

LEGALISM, LIBERALISM, PHARISAISM

Material Presented at the
25th Annual Workshop
International Bible College
September 26-28, 1996

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Legalism is NOT :

- strict obedience**
- total compliance**
- attention to detail**

Legalism IS :

- trusting in one's own goodness**
- expecting to earn salvation**
- being proud of one's obedience**
- seeking salvation through
Judaism/Mosaic Law**

Legalism is therefore an

ATTITUDE

WHAT MADE THE PHARISEES UNACCEPTABLE?

Prepared by Dave Miller
Brown Trail School of Preaching

Characteristics of the Pharisees:

1. Warped view of fellowship

--Matt. 9:10-13

--Lk. 15:1-2

--Lk. 7:36-47

Characteristics of the Pharisees:

2. Misinterpreted Mosaic Law and enforced their misinterpretations and human traditions as Scripture

--Matt. 5:17-48

--Matt. 12:1-9

--Matt. 15:1-9

--Matt. 16:1-12

Characteristics of the Pharisees:

3. Hypocrites

--Matt. 23:4-7, 13, 25-28

Characteristics of the Pharisees:

4. Meticulous about some matters,
neglectful of others

--Matt. 23:23-24

--Matt. 12:10-12

--Lk. 13:11-17

--Lk. 14:1-6

--Jn. 7:19-24

Characteristics of the Pharisees:

5. False sense of security: genetic and religious heritage

--Matt. 3:9

--Jn. 8:33, 39

--Rom. 2:17-29

What Lay Underneath the Pharisee's Behavior?

- self-righteous
- self-centered
- selfish
- prideful/egotistical
- desire for prominence
- jealous
- impenitent

Matt. 15:10-20

Lk. 18:9-14

Matt. 3:7-8

ANTIDOTE: Humility and a healthy sense of unworthiness

Is. 64:6

Lk. 17:7-10

Lk. 10:29

LEGALISTIC/PHARISAICAL PRACTICES TODAY

1. "Anti" positions (one cup, no located preacher, non-cooperation, no Sunday school, no orphan homes)
2. Binding/restricting translations
3. Banning preaching locations
4. Creating division between "personal indwelling" and "word only" views of the Holy Spirit
5. Specifying garment length
6. Constantly scrutinizing others for infractions
7. Listening to hearsay, thinking the worst, jumping to premature conclusions/judgments without sufficient evidence

WHAT IS LIBERALISM?

Classic Sense:

Denial of the miraculous

--virgin birth

--resurrection

--O.T. miracles

--inspiration

General Usage:

Loosing where God has bound

Relaxing Scriptural restrictions

Introducing unauthorized practices

SIGNS OF LIBERALISM WITHIN CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1. "Felt needs" vs. "Book,
chapter and verse" preaching
2. Solos, choirs, instrumental music
3. Handclapping
4. Lifting up hands
5. Female worship leaders
6. Non-Sunday Lord's Supper
7. Drama
8. Religious holidays
9. Dedicating babies
10. "Contemporary" worship services
11. Ecumenism (fellowship, grace,
unity, baptism)
12. Authority of elders
13. Lax morality (divorce/remarr.,
lottery, modesty)
14. Holy Spirit (Calvinism and
Pentecostalism)

WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

Spirituality is NOT:

- a feeling of excitement
- emotional euphoria
- a vague sense of contentment
- stimulation of pleasurable sensations

Spirituality IS:

- rational assessment of Scripture
- compliance with Spirit's instructions
- knowing and doing God's will

1 Cor. 2:10-3:3

Romans 12:1-2

1 Pet. 2:2,5

Gal. 6:1

Col. 1:9-10

THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN

JOHN 8

1. Two or more witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 19:15)
2. Both man and woman (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22)
3. Witnesses must be eligible (Deut. 17:7; Rom. 2:1; Gal. 6:1)

THE GRAIN FIELD

Matthew 12

1. Lawful to pick from neighbor (Deut. 23:25)
2. Lawful on the Sabbath (Ex. 12:16)
3. David **did** sin (1 Sam. 21:3-6; Lev. 24:5-9)

argumentum ad hominem

4. Temple priests work on the Sabbath
(Numb. 28:9-10)
5. As priests serve God in the temple, so the
disciples were serving Jesus
6. The surface concern for obedience was
insincere (Hos. 6:6)
7. Jesus **authored** the Sabbath!

COMMONALITIES BETWEEN PHARISEES AND LIBERALS

1. Elitist attitude of exclusivity
2. Propensity for extremism
3. Inaccurate assessment of Scripture
4. Going beyond what is written
5. Inadequate grasp of biblical love

Pharisee -- insensitive, uncaring,
runs rough shod over people

Liberal -- emotional, "touchy-feely,"
purely physical displays of
affection

6. Root motivations

- pride (Lk. 18:11-12)
- popularity (Matt. 23:5-7)
- permissiveness (Matt. 23:3-4)
- possessions (Lk. 16:14; 20:47)