

TOXIC

LAWYER-UP

REMEMBER, IT'S LIKE YEAST

“Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Matthew 16:6b

THREE SIGNS OF TOXICITY

HYPOCRISY LEGALISM JUDGMENTALISM

Where love is central, law loses its power and its necessity.

Where love is absent, law becomes central and the best we can do.

(derived from Galatians 5:22-23)

WHAT JESUS SAID BEFORE HE SAID WHAT HE SAID

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:17-20

SOMETHING ELSE JESUS SAID

“You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me,

⁴⁰yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

John 5:39-40

DO YOU WORSHIP JESUS OR THE BIBLE?

CHECKING THE LEVELS OF LEGALISM

LEGALISM (*Rituals & Rule-based External Emphasis*)

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and ²saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” that is, unwashed.

Mark 7:1-2

BACK TO THE HEART

He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are

far from me. ⁷They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’ ⁸You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.”

Mark 7:6-8

AN EXAMPLE

And he said to them: “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! ¹⁰For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.’ ¹¹But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban’ (that is, a gift devoted to God), ¹²then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. ¹³Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

Mark 7:9-13

NOT EASY TO UNDERSTAND

Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. ¹⁵Nothing outside a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him ‘unclean.’” ¹⁷After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. ¹⁸“Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? ¹⁹For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods “clean.”) ²⁰He went on: “What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’” ²¹For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”

Mark 7:14-23

A KNIFE THAT CUTS BOTH WAYS

He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

Matthew 13:33

A Sober Awareness -- It’s easy to slip into legalism.

An Obvious Confession -- I admit I can get legalistic.

A Pattern of Evaluation -- I need a pattern in which the Father searches and tests my motives and actions.

An Authentic Community -- I need people in my life who understand and accept where I am on my journey and will walk with me as I take another step toward God.

NEXT STEPS

RESOURCES (*may be available at JW Bookstore*)

The Divine Conspiracy -- Dallas Willard

Connecting -- Larry Crabb

The Safest Place on Earth -- Larry Crabb

The Jesus I Never Knew -- Philip Yancy

Toxic Faith -- Stephen Arterburn, Jack Felton

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