

Signs of a Modern-day Pharisee

My article on legalism¹ was intended to highlight characteristics of Christians which gives them a propensity to adherence to OC laws, of varying number, because the religious spirit operates through legalism – or to put it another way through customs, ritual, rules and regulations.

Having completed the teaching series “Coming out of the Old Covenant”, lets look back and see if legalism still has a place in the way we function. Within church circles such activity could have the tag ‘Pharisee’.

Here are Frank Viola’s introductory notes to this topic:

“Even though it's been "a long, long time ago in a galaxy far, far away" since Pharisees were running around in Century One causing trouble for God's messengers, Pharisees and Pharisaism are still here.

They're like the poor. They'll always be with you.

While Pharisaism is in sharp decline today (experiencing advanced stages of rigor mortis), the pharisaic spirit still exists. And it's the chief reason why so many non-Christians want nothing to do with Jesus.

When I was 18 years old, I spent a lot of time in a group that bred Pharisees like rabbits. And I will shamefully admit that I was one of them.

Thank God, however, I experienced the washing-machine of life and it drained much (or all, hopefully) of the Pharisee out of me. Regrettably, that doesn't happen with everyone. Many Christians waste their sufferings. And so they remain just as hardened, callous, self-righteous and judgmental as they were in their youth.”²

Here are Frank’s 8 signs of a modern-day Pharisee:

- (1) Pharisees spend more time focusing on what they hate rather than on what they love.
- (2) Pharisees magnify the sins of others while minimizing – or even ignoring – their own.
- (3) Pharisees believe and spread accusations against others without ever going to them directly, something you’d insist on if it were you being slandered³.
- (4) Pharisees are quick to pass judgement, but slow to inquire and listen to those they’re judging.
- (5) Pharisees only hang out with other Pharisees.
- (6) Pharisees impute evil motives to the hearts of others – but they’re clueless that they’re merely revealing what’s in their own.
- (7) Pharisees cannot tolerate correction, even when it’s given in a spirit of Christ.
- (8) It breaks a Pharisee’s jaw to admit they’re wrong or apologize to those they’ve mistreated.

You need to read his bog to find out what he wrote as I don’t have copyright approval to quote any more than I have already.

1 – “How to Identify Legalism” (canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/how-to-identify-legalism.pdf)

2 – Frank Viola (06/11/2015) “8 Signs of a Modern-day Pharisee” (frankviola.net/pharisee)

3 – Matthew 7:12

Interestingly, Frank Powell has itemised 12 signs⁴, most of which are quite similar to Franks':

- (1) Pharisees believe showing up for worship every Sunday makes them right with God.
- (2) Pharisees spend more time talking about what they are against, not what they are for.
- (3) Pharisees believe God actually needs them.
- (4) Pharisees don't repent of sin...they don't have any 'serious' sin to repent of.
- (5) Pharisees make every issue black and white.
- (6) Pharisees would never condone homosexuality or fornication...but have no problem watching movies that do.
- (7) A Pharisees' salvation is based on their works, not on Jesus.
- (8) Pharisees read the Bible to substantiate their convictions, not to be shaped into God's image.
- (9) Pharisees believe outsiders should conform to a certain lifestyle before they are accepted as 'Christian'.
- (10) Pharisees don't know the difference between a convert and a transfer.
- (11) All of a Pharisees' Christian friends look and act just like they do.
- (12) Pharisees get angry and offended if someone tries to rebuke them.

Read Frank Powell's article online to get the full details of his points.

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4 – Frank Powell (?) “12 Signs You Are a Modern-Day Pharisee”

(www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/263528-12-signs-you-are-a-modern-day-pharisee.html?print)