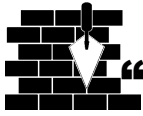


THE PHARISEE - "Is Being 'Good' Ever Good Enough?"



“Building Blocks”

1. **(Intro)** It is likely that those in your study will *not* have a thorough understanding of depravity. That is, the biblical teaching that every area of my being has been affected by sin. This means that my “mind” has to be transformed by a renewal of, or by, the Holy Spirit. This is much bigger than a simple change in what I think *about* (*content*), but deals with *how* I think (process), as well as *why* (motivation).
In the case of this passage (“parable of the rich fool”), the contextual “key” is in verse 15:
2. **(Q1)** In the Ancient Near East, a son was similar to a “benefits package” for a single woman. The other woman didn’t love the child; she merely wanted the security he would eventually provide for her.
3. **(Q3)** It is crucial to understand these passages in the context of the Ancient Near East covenant treaties. This is much, much bigger than obedience and punishment for disobedience. God is re-hersing the covenant stipulations He and the nation agreed to at Sinai and again at Moab (Exodus and Deuteronomy). Solomon, as king, is now the “representative” for the “vassal” (Israel) in this agreement. As goes the king, so goes the nation.
4. **(Q3b)** The personal side of this is inescapable. The king was to secure the “original” copy of the Law (Deut.) from the priests. He was then to make his own copy. It was to be “with him.” Even if that *didn’t* mean physically “on him,” it certainly meant that it was to be much more personal to him than just another “book on the shelf” of the Royal Archives. And, he was to read *in it* “all the days of his life.” Again, even if this is *not* a statement about a “daily quiet time,” it is equally a prohibition against “seasons” of devotion to God’s Law.
5. **(Q9-Heb 4:12)** The adjective here, “active,” means something is “working to accomplish something.” God’s Word “does stuff” while we expose ourselves to it. One of the key things it does is to put us in touch with our motivations and true selves (the very things God needs to re-new because of our depravity). This is why *avoiding it* is so dangerous.



“Stumbling Stones”

1. **(Q5-Deut)** We are always tempted to think of behavioral change (i.e. “improvement”) when we think of sanctification. But, the “first and greatest commandment” of Deut. 6:4-5 is all *internal*, not external. It is an issue of the heart, not our behavior.
2. **(Q11)** This is an important question because it will reveal whether or not someone sees Scripture as a “spiritual vitamin” that’s “good for them,” or as something much bigger and more essential. Failure to expose my heart and mind to Scripture diminishes my ability to distinguish evil. This is the heart of the deception Jeremiah spoke of, and it is the reason why I can/will “wander.” And, wandering itself is deceitful because it is gradual, never alarming, and its cumulative effect is always hidden in the future.
3. **(Q9 - Luke 9:58)** Again, it is tempting to lose sight of the point here. One might argue, “*Of course Jesus didn’t have a home! That wasn’t why he was here in the first place!*” True. The next question then becomes, “*Why am I here, in the first place?*”



“Going Deeper”

1. **(Q2)** Why did the encroachment of the surrounding culture have such power over Solomon, entering his life through “love?”
2. **(Q3b)** Why do you think the warning about apostasy is linked to the king and women, not his emphasis on military strength and personal wealth?
3. **(Q5-1Kg)** What do you think is the difference between a heart that turns cold and a heart that turns away?
4. **(Q5-summary)** Arrange the following four items in the order in which you think they were affected in Solomon’s life:
 - his theology, his emotions, his thinking, his behaviorWhy is the biblical teaching that my evil and sinful heart is also “deceitful” such a serious thing?
5. **(Q8-vv. 9-11)** What is the difference between “wandering” from God’s Word and turning from it? Which do you think Solomon did? Why?
6. **(Q8-vv. 36-37)** What is the message of these verses regarding the relationship between “things” and a heart for the things of God?
7. What connection can you make between Romans 8:6 and Philippians 4:8-9?