




Pharisaitis: Treatment & Prevention

“Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees.”
—Jesus (Matthew 16:6)

South Shore Community Church
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**Pharisaitis:
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Bill & Larry. Non-Christians but doing good deeds. Join or shun?

Matthew 16:5-12

When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. “Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

They discussed this among themselves and said, “It is because we didn't bring any bread.”




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Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.




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1. Why did Jesus use the word "yeast" when he meant "teaching"?
2. Who were the Pharisees and what did they teach?
3. Why and how does one guard against their teaching?
4. And what does that have to do with Bill, Larry, and me?



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1. Why did Jesus use the word “yeast” when he meant “teaching”?
 - Memorable
Typical of Jesus’ teaching to make it unforgettable.
 - Symbolic
Passover; Feast of Unleavened Bread to commemorate exodus from slavery in Egypt. Yeast is to dough what sin is to the soul.



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2. Who were the Pharisees and what did they teach?
 - Separatists. Preservers of religion during secularizing time.
 - Taught strict obedience to rules; minor, outward, man-made.

Imagine a Separatist group like the Amish becoming the “behavior police” controlling almost every church, holding the Presidency, and a majority in the Senate and Congress. That was the kind of power and influence the Pharisees had in Jesus’ day.




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3. Why and how does one guard against their teaching?

Why?

- Their teaching makes people self-righteous hypocrites.



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Jesus' words to the Pharisees: "The Seven Woes" of Matthew 23.

...Obey the Pharisees and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. (vss. 3-4)

Everything they do is done for men to see (vs. 5)



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Woe to you, (7X), you hypocrites! you blind guides! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. (vs. 23)

On the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. (vs. 28)

You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? (vs. 33)


[Note: We cannot talk to any person this way without sinning. Jesus died on the cross for the Pharisees.]



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Pharisees:


1. Do not practice what they preach. (vs. 3)
2. Teach, but don't help people. (vs. 4)
3. Want to look good more than be good. (vss. 5-12; 25-28)
4. Obey minor rules but neglect the important ones. (vss. 23-24)



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Pharisees have their eyes on Rules
and on how other people are doing at obeying them.


Followers have their eyes on God
and on how they themselves are doing at following Him.



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You are susceptible to Pharisaitis if:

1. You have a legalistic church background.
(rules; appearances; shunning certain people)
2. You have overcome an issue.
(forgetting God's grace; pride)
3. You are a helper.
(frustration with those who don't change)
4. You have been a Christian for a few years.
(See #1 above; it creeps in the longer you are in church)
5. You are human.
(We all default to Religion because it is easier than a Relationship with God).




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SELF-DIAGNOSIS

- Preaching but not practicing.
- Teaching but not helping.
- Looking good but not being good.
- Obeying minor rules but not the major ones.

My own bout with Pharisaitis...
I'm only in remission. We're never beyond danger.



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TREATMENT
(Reverse the above).

1. Practice what you preach. (e.g. Bible study)
2. Offer help more than advice. (free babysitting)
3. Look inside. (check heart, thoughts, feelings, motives)
4. Focus on the big rules. (Love God; love people)

The answer to Bill's question.
Did Jesus ever shun anyone, or teach his followers to shun anyone? Never! He spent time with them, without being corrupted, in order to win them back to God.