

ACCIDENTAL
PHARISEES

Week 1 – Intro

How do you view Pharisees?



Angry & Confrontational?



Inquisitive & Seeking?



How do you view Pharisees?

“In Jesus’ day, being called a Pharisee was a badge of honor. It was a compliment, not a slam.” – Larry Osbourne

*“The Pharisees were by far the dominate religious group in Israel in Jesus’ day and the most popular with the masses.”
– John MacArthur*

Highest Level of Spiritual Commitment

- ***Jesus and Paul both referenced **Pharisees** when they wanted to illustrate the highest levels of spiritual commitment:***

“For I tell you, unless your righteousness **exceeds** that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 5:20

“⁴though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; **as to the law, a Pharisee;** ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.” – Philippians 3:4-6

Which direction are you going?

- *Challenged by a message a few years ago:*

*The **longer** we walk with Jesus (and the older we get),
the **sweeter** and more **gracious** we should become.*

- *Do you **agree** with that statement?*
- *Do you find it true in **your life**?*

Which direction are you going?

- *Do you see it in the people **around you**?*
- *Or do we become more **intolerant** and **inflexible** as we get older?*
 - *Sound like anyone in the Bible?*
- *What prevents us from becoming **sweeter** and more **gracious** as we get older?*

Who Were the Pharisees?

- The name, “Pharisee,” likely comes from the Hebrew word **prushim**, meaning separated ones.
- Modern Christians tend to see the Pharisees in a negative light — mostly because the New Testament authors portray the Pharisees as legalistic and hypocritical.



Who Were the Pharisees?

- However, the Pharisees played an integral role in giving us both the Talmud (the written record of the oral tradition) and the Masoretic Text (the original Hebrew Bible, which relied on oral tradition to correctly identify and pronounce ambiguous words).



- As a group, Pharisees were the **guardians** and **interpreters** of the law.

Who Were the Pharisees?

- *Contributions from the Pharisees:*
 - *Emphasizing the “oral tradition” (which they argued was equal to the written tradition of the Torah).*
 - *Extending Jewish practices into life outside the temple.*
 - *Instilling greater piety in “the common people”.*
 - *Promoting belief in the afterlife.*

Seven Types of Pharisees

Type	Characteristic ^{1,2,3}	Jesus' Words
Shoulder Pharisee (shikmi Pharisee)	Wear their good actions on their shoulders for everyone to see	<i>“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.” – Matthew 6:1 (see also Matthew 23:1-12)</i>

¹<https://overviewbible.com/pharisees>

²<https://weekly.israelbiblecenter.com/rabbis-seven-types-pharisees-talmud>

³<https://garydavenport.org/2020/11/23/beware-the-leaven-of-the-pharisees-2-seven-kinds-of-pharisees/>

Seven Types of Pharisees

Type	Characteristic 1,2,3	Jesus' Words
Wait a little Pharisee (nikpi Pharisee)	Always find excuses for putting off a good deed	<i>“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred?” – Matthew 23:16-18</i>

Seven Types of Pharisees

Type	Characteristic ^{1,2,3}	Jesus' Words
Bruised Pharisee (kizai Pharisee)	Run into walls because they are so busy avoiding looking at women	<i>"But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." – Matthew 5:27-30</i>

Seven Types of Pharisees

Type	Characteristic 1,2,3	Jesus' Words
Hunched Over Pharisee ('pestle' Pharisee)	Walk bent over in pretended humility	<i>“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” – Matthew 6:16-18</i>

Seven Types of Pharisees

Type	Characteristic ^{1,2,3}	Jesus' Words
Ever reckoning Pharisee (constantly reckoning good deeds vs. bad ones)	Always weighing their good deeds against the bad	<i>“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” – Matthew 6:19-24</i>

Seven Types of Pharisees

Type	Characteristic ^{1,2,3}	Jesus' Words
Fearful Pharisee (serve from fear)	Are frightened of doing the wrong thing	<i>“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” – Luke 12:32</i>

Seven Types of Pharisees

Type	Characteristic 1,2,3	Jesus' Words
God loving Pharisee	Really love God from their heart and take delight in his law	<i>“But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’” – Matthew 22:37-39</i>

Background of Pharisees

- **The Pharisees are consistently depicted in the Gospels as Jesus' antagonists.**
 - **Most Bible dictionaries depict the Pharisees as greedy, hypocritical, lacking a sense of justice, overly concerned with fulfilling the literal details of the law, and insensitive to the spiritual significance of the OT.**

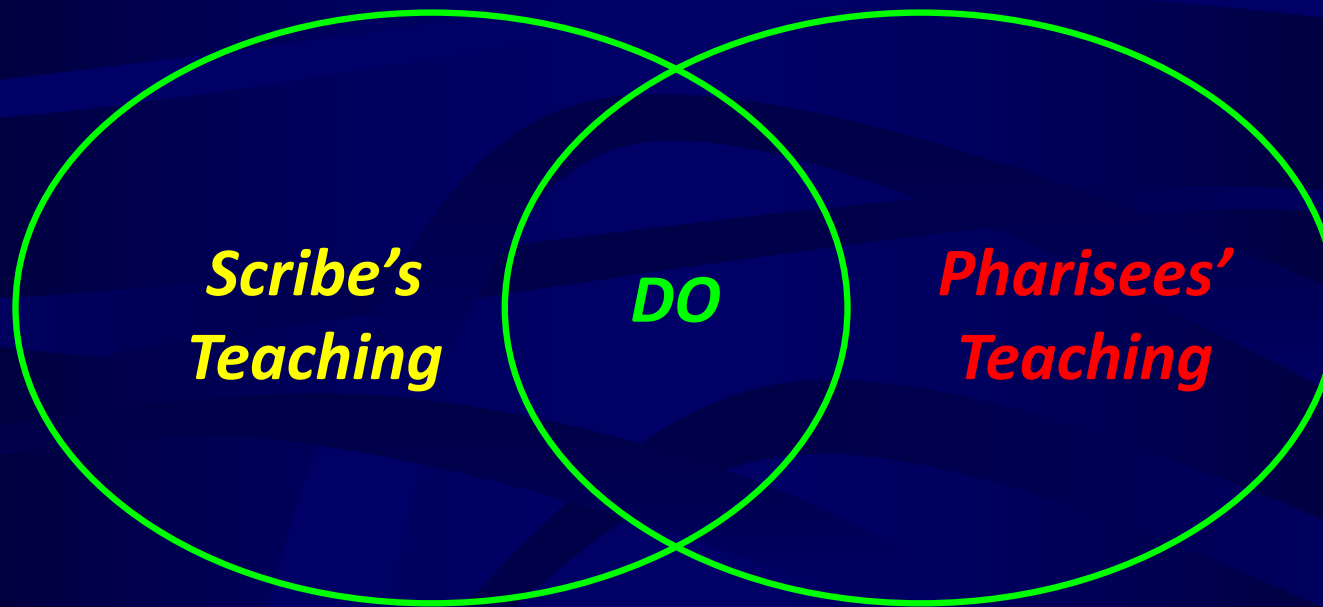
“Jesus makes the word *hypocrite* a synonym for *scribe* and *Pharisee*.”

– John MacArthur

Background of Pharisees

- **All four gospels link *Scribes* and *Pharisees*:**
 - *Probably indicates that some scribes were Pharisees (Matthew 5:20, Mark 2:16, Luke 5:21, John 8:3).*
- **Neither the *Pharisees* nor the *Sadducees* were priests:**
 - *They did not take part in the actual running of the temple, the offering of sacrifices, or the administration of other religious duties.*
 - *Both were "experts in the law"*

What did Jesus say about the teaching of **Scribes** and **Pharisees**?



"¹Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, ³so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice." – Matthew 23:1-3

What did Jesus say about the teaching of *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*?



*"Jesus said to them, 'Watch and **beware** of the leaven (teaching) of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'*" – Matthew 16:6

*See also Matthew **16:11-12**, Mark 8:15, Luke 12:1*

Harsh Words

- **Jesus also had harsh words for the Pharisees in *Matthew 23*:**

*“But **woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites**! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.” – Matthew 23:13*

*“**Woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites**! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.” – Matthew 23:15*

*“**Woe to you**, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ – Matthew 23:16*

*“**Woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites**! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.” – Matthew 23:23*

*“**Woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites**! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.” – Matthew 23:25*

*“**Woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites**! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.” – Matthew 23:27*

*“**Woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites**! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous” – Matthew 23:29*

Background of Pharisees

- **Who were famous Pharisees?**



Paul (Acts 23:9, 26:5, Phil 3:5)



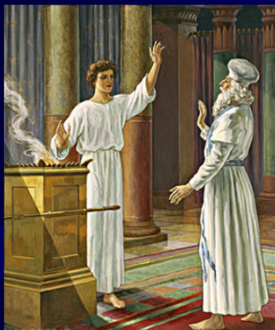
Nicodemus (John 3:1, 7:50)



Gamaliel (Acts 5:34)

Zechariah (Luke 1:5)

*Priest and Pharisee
of the line of Abijah*



**Flavius Josephus the
Historian**

*History of the Jewish War
The Antiquities of the Jews
Against Apion*

Background of Pharisees

- **Not all Pharisees fought against Jesus.**
- **The Gospels record many good interactions with Pharisees:**

“One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table.” – Luke 7:36

“One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully.” – Luke 14:1

Good Pharisees?

“At that very hour some **Pharisees** came and said to him, ‘**Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.**’” – Luke 13:31

“But some **believers** who belonged to the **party of the Pharisees** rose up and said, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.’” – Acts 15:5



Good Pharisees?

- **When the Officers were sent to arrest Jesus:**

*“⁴⁵The officers then came to the chief priests and **Pharisees**, who said to them, ‘Why did you not bring him?’ ⁴⁶The officers answered, ‘No one ever spoke like this man!’ ⁴⁷The **Pharisees** answered them, ‘Have you also been deceived? ⁴⁸Have any of the authorities or the **Pharisees** believed in him? ⁴⁹But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.’ ⁵⁰**Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them**, said to them, ⁵¹‘Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?’ ⁵²They replied, ‘Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.’” – John 7:45-52*

Good Pharisees?

- **After Jesus heals the man born blind:**

“¹³They brought to the **Pharisees** the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, ‘He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.’ ¹⁶Some of the **Pharisees** said, ‘This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.’ **But others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?’ And there was a division among them.**” – John 9:13-16

How Can we be a Modern Day Pharisee?

“It’s not about ancient Pharisees. It’s about accidental Pharisees.”

– Larry Osbourne

How Can we be a Modern Day Pharisee?

1. A deepening sense of frustration and disdain for those at the back of the line. Instead of a Jesus-like compassion for those who can't keep up, we view them with cynicism and a cocky arrogance.

“Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” – Matthew 9:13

“²⁸Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” – Matthew 11:28-30

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” – Luke 19:10

“As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.” – Romans 14:1

How Can we be a Modern Day Pharisee?

2. A spirit of exclusivity. When thinning the herd becomes more important than expanding the kingdom; or raising the bar becomes more important than helping people climb over it, something has gone terribly wrong.

*“¹I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, **bearing with one another in love.**” – Ephesians 4:1-2*

*“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may **present everyone mature in Christ.**” – Colossians 1:28*

*“¹²For what have I to do with judging **outsiders**? Is it not those **inside the church** whom you are to judge? ¹³God judges those **outside.**” – 1 Corinthians 5:12-13*

How Can we be a Modern Day Pharisee?

3. The addition of extra-biblical rules and expectations. Few of us would see ourselves as legalists. We think we've moved on from old school legalism because we no longer judge people by what's in their refrigerator. But the spirit of legalism still runs strong. We now judge people by what's in their driveway and how big their house is.

*"In vain do they worship me, **teaching as doctrines the commandments of men**" – Matthew 15:9b*

²One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

*⁴**Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another?**" – Romans 14:2-4*

How Can we be a Modern Day Pharisee?

4. A pattern of idolizing the past. Whether it's the New Testament church or the scholars of old, we tend to give them a free pass for their failures. But the present-day Bride of Christ and the current crop of leaders that Jesus has put in place are assailed for their blind spots, failures, and feet of clay. Like the Pharisees of old, we rip on the living prophets and then build monuments to them once they die.

"Say not, 'Why were the former days better than these?' For it is not from wisdom that you ask this." – Ecclesiastes 7:10

"Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed." – Luke 11:47

Examples: Must return to a "Christian nation"

How Can we be a Modern Day Pharisee?

5. A quest for clone-like uniformity. Jesus had room for Simon the Zealot and Matthew the Tax Collector. Yet sometimes, the more biblically grounded we become, the less room we have for anyone who hasn't yet learned all that we've learned. The result is a circle of fellowship that's tighter than Jesus's circle of acceptance.

*“¹⁴For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, ‘**Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,**’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, ‘**Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,**’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸**But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.** ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰**As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.**” – 1 Corinthians 12:14-20*

Examples: No room for preference issues like different worship style, music, organization, ministries.

How Can we be a Modern Day Pharisee?

6. Gift projection. It's the toxic belief that my calling is everyone else's calling. It disfigures the body of Christ by insisting that ears become eyes and hands become feet. It looks like passion for the mission. But in reality, it's chocolate covered arrogance.

"⁶Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness." – Romans 12:6-8

"Full-blown gift projection is the sin of the spiritually passionate." – Larry Osbourne

How Can we be a Modern Day Pharisee?

*“The bottom line is that as long as my only image of a Pharisee is that of a spiritual loser and a perennial enemy of Jesus, I’ll never recognize the **clear and present danger** in my own life. I’ll never realize that it’s often a very short and subtle journey from **being zealous for God** to **being unintentionally opposed to God.**”*

– Larry Osbourne

ACCIDENTAL
PHARISEES

Next Week – Overzealous Faith