

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUP CURRICULUM

*Week 17 - April 22 through April 28*

---

## **TODAY'S LESSON:** *"Beyond the Surface"*

---

### **TODAY'S PASSAGE:**

*Matthew 23:23-28 NLT 23 "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. 24 Blind guides! You strain your water so you won't accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel! 25 "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence! 26 You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too. 27 "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. 28 Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

**INTERACTIVE QUESTION:** What did you learn from what we just read?

### **1) Internal Transformation is greater than External Righteousness**

- Jesus confronts the Pharisees' for practicing tithing meticulously, while neglecting the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith.
- External righteousness refers to adhering to religious rituals and rules (what one eats, drinks, wears, etc.)
- Internal transformation involves a genuine change of heart and character.

*Matthew 23:23 (NLT) - "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens but ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith."*

- Jesus emphasizes the significance of justice, mercy, and faith as essential components of TRUE righteousness.
- External practices must be accompanied by a heart committed to God's principles.

**INTERACTIVE QUESTION:** How do we make sure that our efforts to do what's right change us on the inside, not just on the outside?

## **2) Cleaning the Outside does not replace Cleansing the Inside**

- Jesus uses the metaphor of cleaning the outside of a cup and dish while neglecting the inside to illustrate the Pharisees' hypocrisy. He points to the importance of inward purity.
- Cleaning the outside represents maintaining appearances, while cleansing the inside refers to purifying one's heart and motives.

*Matthew 23:26 (NLT) - "Blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean too."*

- Jesus underscores the necessity of inner purity in the Christian life.
- He challenges us to examine our motives and character, not just our outward actions

**INTERACTIVE QUESTION:** How can we ensure that our lives reflect both outward integrity and inward purity, as Jesus desires?

## **3) Your appearance is not more important than reality**

- Jesus uses the image of whitewashed tombs, beautiful on the outside but full of dead men's bones inside, to describe the Pharisees' hypocrisy.
- Whitewashed tombs represent a deceptive appearance of righteousness on the outside, while concealing inner death and corruption on the inside.

*Matthew 23:27-28 (NLT) - "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness."*

- Jesus warns against the danger of hypocrisy and superficial religion.
- He calls for authenticity and consistency between our outward appearance and our inner character.

**INTERACTIVE QUESTION:** How can we avoid being hypocritical and instead focus on being real and honest in our lives?

**CLOSING QUESTION:** What is one thing from today's lesson that you will apply this week?



## GIVING

**When we generously share with those in need, we embody the transformative power of God's love.**

***1 John 3:17-18 (NLT)***

*17 If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person? 18 Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.*

Encourage everyone to give their tithes and offerings.