

Deuteronomy 6:5

Y	X	C	Y	N	E	E	A	N	D	S	X
Q	F	D	T	D	N	A	U	H	C	P	Z
T	H	E	B	I	U	X	T	D	O	G	Z
C	K	D	R	O	L	I	U	O	H	T	H
E	S	H	J	L	W	L	L	A	T	W	
T	O	T	Q	V	L	T	R	A	E	H	E
L	U	I	L	U	O	K	T	I	Z	G	N
A	L	W	A	A	V	H	T	H	L	I	I
H	P	L	T	A	E	L	T	X	Y	M	H
S	W	T	F	H	L	K	L	I	W	Q	T
L	W	H	W	F	Y	L	M	A	W	O	L
F	B	Y	D	N	A	Z	R	L	N	I	K

*Words to Find:
"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."*

Carnal "Mud"

C. H. Spurgeon

When Napoleon invaded Egypt, he encountered an army ensconced in a mud fort that effectually defied all his efforts to destroy it. If it had been built of rock, he could have blown it up with powder, or shivered it with artillery. If it had been of wood, he could have fired it with a rocket; but it was a huge mass of mud, in which his iron missiles stuck fast, and rather increased than diminished its power of re-

sistance. He therefore left the place in despair, and turned his attention to more practical operations.

Now what this mud fort was to the French soldiery, a cold, dead church is to the world of ungodly men. They are effectually protected behind this mass of carnality, and utterly defy all the moral artillery of the Gospel. The heavenly missiles stick fast in this intervening obstacle, and never reach their mark.

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"Religious", But Not Righteous

Bill Brinkworth

Pharisees

were a powerful, controlling, Jewish group that led "spiritual" activities in Jesus' time. They were



known for their separation from the scripturally "unclean" practices of the worldly gentiles. Their roots came from the intellectual scribes that had much to do with understanding and preserving the Scriptures. At the time, if anyone was considered to be a "godly" people, certainly it would have been the Pharisees.

However, Jesus had much to say against this sect. It was some of these "religious" people that opposed Jesus and tried to stop His preaching. It was this group that taught contrary to what the Word of God taught. It was the Pharisees that led people in the wrong direction about spiritual matters.

John 8 tells much of what Jesus knew about this religious,

but unrighteous, group including:

- ◆ Their judgments and discernment of what they saw and heard were often determined by their weak flesh, and not by God's influence (vs. 15).

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Discern!

Bill Brinkworth

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." I John 4:1

Too many Christians are missing discernment in determining what is of God, and what is not. I John 4 starts off by urging believers to be wary of how they are influenced.

Cults and many denominations are full of those that mean well, want to follow God, but end up following unbiblical, ungodly theologies and philosophies. A desire to please God is normal for most, but the failure to discern right from wrong often gets a

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“Religious”, But Not Righteous

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- ◆ They did not know God (vs. 19). Although this group was known for their wisdom of the Scriptures, Jesus knew that they were not of God. They did not even know the true God, and He was not their Father (vs. 44)
- ◆ Their garb and practices led people to believe they were religious, but Jesus knew that they were not of God, but of the devil (vss. 23, 44).
- ◆ Their man-made “religion” would not save them. Unless they believed in Jesus alone, they would die in their sins (vs. 24).
- ◆ They did not realize that they were held captive by their sins. They were not spiritually free (vss. 31-37).
- ◆ The truth of God did not direct their lives (vs. 37). They were not obedient to the Word of God they had claimed to follow (vss. 37-39).

Today, we may not be controlled by the Pharisees, but we still have “religious” among us that are not righteous. Even if they are faithful in going to church, doing “spiritual” things, or even talk the “Christian talk”, they may be as spiritually dead as were the Pharisees.

God’s Word reveals that many of today’s “religious” are similar to the Pharisees that Jesus rebuked. “Religion” does not save or change anyone! Only a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and trusting in God’s Word will change anyone — from the inside out!

Discern!

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person further away from God’s truths than they would ever expect.

Most people are trusting. It is surprising what they will believe at times. John gives one key word of advice in determining if something, or someone, is of God or not. That word is “try” (I John 1:1). It means to “prove by testing”.

As Ephesians 6 makes very clear, there is an unseen spiritual battle going all around us. This battle is raging between two sides: God’s and His enemy, Satan. It is up to a godly, spiritual person to determine if what we are contemplating getting involved in or believing is from the spirit of God or Satan’s influence. We are to “try” the situations.

One of the primary tests is if the person, who may even claim

to be Christian, confesses readily that Jesus has come in the flesh and is the Christ (vss. 3-4). One who is of God will know who the Father’s son is.

I remember, as a young believer, using this test myself on two well-dressed, white-shirted, male visitors that came to my house one day. They presented a Bible, and many of their own cult’s writings to me. They sounded spiritual and Christian, but when asked if Jesus was God’s only son, their reply failed the test. They said Jesus was a good man, and teacher, but He was not the Son of God.

Since then, I have asked the test question to many, some even Baptist, and they too had good sounding answers; but when made to answer directly, they denied Jesus was the Christ — just a good man and prophet.

There are a lot of ungodly “spirits” roaming this earth (vss. 3-4). We are not to be afraid of them “because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (vs. 4). The indwelling Spirit of God will protect us, but we are to be wary. We are to look upon the things,

“Give us clear vision that we may know where to stand and what to stand for; because unless we stand for something, we shall fall for anything.”

— Peter Marshall

“There are only two type of religions: ‘do’ or ‘done’.”

philosophies, and people with some godly intelligence. We can and should determine what is of God, and what is not.

Couldn’t See Where He Was Going

C. H. Spurgeon

Some people make use of Christ’s gospel to illuminate their intellect, instead of making use of it to illuminate their hearts. They are like the farmer Rowland Hill once described.

The farmer was sitting by the fire with his children. The cat was purring on the hearth, and they were all in great comfort.

A plowman rushed in and cried, “Thieves! Thieves! Thieves!”

The farmer rose up quickly, grabbed the candle, held it up high near his head, rushed after the thieves, and tumbled over a wheelbarrow, because he held the light near his head, instead of lowering it towards his feet to see where he was going.

So there are many who just hold religion up to illuminate their intellect, instead of holding it down to illuminate their practice; and so they fail and do more hurt to their Christian profession in one hour than they will ever be able to retrieve.

“The appearance of religion only on Sunday proves that it is only an appearance.” — Adams