



Introduction: There is a saying: “Don’t follow bad _____ they lead to bad ends.”

1. Religion teaches, but doesn’t _____ – 23:1–3

“The Jesus spoke to the multitude and to His disciples. Saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.”

The religious elite – the scribes and the Pharisees _____ Jesus as the Messiah. Yes, they refused to hear Him, but I pointed out that according to Mark 12:37, *And the common people heard Him gladly.*

In verse 2, Jesus teaches that the *“scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat.”* What does this mean?

Scribes & Pharisees...

Jesus says, *“Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do,”* Jesus says, *“observe and do.”* This was how they were to react to the

teaching of Moses' law. Jesus makes it very clear that when the law is taught that one is to be _____ to it.

Secondly, Jesus says, *"But do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do."* Jesus was telling the multitude to do what they tell you from the law of Moses, but don't follow their _____.

Religion is about what you know, and not how you _____. Whereas Jesus made it clear that religion has it wrong. He says, *"But do not do according to their works;"*

2. Religion places Heavy _____ on Others – 23:4

"For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."

The scribes and Pharisees should have helped people draw closer to God, but instead, they _____ them under man-made rules. Religion creates a bunch of man-made rules that a person must follow.

Here are some rules that the scribes and Pharisees came up with:

And what are some man-made rules we discover in religion in the 21st century?

In today's language, we call this _____.

3. Religion seeks to be in the _____ – 23:5

"But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments."

Jesus made it clear that the works of the scribes and the Pharisees were done to be _____ by men. That is Religion.

One of the ways the scribes and Pharisees got noticed was by wearing _____. And in verse 5, Jesus tells us, *“They make their phylacteries broad...”*

Their phylacteries got them the _____ they were seeking. It got them noticed. Not only did they wear broad phylacteries, but they also would, *“enlarge the borders of their garments.”*

What we are looking at here are religious _____. Numbers 15:38-39 tells us that Israel was told to make tassels and to sew them onto the corners of their garments. These tassels were to remind them of God’s commandments.

One author wrote, “They _____ their religiosity.”

4. Religion wants Positions of _____ – 23:6

“They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues.”

The *“best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues”* tells us that the Pharisees were all about _____. This is head-table mentality. It is “seat me” where I will be noticed.

The best _____ at feasts were near the host. The best seats in the synagogues were seats that faced the congregation – those that sat there would be seen by everyone.

How might this play out in the church today?

Religion makes it about _____ but Christianity makes it about JESUS!

5. Religion desires _____ and Recognition – 23:7–10

“They love greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.”

Beware of those who desire the _____ and not the testimony.

Religion is about proper _____, titles, and positions. Christianity is about SERVING. It's not about ecclesiastical hierarchy.

I find that verses 11-12 are: **A Call to True** _____

1. **Be a** _____ – 23:11

“But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.”

2. **Be** _____ – 23:12

“And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Conclusion: Instead of me repeating the five bad examples to _____, allow me to provide you with five clear _____ of biblical Christianity. Here they are (and these points would make a great devotional for one's personal quiet time this week):

1. _____ what you teach or preach to others (James 1:22; Romans 2:21; 1 Timothy 4:16)
2. Avoid _____ in your own life, but make sure that you do not place legalism upon others (Galatians 5:1; Colossians 2:20-22).
3. Play the role of a _____ well (pick up the basin and the towel). Jesus was a servant. Christians serve (John 13:14-15; Mark 10:45; Philippians 2:3-4).
4. Use your talents and abilities without having a _____ in the Church. And if you receive a title, all you really get is more scrutiny (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:10; James 3:1; Matthew 23:11-12).
5. Seek to get people's eyes off _____ and onto Jesus Christ (John 3:30; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Corinthians 2:2).