

## Rediscovering the Pharisees Part 3



Imagine someone calling you a “Pharisee”. You would likely be offended by this association. It is understandable, but do you know why? Popular culture – especially Christian culture, has made “Pharisee” a derogatory term. Most people however – including Christians, don’t know very much about the Pharisees. And what they claim to know, is frequently wrong. The Pharisees deserve their derogatory status, but not for the reasons often heard. Discovering their true identity – that established in the pages of Scripture, will be the focus of this study.

### **1. RELEVANCE: Why study them?**

Because understanding the Pharisees helps us to stay away from the teachings of Martin Luther, understand the teachings of Jesus, avoid becoming a member of the Dunning Kruger club—and ultimately, hell. Through the discovery of their beliefs, we find answers to our own poor thinking as well as the reason so many (today) have embraced a false and damning version of Christianity. It is because our/their religion is no different than that of the Pharisees.

### **2. RELIGION: What were the main tenets/beliefs of the Pharisees?**

#### **2.1. Traditionalism**

Giving human tradition (the teachings, doctrine, beliefs, practices, principles, policies, commands, laws, justice and religion established by mankind) more authority than God’s Word (the teachings, doctrine, beliefs, practices, principles, policies, commands, laws, justice and religion established by the writers of Scripture). In other words, putting human reason above the revelation of God. Traditionalism made the Pharisees poor thinkers and false teachers (Mat 12:1-14, 15:1-14; Mar 7:4).

Examples of this Pharisical practice in the Christian church today: 1) swear words are inherently sinful, 2) “little-house-on-the-prairie theology” [Doug Wilson video]: a home manifesting mature godliness and devotion to Jesus is a place where the kids are home-schooled, the food home-grown or home-made [especially the cookies!] and all the maintenance or home-improvements are done by the family, 3) Luther’s gospel in the evangelical church, 4) the practice of situational ethics in the majority of churches (e.g. masturbation not disciplined as a capital crime though this is the only penalty assigned to sins related to sexual immorality in the bible).

**\*THE POINT NOT TO MISS:** CHECK YOURSELF! Christianity is filled w/Pharisees – people practicing their religion, at least as it relates to the belief/practice of traditionalism. And that traditionalism will not only make us poor thinkers – but could also keep us from going to heaven - to miss Jesus as the Pharisees did (Joh 9:16; this is clearly the case w/the Evangelical church’s embrace of Luther’s gospel). Hence reason for Paul’s warning in (Col 2:8).

#### **2.2. Narcissism**

Living to experience praise, approval, love, neediness and respect from others or promote self (fulfillment, enjoyment, status and power) at the expense of others– including God. In other words, putting self-love (or loyalty) above love (or loyalty) to God.

2.2.1. The Pharisees were not only traditionalists, they were also narcissists. The reason they did what they did was for the purpose of receiving the praise of others and promoting self (Mat 23:5-7; Joh 12:43; Joh 5:44; Luk 16:14 = What causes people to become “lovers of money” [to be loyal to money] is they are narcissists - i.e. living to promote self or gain power, since money is number one way to do that in this world. Notice they were also seeking to justify themselves by others [versus God] – Luk 16:15).

2.2.2. The narcissism of the Pharisees likewise contributed to their poor thinking and failure to recognize Jesus as the Messiah (Joh 5:15-17; “Jews” = Specifically, the Pharisees- those most seeking to kill Jesus – Mat 12:14)

2.2.3. Narcissism has a long history among human beings, a history going all the way back to the Fall. Satan, then Adam and Eve were the first narcissists in their attempts to be God (or take His throne) (Isa 14:13-14; Gen 3:5-6).

2.2.4. Narcissism is also at the heart of most (if not all) homosexual behavior. It is the epitome - or extreme version of narcissism (or self-love). Hence the designation “homo”(sexual) (i.e. of the same in sexual love; sexual desire for oneself or one like self). Even the world understands this association.

“According to orthodox psychoanalytical theory, narcissism and homosexuality are strongly associated. This association played a major role in pathologizing homosexuality. The hypothesis, which is based on the Freudian connection between narcissism and homosexuality, is [also] supported by the results in [psychological study].” – Gidi Rubinstein (“Narcissism and self-esteem among homosexual and heterosexual male students”; Pub-med.gov)

2.2.5. According to Paul however, this association has even deeper roots. Homosexuality (along w/a “debased [insane] mind”) is the punishment for those whose narcissism (or self-love) causes them to hold God in contempt (to judge Him and His truth as unrighteous) and establish themselves as the proper object of worship (Rom 1:18-28).

2.2.6. You don't (however) have to be pursuing homosexual perversion to be a narcissist. Again, the Pharisees were narcissists (but probably not homosexuals). As a matter of fact, many of those who claim to be Christians are narcissists.

2.2.7. Signs you are (more than likely) a narcissist:

2.2.7.1. you care what other people think about you (Luk 6:26):

2.2.7.1.1. your primary motivation to do certain things/right thing is so that people will praise, respect, think highly or approve of you (versus seeking the praise/respect of God - Rom 2:7-8 "self-seeking" = Narcissistic).

2.2.7.1.2. you constantly need the praise or recognition of others to be faithful or keep doing the right thing (e.g. faux leaders – how women end up w/effeminate [pansy, emotional, soft] husbands they thought were real men) (Gal 1:10).

2.2.7.1.3. you make sure others know what you have, who you are, who you know or when you do certain things so as to get their praise, respect or approval of you (Mat 23:5-7; e.g. always posting your achievements on social media; wear clothing advertising where you work/what you do when it is not necessary; you are always name-dropping or telling people what you do, how much you make or where you work).

2.2.7.1.4. you fantasize about others giving you respect or listening to you, or thinking you are smart or wise or cool.

2.2.7.1.5. you show partiality when it comes to your family (e.g. you cover up or discount their sin so as to keep rec'g their praise/love/approval of you – Mat 10:32-33 "denies Me before men" = Inhibits Christ's Lordship over their life by covering up/discounting their sin. This is what Jesus is getting at when He then talks about loving one's family more than Him [in vv34-37]; Jos 7:24-25).

2.2.7.2. you are a kiss-up or yes-man or coward or two-faced e.g. (rarely ever are you frank w/people – telling them the truth about who they are – or how you view them; you refuse to talk tough, use harsh words or use swear words when necessary; you shy away from tough conversations – even w/your kids or spouse; you agree outwardly w/others though inwardly you are opposed; you are all about praise and little about dealing w/sin; Pro 27:6; 2Ti 4:3).

2.2.7.3. you refuse to take the necessary time to disciple your wife and kids which means understanding why they do what they do (i.e. getting to the specific cause[s] of their actions and never settling for "I don't know")

2.2.7.4. you are always making excuses, playing the victim or feeling sorry for yourself (self-preservation – Mat 16:25).

2.2.7.5. you need others to need you and so will manipulate them to get it (e.g. parents trying to keep their kids at home as long as possible and giving them a guilt trip for wanting to be independent).

2.2.7.6. you are loyal to money and infatuated w/making lots of money (it is the primary determiner of what you do).

2.2.7.7. you are guilty of immoral sexual behavior – most especially homosexual behavior (Rom 1:21-27 = Narcissism ["exchanged the glory of God for man" = self-worship] causes God to "g[i]ve them up" to the perversion of homosexuality).

2.2.7.8. you don't have many close friends in the church because you refuse to be a friend (e.g. you have no interest in going to them or learning about them; you want everyone to come to you and like what you like; Phi 2:3-4 w/5-8).

2.2.7.9. you get offended, don't handle or honestly listen to the criticism of your brothers and sisters (e.g. when you or you family are criticized, you think about leaving the church – once more, self-love/preservation, Mat 19:16-22 = The RYR was a narcissist – hence his love of money. He didn't come to Jesus for honest criticism, but approval and when he didn't get it, he split).

2.2.7.10. you consider the consequences that may be associated w/doing the right thing before doing it (i.e. you do not practice blind righteousness) (again, self-love, or preservation is the issue).

2.2.7.11. you always think it's about you (even now – that pastor is picking on you specifically) (e.g. you are never genuinely happy for others in the church if they have something you don't have – but want, relationships, money, careers, houses, spouses, health, brains, etc. – Jam 3:14-16).

2.2.7.12. Like Satan and the homosexual, you hold all in authority in contempt (self-love makes me believe I sb king) (e.g. you question anyone in authority, their competency, integrity, their right to be over you; you always believe you know better than those over you).

**CLOSING CONTEMPLATION/CHALLENGE: Jesus makes it abundantly clear that the narcissist and person truly following Him are on separate eternal paths. If we want to get to heaven, we must take up our cross and crucify the narcissist in us (Mat 16:24 -"If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself [deny self-love/narcissism], take up his cross and follow Me").**