



## The Way of Freedom

*Jesus said to them, “Be careful! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.”*

*“...I am telling you to beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” Then the followers understood that Jesus was not telling them to beware of the yeast used in bread but to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.*

Matthew 16:6, 11-12 (NCV)

*But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.*

*“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces.*

*“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness.*

*“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.*

*“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”*

Matthew 23: 3-4, 13, 23, 27, 33 (NIV)

## How did God’s self-appointed defenders become his archenemies?

- They built extra \_\_\_\_\_, lots of them, just in case.

*“Every word of God is flawless;  
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.  
Do not add to his words,  
or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.”*

Proverbs 30: 5-6 (NIV)

- They turned helpful \_\_\_\_\_ into rigid religious \_\_\_\_\_.

*Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.*

*One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.*

*You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.*

*Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.*

*Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.*

*So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.*

Romans 14:1-2, 5, 10, 13, 19-20, 22 (NIV)

- Eventually, their extra-biblical \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ became more important than God's biblical \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Sermon in a Sentence:** Don't use scripture as \_\_\_\_\_, use it as a \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Have you ever experienced rigid religious rules? If so, please explain if those rules helped or hindered your relationship with Jesus?
2. At any time in your life have you let Scripture become binoculars, instead of a mirror? What did that look like? How can you move toward showing more love and grace instead of judgment or condemnation?
3. What could be an action step for you this week that shows more love in your home, workplace, school, or community?

### **Recommended Resources**

- *Accidental Pharisees: Avoiding Pride, Exclusivity, and the Other Dangers of Overzealous Faith*, by Larry Osborne
- *Phariseotomy: How to Joyfully Remove Your Inner Pharisee and other Religiously Transmitted Diseases*, by Peter Haas
- *Uncommon Ground: Living Faithfully in a World of Difference*, by Timothy Keller and John Inazu
- *You Might Be a Pharisee If... Twenty-Five Things Christians Do But Jesus Would Rebuke*, by R.T. Kendall

**(NCV) New Century Version**

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