

## The Hypocrisy of Religion, Part Three

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Last time we addressed ourselves to the Hypocrisy of Religion. The Religionist gave UNBIBLICAL ordinances, commands, rituals and religious works that God never required for entrance into Heaven or for our spirituality. We have given this hypocrisy another name which fits this error exactly. We call it legalism. The book of Galatians, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Ephesians and as well as the most of the rest of the New Testament dogmatically declare that by the deeds of the flesh no person is ever justified before God.

In Matt.23:5-6, Jesus make it clear that the motivation of Religion is self-centered. To make oneself appear to be spiritual in order to gain the recognition of men and God.

Mt 23:5-6, "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'" NKJV

Men gaining the acceptance and praise of others because they have appeared to be spiritual leaders among men. God calls this PRIDE and God hates pride! Instead, God requires a true humility that comes from the heart.

Ps 51:17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart — These, O God, You will not despise." NKJV

A broken and contrite heart and spirit the Lord will not despise. In the 6th verse of Matt. 23, Jesus indicates that when these legalists are in public they want to be recognized and exalted above others, wanting the chief seats among men. Someone wisely said that, "self-praise stinks" and how true that is. Men like it when others give to them offices and other forms of recognition before others, as though they are giants among men. We remember that the Bible says the one sin that caused Lucifer, the most exalted of angels, to fall was PRIDE. How subtle pride is and how painful to the human EGO to accept true humility.

In Matt.23:8, Jesus tells us to avoid being entrapped by pursuit of titles and praises of men that at least in our minds exalts us over others. Jesus said do not become masters of men in attitude for there is only one genuine and real MASTER of men and that is God himself.

Mt 23:8-10, "But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven." NKJV

In fact further in our text, Jesus said if you really want to be great in God's eyes become a servant to others.

Mt 23:11-12. "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." NKJV

May God grant us victory over our own egos so that in our hearts and minds we do not allow ourselves to be filled with such pride and ambition that we think more highly of ourselves than God does. We need the help of God the Holy Spirit if we are to have victory in our lives over Hypocrisy!!