

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF A RELIGIOUS HYPOCRITE

John 7:19-24

Introduction:

1. Their Beliefs aren't lining up with their Actions

A) Their beliefs – the religious leaders professed allegiance to the Law of Moses (John 7:19a)

> In fact, they would call themselves “Moses’ disciples” (John 9:28-29)

B) Their actions – these religious leaders were plotting to break the Law given through Moses

> Yet none of them keeps the Law (John 7:19b)

In fact, they were plotting to kill Jesus – an innocent man (John 7:1, 19)

> This plan puts them in conflict with their professed beliefs as disciples of Moses (Ex. 20:13)

Question: Was the Law given to reveal our righteous OR was the Law given to reveal our sinfulness – falling short, of God’s righteous standard?

Paul’s insights (Romans 7:7-12; Galatians 3:10-14)

C) Their response to Jesus’ assessment

> Accusation (John 7:20a)

> Indignation

No one is seeking to kill you (John 7:20b)

Is that true? (John 5:16-18; 11:53)

2. They’re Blind to the Inconsistencies of their Standards (John 7:21-23)

A) The cause for this confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders (John 7:21)

> The miracle that Jesus performed in John 5:8-18

B) The approved “exception” for the religious leaders to work on and yet keep the Sabbath (John 7:22)

> The law’s instruction about circumcision (Leviticus 12:1-3)

> The law’s instruction about Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11)

C) Their “exception” should vindicate, not condemn, Jesus’ healing of a paralytic

> The lesser exception of the religious leaders opens the door for the greater exception of Jesus to heal the whole man on the Sabbath (John 7:23)

Jesus’ healing a man was a sign or picture of His future kingdom (Rev 21:1-4)

> Jesus had much to teach the religious leaders about the Sabbath

The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 3:27)

It is right to do good on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:12)

The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8)

3. Their Focus is upon Judging by Appearance, not according to Righteousness (John 7:24)

A) Notice the emphasis upon the word judge – 3 times in verse 24

> Hypocrites are devoted to and skilled at finding and condemning the sin in others

In the original language this verb is in the present tense – continuous action

Matthew 7:1-5 gives us insight into this “judgmental” pattern of life

> This doesn’t trump the admonitions to judge righteously

False teachers (Matthew 7:15-20)

Sinful behavior in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 5:1-6)

B) The religious leaders are judging Jesus by an “appearance” not the reality

> In “righteous indignation” they are condemning Jesus as a “lawbreaker”

C) The ultimate expression of this emphasis upon appearance instead of righteousness will be seen when the religious leaders finally contrive their plan for putting Jesus to death (John 18:28)

APPLICATION:

What can we focus on to help keep us from being religious hypocrites?

1. Have a growing awareness of the disparity in my own life between what I know to be true and my failure to live according to that truth (James 1:21-27)

2. Have a growing desire to love others as God has love me (1 John 4:7-11)

3. Have a growing awareness of the righteous standard of God revealed in Jesus Christ (John 1:14)