in charge, and I have discovered how to use God for my own benefit."

This kind of mentality takes the wonderful promises of God and reduces them to a formula. For instance, one of the most popular Scriptures used among Bible-believing Christians is 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and heal their land."

This is a wonderful promise of God. It is God stating to his people, "Come back into proper relationship with me. We can have life together at its fullest." But instead of hearing promise, so many Christians have reduced it to a formula that, when applied, will guarantee that relief will come.

God is not big computer in the sky waiting for us to enter the proper code word. He has already acted on our behalf and made his life and mercy available to us. His promises to us are not trick formulas that enable us to manage and manipulate our lives here on earth. They're invitations to a fresh encounter and an everlasting relationship with him.

Re: Pitfall of Pharisaical Legalism - posted by jimp, on: 2012/6/14 18:09

dear truemwitness, wonderful post...amen.jimp

Re: , on: 2012/6/14 18:18

The pharisees and Saducees were also guilty of substituting their own interpretation an traditions as the truth.

We should be very carefull not to do the same.

Mt 15:3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

Mt 15:6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

Mt 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Mr 7:7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Tit 1:14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.
(KJV)

Re: Pitfall of Pharisaical Legalism - posted by DEADn (), on: 2012/6/14 19:12

Truewitness

Your post would ring aloud throughout this nation. I believe it is a reason why many have turned away from the church and become atheists and agnostics. Apparently what happens is people turn to Jesus in order to be set free and yet when they go to church they get bound in chains because of outward appearances and a list of do's and don'ts. They come out of a bondage of sin and fall into a bondage of other sin and this is where fundamentalism comes into the picture.

I have come across a number of people online who have been burned through this and have become mostly athiests as a result. They recount their lives as Christians and the things they had to do in order to live and look the part while insid they were becoming deadman's bones.

I think it is in man to control man and we see this in politics and this roles over to religion as well. Look at the Catholic church, look at cults, look at very fundamentalist sects and see what its leaders do to their congregation. Seems one sin is forgiven but then it gives way to a deeper sin which blinds the heart even more.

I think about my own personal life. I don't think I was ever under the influence of fundamentalism though I heard little arguments around me about certain things when in groups which I found to be ridiculous. If I were exposed to fundamentalism and carried it in my life it would be from Christian radio of all things. Probably a reason why I stopped listening to it when I died inside years ago. I listen to a little bit of it now but I am careful what I listen to because some of it is really dealing with reality imo.

I also believe that America's view of God is skewed as a result of the religious people of our day. Think about it, how many people think God is ready to zap someone because they did something bad? Where does that mentality come from? Grace is not a staple in the minds of us who believe in God. Oh, we talk about it but we don't seem to practice it as we should. Is it the heart that is deceitful and desperately wicked in this case? Who can know it? Yeah, I think so and I think it helps reflect the flaws we have of God and how we project it and this goes to religious leaders as well.

Just my thoughts
John

Re: - posted by joliboy11, on: 2012/6/14 22:52

I agree John,

I would like to share something that I posted a while ago, this is not just the greediness of love of money but the blindness it brings to those who preach 'prosperity and healing' as a constraint in Christian life

Did someone encountered this teaching?

There is a teaching emerging in some churches today. May I express my view on this 'prosperity-healing' teaching. They

teach that God will provide a job for you to earn money(I agree with that). The verse used is 2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich. For healing they teach having faith in God, wait and be healed. The verse they use is 1 Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. Notice that they don't condemn those who work hard to earn money but those who spent money to be healed. I will ask, IS MONEY MORE IMPORTANT THAN HEALTH? Jesus said that He want mercy more than sacrifice. This teaching approves working hard for money but undermines striving for health.

Food makes us healthy and medicine is designed for that too. When we eat we ask God to bless the food, so we can also do it with medicine. We use apparatus like barbell to exercise - to be healthy, so what's wrong with using an apparatus in operation? They said that the reason you're not healed is you don't have enough faith or because of sin, same with money. This 'prosperity-healing' teaching approve money given by the company either believer or unbeliever but condemn healing from a doctor/ medicine. Why is it? Can you see what the love of money can do? This teaching has made more people selfish than merciful. I do believe in miracles but if I don't have love, it's useless.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2012/6/15 4:49

hi, the worst thing i ever heard coming out of a preachers mouth was" the reason why you were not healed is that you only sent me 500.00 and you have a 1000.00 sickness.jimp

Re: , on: 2012/6/15 4:59

Quote:
-----hi, the worst thing i ever heard coming out of a preachers mouth was" the reason why you were not healed is that you only sent me 500.00 and you have a 1000.00 sickness.

Yikes!