

Pharisees Are Very Critical of Others in Small Matters

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen addresses the critical nature of Pharisees and the importance of following Jesus over legalistic church leaders.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:7, Matthew 12:2, Matthew 15:2

Topics: "Legalism", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches about the Pharisees' critical nature towards Jesus' disciples, highlighting their legalistic tendencies and constant fault-finding. He warns believers against following church elders who exhibit Pharisaical behavior, emphasizing the importance of discerning whether an elder is a worthy example to follow. Submission to an elder is necessary in church matters but not in personal matters, urging believers to follow Jesus rather than legalistic leaders to avoid self-destruction.

Transcript

"The Pharisees said to Jesus, 'Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath.'" (Matthew 12:2)

The Pharisees knew that the Law permitted the Israelites to pluck grain to eat, when they walked through anyone's field. But what they questioned here was why the disciples were doing this "work" on a Sabbath day. Pharisees are very critical of people in small matters. In Matthew 15:2, they asked Jesus why His disciples didn't wash their hands ritually, as taught by the traditions of the elders. Pharisees are always watching other believers for some small thing to find fault with.

If you are an elder brother and you are like that, then it is likely that your church too is full of Pharisees - because the majority of people in any church usually develop the habits of their elder. We see that in Revelation chapters 2 & 3. If however the elder brother is free from Phariseeism, then the chances are that most of the people in his church will also be free from Phariseeism.

I would say therefore to every believer: Do not follow your church-elder if he is a legalist and a Pharisee. Submission to an elder is required only in church matters and not in personal matters. By that I mean that if he announces that the Sunday meetings will start at 10 am, then obey him and go at 10 am. In the meeting, when he announces Song No. 45, obey him and join with the others and sing Song No. 45.

When he asks the congregation to stand, you also stand. And when he tells everyone to sit, you also sit down. That is all that "submission to an elder" means. But you don't have to follow his example in his life, if he is not a worthy example to follow. Otherwise, you will destroy yourself too. Follow Jesus Himself and never follow a legalistic, Pharisaical elder - whoever he may be - even if he is the senior most elder in your fellowship. You must submit to an elder in other areas of your life, only if you have full confidence in him as a man of God.

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