



Real or Religious

Getting our perspective in focus

BEFORE YOU LOOK AT ANY MATERIAL...

What do you believe is “required” in order to “get saved” or be a true Christian:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Bullet point what will be the results / evidences of a true Christian:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

IS THERE A PHARISEE IN ME?

1. Godliness or just good works? Real or religious?

Amazingly, Jesus himself says there are things we are expected to be/do that are “weightier” or more important in God’s eyes. The things he lists that the Pharisees seem to be doing well are “easy” and outward. The things that are most important seem to be things that are more INWARD and much harder...

Matt. 23:23-24 ^{ESV}

²³ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

²⁴ You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

List the things you DO that you think God likes? (Outward things that aren't probably all that hard to do?)

List the things you DON'T do that you think God desires and are probably MORE important to him? Things that have more to do with being like Him and are harder to do?

2. Clean outside, but filthy inside?

The Pharisees did not IGNORE "cleaning up" their lives but it seems they were more interested in cleaning up what people could see and evaluate. However, they did not seem to clean up the TRUE person. The REAL them. The inside:

Matt. 23:25-28

²⁵ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

²⁷ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

What outward impression do you give people? Do they see a "clean and good" outward?

Does your inward match your outward? What is on the inside that the outside is masking? What is God seeing and saying you really need to clean out?

3. Busy with ministry but NOT living it?

The Pharisees were very busy doing ministry and even evangelizing, however, they were not true believers, therefore, anyone that they affected “religiously” were not affected to Christlikeness or true faith.

Matt. 23:15 ^{ESV}

¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

if I brought you a “new convert” and told them to watch your every habit of life, action, thought and motive, and to follow you as Paul told others to follow him, describe in detail what they would turn out like?

In what ways would they look like Christ after learning from your life?

LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE

4. Repentance and change or just remorse and guilt?

Definition of Repentance: “to change one’s way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude with regard to sin and righteousness.”¹

¹ Louw, s.v. “metanoē,w; metanoia,” 510. They go on to state in footnote 5 that “the focal semantic feature of these terms is clearly behavioral rather than intellectual.”

Matthew 3:8: "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance."

Matthew 3:8 ^{NLT} "Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins and turned to God."

Acts 26:19 ^{NAS} "Consequently, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but *kept* declaring both to those of Damascus first, and *also* at Jerusalem and *then* throughout all the region of Judea, and *even* to the Gentiles, that they should **repent** and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.

Romans 6:2-6: if, "...we died to sin, how is it possible to still live in the same way? ... so we should conduct ourselves in newness of life... "

1 John 2:29: "Since you know that He is righteous, we know that *everyone who practices what is right* is born of Him."

1 John 1:6 ^{NKJ} If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

If salvation is inseparable from repentance and repentance assumes change, then any who would come to Christ would necessarily show change.

If salvation and the Christian life are characterized by turning from sin and CHANGE in the areas of sin... **describe how your life shows a pattern of repentance?**

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

James 2:14: "My brothers, what is the benefit if you claim to have the faith, but it has no actions with it? Is that kind of faith capable of saving him?"

This verse also makes it clear that ALL who are true believers are CHANGED into a new creation in Christ. Notice that the person is **new**, not just the actions. What is different about you as a person compared to the nice moral caring unbelievers?

5. True Christians love their God and Savior?

John 8:42: "... If God was your Father, then you would love Me."

What do you think it means/ looks like to "LOVE GOD"?

Do you think you have true love for God? Explain your answer:

6. **WARNING:** Feelings, excitement, joy, short lived excitement (Matt 13:3-9, 18-23), or doing lots of "ministry" (Matt 7:16-23), are not evidences of true saving faith:

Read: Matthew 7:16-23 and Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23