

Are You a (Recovering) Pharisee?

1. How to tell (3 Signs/Indicators):

1) You have problem with certain groups of people because they are the "problem".

Mark 2:13-14: 13 He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. 14 And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

1. Jesus pursues
2. Jesus says follow
3. The person whom Jesus pursues and says follow is Levi, a tax collector.

Question: Who are the "Levi's" in your life?

Two things to consider when you are struggling with the "Levi's" in your heart, mind, and life:

1. From a Christian perspective, you may be operating out of a wrong framework for how God engages people.

Tim Keller: "If the gospel is true-- it is not the good people who are in and the bad who are out, or the open-minded and tolerant who are in and the bigoted who are out. Rather, it's the humble who are in and the proud who are out."

Two things to consider when you are struggling with the "Levi's" in your heart, mind, and life:

2. Pride often results when we compare with others:

CS Lewis: "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next person. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others...It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest."

Are You a (Recovering) Pharisee?

1. How to tell (3 Signs/Indicators):

1) You have a problem with certain groups of people because they are the "problem".

2) You find yourself "evaluating more" and "celebrating less."

Mark 2:15-16:

Verse 15: And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.



Verse 16: And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”



“Evaluating More” and “Celebrating Less”

Two Questions to Consider:

1. For some of you, has “Evaluating for God” turned you into a religious “watchdog”?



“Evaluating More” and “Celebrating Less”

Two Questions to Consider:

2. “What has happened to all your joy?” - Galatians 4:15

A.W. Tozer: “...the people of God ought to be the happiest people in all the wide world! People should be coming to us constantly and asking the source of our joy and delight...”



Nehemiah 8:10: The joy of the Lord is your strength.

Hudson Taylor: “It is the consciousness of the threefold joy of the Lord, His joy in ransoming us, His joy in dwelling within us as our Saviour and Power for fruitbearing and His joy in possessing us, as His Bride and His delight; it is the consciousness of this joy which is our real strength. Our joy in Him may be a fluctuating thing: His joy in us knows no change.”

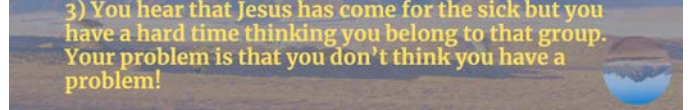


Are You a (Recovering) Pharisee?

1. How to tell (3 Signs/Indicators):

- 1) You have a problem with certain groups of people because they are the “problem”.
- 2) You find yourself “evaluating more” and “celebrating less.”

3) You hear that Jesus has come for the sick but you have a hard time thinking you belong to that group. Your problem is that you don't think you have a problem!



Matthew 2:17: And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Understanding this verse:

1. Jesus is not saying there are some who are a well and so they don't need Jesus.

The Bible is clear that everyone needs Jesus because there are none who are righteous (Romans 3:10), and we all have sin sickness (Romans 3:23-24).

Understanding this verse:

2. This verse gives a warning: perhaps the greatest sin-sickness of all is thinking you don't have it (spiritual blindness)!

Paul Tripp: "Spiritual blindness isn't like physical blindness. When you're physically blind, you know you're blind, so you compensate for this significant physical deficit. But spiritually blind people are not only blind, they are also blind to their own blindness! They think they see well, so the spiritually blind person walks around with the delusion that no one has a more accurate view of himself than he does."

Understanding this verse:

3. A significant reason why we don't think we have sin-sickness is because we view sin only as doing bad things.

Tim Keller from Prodigal God (The Parable of the Lost Sons): "Nearly everyone defines sin as breaking a list of rules. Jesus, though, shows us that a man (ie older brother) who has violated virtually nothing on the list of moral misbehaviors can be every bit as spiritually lost as the most profligate, immoral person. Why? Because sin is not just breaking the rules, it is putting yourself in the place of God as Savior, Lord, and Judge."

(Keller) "Pride in his good deeds, rather than remorse over his bad deeds, was keeping the older son out of the feast of salvation. The elder brother's problem is his self-righteousness, the way he uses his moral record to put God and others in his debt to control them and get them to do what he wants. His spiritual problem is the radical insecurity that comes from basing his self-image on achievements and performance, so he must endlessly prop up his sense of righteousness by putting others down and finding fault. As one of my teachers in seminary put it, the main barrier between Pharisees and God is 'not their sins, but their damnable good works.'"

Mark 2:13-17: Are You a (Recovering) Pharisee?

1. How to tell (3 Signs/Indicators)

2. What to do if you are

The Gospel of Grace to (Recovering) Pharisees:

1. Recognize that sin is not just doing "bad" things but there is the sin beneath the sin that is often connected to pride and "doing" good works.

"Lay your deadly doing down, down at Jesus' feet. Stand in Him and Him alone, gloriously complete."
- James Proctor

The Gospel of Grace to (Recovering) Pharisees:

2. Grace flows down to you! Instead of looking down, looking around, look up and receive!

Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

Isaiah 53:5: But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Prayer for "Recovering Gospel Pharisees" (Scotty Smith):

Reader: Lord Jesus, we talk about you a lot, using plenty of spiritual language and Bible quotes; we may be quick to recognize and correct false teaching, but we confess that our hearts can be far from you!

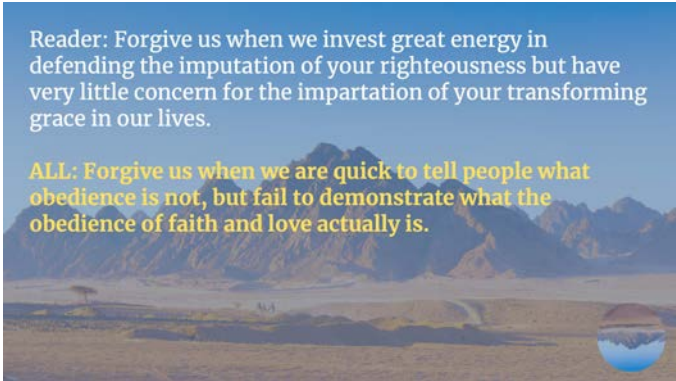
ALL: While it would be one thing if we were distorting and misapplying Old Testament law like the Pharisees, putting people under the yoke of performance based spirituality, replacing your commandments with our traditions, it's another thing to be a Gospel Pharisee and scribe.

Reader: Forgive us, Jesus, when we love exposing and damning legalistic, pragmatic and moralistic teaching, more than we love spending time with you in prayer and fellowship.

ALL: Forgive us for loving the theology of the gospel and the doctrines of grace, more than we actually know and adore you.

Reader: Forgive us when we invest great energy in defending the imputation of your righteousness but have very little concern for the impartation of your transforming grace in our lives.

ALL: Forgive us when we are quick to tell people what obedience is not, but fail to demonstrate what the obedience of faith and love actually is.



Reader: Forgive us when we call ourselves “recovering Pharisees” or “recovering legalists,” but in actuality, we’re not really recovering from anything.

ALL: Forgive us when talk more about “getting the gospel” than we’re actually “gotten” by the gospel.



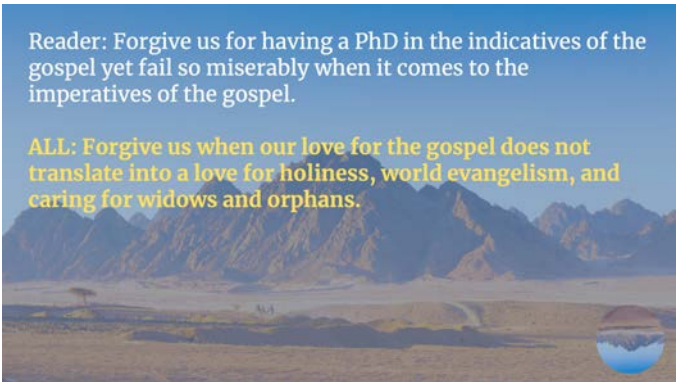
Reader: Forgive us for being just as arrogant about grace theology as we were obnoxious about legalistic theology.

ALL: Forgive us when we don’t use our freedom to serve one another in love, but rather use it to put our consciences to sleep.



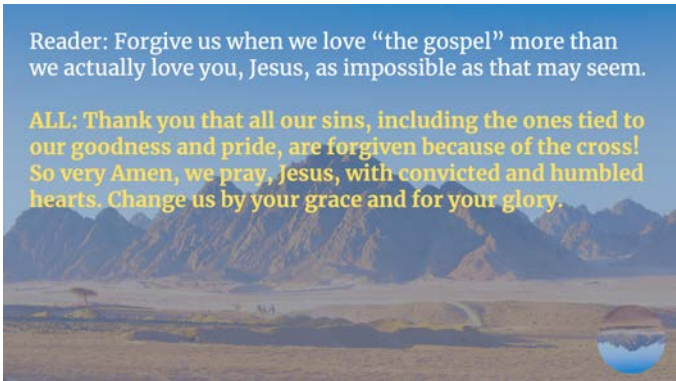
Reader: Forgive us for having a PhD in the indicatives of the gospel yet fail so miserably when it comes to the imperatives of the gospel.

ALL: Forgive us when our love for the gospel does not translate into a love for holiness, world evangelism, and caring for widows and orphans.



Reader: Forgive us when we love “the gospel” more than we actually love you, Jesus, as impossible as that may seem.

ALL: Thank you that all our sins, including the ones tied to our goodness and pride, are forgiven because of the cross! So very Amen, we pray, Jesus, with convicted and humbled hearts. Change us by your grace and for your glory.



Mark
CHRIST'S POWER OVER EVERY NEED

