

Vain Worship

The worship of the Pharisees was vain because of two reasons. It was only lip service, and they taught for doctrines the commandments of men. Jesus said, *"You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men'"* (Matthew 15:7-9).

No matter how great our zeal may be -- even as great as the Pharisees who compassed sea and land to make a proselyte -- all of our efforts are vain if we are not sincere, and if we teach for doctrines the commandments of men. God is interested in our hearts. As is shown in the Old Testament, mere formality does not appeal to God. The doctrines and commandments of men not only make our worship vain, they will cause us to be accursed (Galatians 1:6-10). People will also be condemned for believing the lies we preach (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Matthew 7:21 says, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven."* There is no need to play the hypocrite with God. *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life"* (Galatians 6:7-8). Moses gave the ultimate warning in Numbers 32:33 when he said, *"But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out."* Keep your heart pure, follow the Lord, and avoid vain worship.

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