

RELIGION OR RELATIONSHIP?

Luke 15:25-32 Jeff Schreve

Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." Luke 15:1-2

Is religion keeping you from a real relationship with God?

1. Religious people are sinners of a different stripe.

And He said, "A certain man had two sons." Luke 15:11

- A. They are outwardly good and respectable.
- B. They are outwardly dutiful and meticulous.
- C. They are inwardly rotten and very far from God.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

Matthew 23:27-28

"THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME." Matthew 15:8

2. Religious people are exposed in the light of grace.

- A. They are angry with the Father's grace.
- B. They serve only for gain and not for love.
- C. They have no heart for the Father's heart.

"And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." Luke 15:6-7

3. Religious people are very hard to reach.

... and his father came out and began entreating him. Luke 5:28

A. They are blinded by their self-righteousness.

B. They are bitter over perceived injustice.

"But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.'"

Luke 15:29-30

C. They are unwilling to repent and come to the party.

"But he became angry, and was not willing to go in."

Luke 15:28

Is your religion keeping you from the heart of God?