

Family Theme | **Jesus Confronts Self-Righteousness** Date | **March 3, 2023**

Study Text | **Matthew 16:1-12; 23:1-36**

Read the Word: Matthew 16:1-12; 23:1-36

Disciple Your Family: Discuss with family members how we are to do good deeds to please Christ, not to impress people or try to earn right standing with God.

Discuss the following Key Truths and how to apply them to life. Use the questions to spark discussion.



Key Truth: Self-Righteousness Will Not Get People to Heaven (Matthew 16:1-12)

APPLY: Trust Jesus, knowing His signs and wonders affirm that He is the Son of God.

- *The Pharisees and Sadducees had seen Jesus perform many signs and miracles. Why did they still reject Him as the Messiah and Savior?*
- *Why do many people reject Jesus today?*
- *Through what signs does God reveal Himself today? (His Word; His people; His presence; the conviction of the Holy Spirit; changed lives; power over temptation; etc.)*

APPLY: Avoid works-based religion. Do good deeds to please Christ, not to impress people.

- *The Pharisees and Sadducees were caught up in works-based religion. What does that look like today? (Legalism; seeking to keep man-made lists of do's and don'ts; etc.)*
- *Why might a desire to impress others be detrimental to our walk with God?*
- *How can we help others understand that good works are important, but they are not the foundation of saving faith?*



Key Truth: Self-Righteousness Leads to Hypocrisy (Matthew 23:1-36)

- *What is hypocrisy? How did the scribes and Pharisees display it? (Hypocrisy is when our actions do not match what we say or claim to believe. The religious leaders did not practice what they preached.)*

APPLY: Zeal for external signs of righteousness isn't necessarily a sign of inward righteousness.

APPLY: Self-righteousness is done to glorify self while true righteousness is done to glorify God. Practice true righteousness.

- *Motives matter. How can a good deed honor God? How might it also displease Him? (It honors God if done out of love for Him and a desire to please Him; it displeases God when done to earn His favor or look good in the eyes of others.)*
- *We live in an age of self-promotion and self-glorification. Why might that be harmful to our walk with God? In what types of situations might it be tempting for a Christian to emphasize self over God's glory?*
- *Why are man-made legalistic teachings dangerous? (They can cause people to try to earn right standing with God instead of trusting in Christ for righteousness; etc.)*
- *How can focusing on Jesus and the truth of Scripture help keep one's ego in check?*

APPLY: Let love for God and love for others be your motivation for what you do.

- *Why is humility so important for Christians? Why will a humble spirit make us more like Christ and less like the scribes and Pharisees?*

Build a Foundation: Discussion questions for elementary students.

- What is self-righteousness? (When we think we are superior, especially to God's way.)
- How did the disciples misunderstand what Jesus was telling them?
- What does it mean to be a hypocrite? (When your behavior or actions don't match what you say you believe.)
- How can hypocrisy hurt a believer's relationship with God? How can it keep others from choosing to follow Jesus?

Work together to memorize the Verse of the Month: **Matthew 6:21**



Discuss This Week's Building Block:

The Jewish religious leadership of Jesus' day included two groups, the Pharisees and Sadducees. Neither accepted Jesus as Messiah.

Everyday Extras:

Challenge family members to perform at least one secret act of service each day this week. It might include doing another person's chore, leaving an unexpected gift or treat, or sharing encouraging words. Sometimes it is tempting to serve others when we will be seen because it puts attention on us or makes us "look good" for serving. But following Jesus' example means serving even when nobody will know we have done so—serving because it's the right thing to do instead of because of the notice we might gain. The motivation of the Pharisees and Sadducees was self-serving. The Bible encourages us to let our love for God and others be the motivation for what we do.

Preschool Highlights:

Today your child learned about a parable Jesus told about a man who had 100 sheep. He lost one and left the other 99 to search for that one lost sheep. When the shepherd found it, he celebrated with his neighbors. We are like the sheep, and Jesus is our Shepherd. Jesus celebrates when we are found because **We Are Special to God.**