



I. Lies & Loopholes

Key Truth: There Is No Substitute For True Devotion

II. Jesus Rebukes Hypocrisy

Mark 7:1-13

1-5

Accusation

6-13

Condemnation

III. Clarity: Pursuit & Priority

Mid-Week Devotion (Take time to pray & respond to the following)

Loopholes are exceptions to rules that people seek in order to be empowered or freed in some way. Sometimes loopholes are hidden so that only a select few can exploit them. Other times, they are promoted so that abusers can benefit from the cover of being “just one of many” who leveraged an exception for their own gain. When loopholes are insufficient or are unavailable, people will resort to lies in order to say, do, and believe what they want. This behavior may be effective in a worldly context, but it never fools or deceives God. When it comes to one’s relationship with the Lord, there is no substitute for true devotion.

Hypocrisy is a symptom of the sinful human condition. It undermines trust and creates conflict in society. Hypocrisy among God’s people is a stumbling block to unbelievers who might otherwise be inclined to investigate God’s Word and consider what it means to be part of God’s family. Every believer is susceptible to hypocrisy and each one must acknowledge their need for the Holy Spirit to harden their hearts against the sin of false and insincere devotion to God.

The remedy to Christian hypocrisy is humility, courage, and confession. God is neither fooled by false devotion nor unwilling to receive and forgive those who repent. Jesus does not *want* to condemn, but He will not receive those whose hearts are not truly His. To what degree does your heart belong to God? Are you devoted to following Him or are you devoted merely to the activity and appearance of being a Christian? Is there a relationship with God that undergirds the exercise of your religion? Are you willing to ask God to bring clarity and correction to your pursuits and priorities?

Prayerfully confess any ungodliness that is presently at work in your life. Invite God to replace it with devotion to Him, love for His lordship, and a desire to be an instrument of His will.