

## A Sure Mark of Pharisees: An Unteachable Spirit – Part 1 John 9

### Introduction:

1. John chapter 9 gives us some very deep insight into the heart and mind of the Pharisee. What is it that made the Pharisee so arrogant, so obnoxious, so callous, and so haughty?
2. It was the Pharisees' conviction that they knew everything. As an upstanding Pharisee, you can't afford to let down your guard for one second. You must constantly demonstrate that in you resides complete and full spiritual wisdom.
3. **Romans 2:17-20** describes to perfection the attitude of the Pharisee. Notice verse 19, "*And art confident...*" Confidence is a key for a Pharisee. You must be confident in yourself that you always know the answer for everything. You are an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, you hold the key to knowledge and truth.
  - But in verse 21, Paul asks the question to the Pharisee, "*Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*"
4. Herein lies the problem. A Pharisee always has an unteachable spirit. Jesus used the word "disciple" a lot. The word "disciple" simply means "a learner." Pharisees aren't candidates to be disciples of Christ because they aren't learners.
5. In John 9, the story centers on a man that was born blind (vs. 1). Jesus' disciples have some preconceived ideas about how the man got into this condition, and Jesus quickly straightens out their thinking. vs. 2-5
6. Jesus then heals the man (vs. 6-7), and his neighbors immediately begin to question the man (vs. 8-12). Then they take the man to the Pharisees and the fun really begins. vs. 13
7. In this chapter, one thing is clear - the Pharisees have everything figured out (so they think). They absolutely, positively know:
  - That Jesus is not of God. vs. 16
  - The man was not really born blind. vs. 18
  - That Jesus is a sinner. vs. 24
  - That the man born blind was blind because of sin. vs. 34
8. Little did they know that they were the biggest fools in town. They were wrong about everything that they **thought** they knew.
9. You read this chapter and they are so sure that they are right about everything, and they couldn't be more wrong. How does a person get this way? Verse 34 is the key - the Pharisees asked in sarcasm, "*...dost thou teach us?*" They were unteachable.
10. There were several character traits that made them unteachable. Let's learn from the Pharisees negative example and decide that we will possess a teachable spirit.

### First, Pharisees explain away truth by seeking to discredit the teacher.

1. Jesus had done this miracle and healed this man on the Sabbath day (vs. 14). There was nothing scripturally wrong with this, but it violated the Pharisees' **tradition**.
2. So, after they questioned the man about what had happened, immediately many of the Pharisees explained away the truth of what Christ did by saying, "*This man if not of God.*" Why? "*...because he keepeth not the Sabbath day.*"

3. Notice, they make a big deal out of a sideline issue rather than deal directly with the truth that is staring at them. This is the way of Pharisees. If they don't like or agree with the truth being presented, they simply discredit the teacher.
  - Preachers do this all the time. "That isn't traditional Baptist doctrine." "Brother so and so doesn't believe that." "The guy teaching that sings praise choruses and uses a projection screen." "He doesn't even wear a tie on Sunday mornings."
  - What does that have to do with the subject at hand? Absolutely nothing, but it is a favorite tactic of the Pharisee.
4. Pharisees are only willing to listen to people just like them. Why? Because then they are sure not to have any of their views or opinions challenged.
5. Jesus was not one of them. He wasn't on the inside of the religious system in Israel. So the Pharisees constantly sought to discredit Jesus, thinking that this would also discredit his teaching. It is an age-old political tactic.
6. Christians do this all the time, too. They don't attend a L.I.F.E. Group because no teacher is qualified to teach them. When the pastor is gone, they don't come to church because the other staff doesn't measure up.
7. Husband, your wife points out some truth about you that isn't flattering. You respond, "But you are...." Rather than deal with the truth of her statement, we attack her character.
8. Pharisees explain away truth by seeking to discredit the teacher.

### **Second, Pharisees are not good listeners.**

1. The Pharisees were on a seek and destroy mission. They interrogated the man's parents (vs. 18-23), then they went to the man again and asked him what Jesus had done to him. vs. 24-26
2. I love the man's answer in verse 27. The key is the phrase, "...ye did not hear." He basically tells them, "I've been talking, but you haven't been listening."
3. Pharisees are good talkers but they are not good listeners. Yet, the only we can truly learn is by listening.
4. Pharisees are above learning, so they aren't good listeners. But a godly person has learned the biblical art of listening. **Proverbs 15:31-32, 17:27-28, 18:13, 19:20**
  - A wise man loves instruction and loves those who give him instruction. **Proverbs 9:8-9, 12:1, 1:7-8**
  - Parents, it is your job to insure that your children grow up to be good listeners and take instruction well. **Proverbs 15:5, 10:17**
5. A Pharisee is an expert on everything. An expert has ceased the process of learning and has turned from a disciple into a critic. It can happen to any Christian. This is why a little knowledge can be a very dangerous thing. The Pharisee knows just enough to think he knows it all. **Illustration:** homiletics class in college
  - We can easily take on the role of the Pharisee and become hard-headed, stubborn, set in our ways, cynical, and sarcastic. We are experts at everything and quick to give our opinion.
6. But, oh, how exciting to be a learner – ever-growing, ever-changing. Do you remember when you first got saved? You lapped up everything you could get. You knew you had a long way to go, but you were just glad to be on the right road.

7. What freedom when we realize that we don't have to know everything and we can take our seat with the learners! We can simply say, "God, use others to teach me."
8. Remember - no teacher is above being taught. When you quit learning you quit growing. You become relegated to the role of the Pharisee.