

Recipe for a Pharisee

Ingredients:

2 cups	Judging others
3 teaspoons	Hypocrisy
16 oz.	Legalism
1 lb.	Rules and regulations
4 T.	Public recognition

Directions:

Mix publicly in a mixing bowl that is clean on the outside but dirty on the inside (Matthew 23: 25-28, Luke 11:39-40). Bake in hell's kitchen until done.

Matthew 23:1-28, Luke 11:39-44, Luke 12:1-3, Matthew 15:1-20, Mark 7:1-23

1. Judging others - (toothpick and 2x4) - Matthew 7:1-5
2. Rules and regulations - (stack of books) - Matthew 23:1-4
3. Legalism / letter of the law - tithe (bag of seeds) Matthew 23:23-24, Luke 11:42
4. Hypocrisy - (yeast/leaven) Luke 12:1, Matthew 16:5-12
5. Public recognition/"praise of men" - Luke 11:43, Matt. 6:1-5, Matthew 23:5-7

The practice of Judaism focused on *outward, visible, verifiable* "boundaries" to measure, prove or demonstrate their compliance with their faith (religion):

1. Circumcision - Genesis 17:7-14, Romans 2:25, 28, Galatians 6:13, Acts 15:5-21, I Corinthians 7:19
2. Dietary restrictions - Leviticus 11:25-26, Acts 10:9-16
3. Sabbath observation - Leviticus 23:3, Exodus 20:10, Mark 2:27, Galatians 4:9-11, Colossians 2:15-17.

The Pharisees were experts at establishing, creating and then publicly observing the visible aspects of their religion while rejecting the *inward change of heart* required by God. But are we any different today? Are we, at times, quick to judge, slow to forgive, prideful in our religiousness, hypocritical or unloving?



Who were the Pharisees?

They were an influential group within Judaism that arose during the 1st century B.C. after the Jewish people had been brutalized by several foreign rulers. They started out as national heroes, and many gave their lives to preserve the laws and commands of God and the identity of the Jewish faith. Somewhere along the way, they lost their original focus and using their influence, they became the self-appointed moral and religious police. However, some attributes to their "credit", they:

- Were dedicated national and religious heroes
- Acknowledged the scriptures as God-given
- Dedicated students of the Old Testament
- Kept all the ceremonial laws
- Emphasized education and evangelism
- Sacrificially tithed and fasted
- Anticipated the Messiah

Sadly, the Pharisees allowed these good qualities to degenerate into mechanical, unloving, inflexible and self-proclaimed religious superiority that missed the point of God's Word, and that's where Jesus stepped in and called them on it, and they did not like it (Matthew 15:12).

Faithful - though misguided, they were zealously trying to uphold and protect the Law and ensure obedience to its commands. So much so, that they added the oral traditions and additional laws to regulate all facets of a Jew's life to the point they became as important as God's Word. Consequently, their logic allowed them to leap from the known will of God to the assumed will of God so easily that they confused the two.

Fraternity - Although not always in agreement with each other, they were clearly separate from the Sadducees, the Essenes and the "average" Jew. They had a proud dignity about their station in life (even Paul admitted he was a Pharisee).

Fences - because they were so obsessed and so fearful of violating any of God's laws, they built ever increasing and burdensome boundaries of behavior that were so strict there would be no chance of accidental violation of the original command. (Matthew 23:1-4)

Formality - They took ceremony and ritual to extreme measures, adding additional steps and required components until compliance was nearly impossible to achieve, and many Jews just gave up trying (Mark 7:1-8).

Fanatical - they zealously tithed, washed, fasted, observed the Sabbath and performed everything to a greater extent than required by the law.

Flaunting - They did everything in public so that others could see their piety and performance. They sat in the best seats in the synagogues and banquets. (Luke 14:7-11)