

Dangers of No-Love Religion

Part 2

Mark 7:1-7

“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard it is coming, and now it is already in the world.... We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” (1 John 4:2-3, 6)

“But the [Holy] Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons....” (1 Tim. 4:1)

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.” (James 3:14-16)

We are not neutral in our thinking or problem-solving.

Human societies are deeply dominated by deceitful demonic lies serving as the baseline of our solutions to human suffering and sin.

Human wisdom is steeped in the lies of Satanic deception.

Mark 7 is a stunning picture of the confrontation between the self-righteousness of the human heart and the servant-heart of the Son of God.

It is also a contrast between empty religion and eternal truth, and between hypocrisy and humility.

Three dangers of religion without love;
A false religion based on the wisdom (teachings) of man

I. Religious Knowledge Without Love

Pride in what I know

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Pride in what I know

Are we allowing God's truth to change our hearts so that we are growing in His love for Him and for others?

Am I considering others more important than myself? Am I forgiving? Am I gentle, patient, and kind in how I relate to others, especially when they sin against me?

I. Religious Knowledge Without Love

Pride in what I know

Payoff: Knowledge is power.

I. Religious Knowledge Without Love

Pride in what I know

The church isn't a system, or a program, or even a series of programs.

The church is you, God's people—a spiritual family and a living organism created for loving service to the glory of God.

I. Religious Knowledge Without Love

Pride in what I know

God's Word leads us away from idols and into relationship with the Lord.

"Little children, guard yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21)

"Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry" (1 Cor. 10:14)

I. Religious Knowledge Without Love

Pride in what I know

Product: Prideful religious knowledge makes a hypocrite.

Jesus' accusation was that they were religious hypocrites.

They were the false teachers, not Jesus.

I. Religious Knowledge Without Love

Pride in what I know

“They professed to be followers of God but were in reality followers of men. Religion had been smothered beneath ritual. Washing the hands counted for more than the devotion of the heart. They were careful of petty rules, and careless of the great commands of God.” *(D. Edmond Hiebert)*

The second danger of religion without love is:

II. Religious Rules Without Love

Pride in what I do

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Payoff: Rules are control.

The love of Jesus is a love that is willing to be sinned against. And when sinned against, it doesn't seek its own way, but *“bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.... love never fails.”*

It is the sacrificial love of the cross of Christ.

II. Religious Rules Without Love

Pride in what I do

Product: Prideful religious rules produce a hard heart.

The third danger of a religious life not based in love is:

III. Religious Devotion Without Love

Pride in who I am

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Tradition must serve the truth: *“But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.”* (1 Thess. 5:21-22)

III. Religious Devotion Without Love

Pride in who I am

Payoff: Piety is security.

III. Religious Devotion Without Love

Pride in who I am

Product: Prideful piety produces hollow holiness.

How might your life be different if you stopped being so influenced by:

- What people think about you?
- What people do to you?
- What people are not doing to you?
- What you consider a raw deal for your life because you aren't getting what you think you deserve?

God's word is spiritual wisdom for godly thinking and living. Is His Word helping your heart to grow increasingly loving?

Are you increasingly:

- Patient, kind, and gentle?
- Compassionate, considerate, servant-hearted, and forgiving?
- Committed to peace with others through a growing deference and a willingness to be sinned against for the sake of Christ and His gospel of grace?

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