

HEART OR HABIT?

MATTHEW 15:1-9

Without the heart it is not worship; it is a stage play; an acting a part without being that person. We may truly be said to worship God-though we lack perfection; but we cannot be said to worship Him if we lack sincerity.

-Stephen Charnock

I. The Ways of Man

II. The Word of God

III. The Warning of the Prophet

Getting to Know You:

1. Can you think of a biblical verse that has often been misused or a saying that people attribute to the Bible which is not actually in it?

Into the Bible:

2. Careful obedience to the Law and ceremony in worship were hallmarks of the Pharisees. Christ points to even this as hypocritical on their part. What does the Bible have to say about the nature of true worship? (Psalm 40:6-8, John 4:23)

Application:

3. Jesus increasingly criticized the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy as his ministry progressed. (Matthew 23) Yet they prided themselves on knowing the Scriptures and preserving orthodoxy of belief and practice. How does the New Testament teach us to avoid a similar trap in our own attitudes? (John 14:21, 23-24; I John 2:4; James 2:14-18)

4. Jesus challenges the Pharisees about misusing Scripture by twisting it to fit their own purposes. Paul warns us about those who would similarly abuse the truth in II Timothy 4:3-4. How can we avoid falling into this trap ourselves? (II Timothy 2:15, I Thessalonians 5:21, Acts 20:27)

For Families:

5. Talk with your children about the difference between knowing what God says and obeying what God says.