

**INTRODUCTION:** It has been often said that ***“Life experience is the best teacher.”*** The people you meet, obstacles you overcome, trials you face, victories you win, and failures you suffer – all serve to shape you into the person God wants you to be.

However, we clearly learn from God's word that Jesus Himself came as our living teacher and human example of *“how to be, all that God would have you to become.”*



The Bible says in Hebrews 2:17-18 ... ***“For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.”*** (NIV)

Jesus suffered everything you and I suffer and was shaped by it into the perfect human being. In this bible study series we will learn many life lessons from Jesus – some things of which ... we may wish we'd learned a whole lot sooner! As the Son of God, Jesus taught many things to help us live victoriously. Let's look at some life lessons that we can learn from Jesus.

## 1- Religion Alone Doesn't Make You Holy

Jesus Christ took the Jewish people and religious leaders by surprise when He dismantled many of their traditions. In Mark 7:9 He said to some religious leaders, ***“All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.”***

In Jesus' day, religious people were consumed with following rules and laws that were impossible to keep. They were obsessed with outward appearances and looking good to other people. But Jesus taught that it is not the outward (appearances) that makes one holy but the inward motivations of the heart. **READ MATTHEW 15:1-20.**

This was a radical idea at that time because Jesus was challenging the idea that it wasn't certain *“evil”* foods that contaminated them ... but the things that came from inside them that made them unholy (like lust, pride, hatred, and jealousy which led them to do evil things). **Meaning: Religion and beliefs are no good if they don't transform the heart!**

## **TRADITION**

The Pharisees were very concerned about traditions. Traditions have great significance for us also. What is the role of tradition in the life of some of our churches? Questions to consider ...

- What rules have developed over time (and are no longer questioned) concerning proper behavior with respect to the use of alcoholic beverages, playing cards, music, movies, wearing pants and dancing?
- Who originated those rules? Who enforces them today?
- How do such rules help spiritual growth or hinder it?
- Why are such "secondary rules" important to some churches? How do you keep them from assuming the same importance as biblical rules?

## **PHONIES**

Jesus blasted the Pharisees for being hypocrites. ***The trouble with religious phonies ... is that God is never fooled, though lots of people are!*** If in your heart you are greedy, sensual, power-hungry, and happy with it, then you are a phony. For your own sake and for the rest of us, please do one of the following:

- (1) **Give up the church.** Better to be a full-fledged pagan than a pagan in a religious suit. God isn't fooled anyhow, and fewer people will be discouraged by your hypocrisy. Or, the better decision ...
- (2) **Give up your hypocrisy and give your life to Jesus. Let His Spirit renew you from the inside out. Be real about faith, starting today!**

***Jesus told his disciples to leave the Pharisees alone because the Pharisees were blind to God's truth.*** Thus, anyone who listened to their teaching would risk spiritual harm. Not all religious leaders clearly see God's truth. Religion can lead you into a pit if you follow teachers who are blind to the truth.

***All teachers who fail to recognize the supreme authority of Jesus, as Savior and chief interpreter of the Scriptures, are heading that way. Follow them, and you'll fall in too.*** But if you follow teachers who follow Jesus, the nutty ideas of a thousand crackpot religions won't confuse or bother you. Choose your mentors carefully! Make sure that those you listen to and learn from are those who teach and follow the principles of Scripture.

## **Religion Alone Doesn't Make You Holy!**