

Whenever I'm making an argument, whether it be personal, political, or pastoral, I like to include examples. I do this because examples serve two purposes. First, they provide proof or evidence supporting the point being discussed or debated.

Second, they serve as tools of both encouragement and education. They serve as an educational tool in that we can look at an example and learn from either the positive or negative behavior. They serve as encouragement because we can use them to see that others have been able to do what we're called to do or they show us that we are not alone in our mistakes.

I believe that it is especially important to look at biblical illustrations and examples when studying biblical precepts and truths. So this week we're going to look at a New Testament example of what happens when we fall for Satan's scheme to replace God's wisdom with man's knowledge. To do that, let's read from . . .

Scripture: Mark 7:1-23

## I. Worldly Wisdom VS Godly Wisdom: A New Testament Example (Pharisees)

### A. **The Exchange** (Rom. 1:25; 7-9)

1. Teaching Traditions of Man Instead of Teaching Truth from God
  - a) Step 1: Teach knowledge of man instead of wisdom from God
    - (1) Culture
    - (2) Classrooms
    - (3) Church
2. Forget Commands from God to Follow Traditions of Man
  - a) Step 2: Encourage following of man's will and way at the expense of God's will and way
    - (1) Once a substitute has been provided the original can and must be cast aside and forgotten
    - (2) Man's traditions and knowledge and God's will & way are incompatible => one must be jettisoned
3. Invalidating Commands from God for Impotent Traditions of Man
  - a) Step 3: Invalidate (marginalize) God's commands to maintain man's control
    - (1) One cannot receive the blessings and benefits that come from obeying God's commands if one has forgotten or replaced those commands with mankind's knowledge and traditions
    - (2) In choosing to invalidate the commands of God one chooses to accept the consequences of man's knowledge and tradition

(3) A consequence of man's knowledge and tradition is impotence to effect godly change (Col. 2:23)

**B. The Evidence (21-23)**

1. Godly wisdom is evidenced by godly conduct (James 3:17)
  - a) When we heed God's truth and obey God's commands we reflect the holiness of God
2. The traditions & knowledge of man are evidenced by sinful conduct (21-23; James 3:15-16)
  - a) When we dismiss God's truth, disobey his commands, and instead embrace and follow the traditions and knowledge of man we exhibit the falseness of man in its fullness

**C. The End Result**

1. Damnation rather than Deliverance
  - a) The traditions and knowledge of man lead to everlasting damnation and destruction of the soul's of mankind
    - (1) Matt. 23:13, 15
  - b) The wisdom of God through the Gospel leads to deliverance and glory
    - (1) 1 Cor 2:5-7

If we're going to be good Christian soldiers, we have to be informed Christian soldiers. But we cannot allow our information to be rooted in human knowledge and traditions rather than God's truth and commands. If we do, we have fallen for one of Satan's most prevalent and powerful schemes.

While it's easy to look at our world today and think it can't get much worse, the Bible offers us examples of others who fell prey to this particular ploy. The Pharisees are a good example from the pages of the New Testament and one of the best examples of a Pharisee who succumbed to this scheme is the apostle Paul, formerly the Pharisee Saul. Saul thought he was doing God's work when he was out imprisoning and killing Christians. Why? Because he had replaced God's truth and commands with the knowledge and traditions of man. But just as Paul repented and went on to serve the Lord in mighty ways, so too can we.

This morning, I encourage you to use this time of invitation for Spirit guided reflection and introspection. Have you committed the same sin as the Pharisees? Have you allowed the teachings and traditions of man to replace the truth of God's word? Have you disregarded God's commands in order to keep and appease the traditions of man? Have you invalidated God's commands in order to maintain the way and will of man? If so, the appropriate response is confession and repentance.