

Inside and Outside

Scripture Reading — Luke 11:37-42

"You Pharisees clean the outside ... but inside you are full of greed and wickedness." Luke 11:39 —

As religious leaders, the Pharisees often challenged Jesus because they felt threatened by his teachings. Jesus taught that spiritual cleansing and renewal took place in a person's heart and showed on the outside in acts of mercy and justice. But the Pharisees taught a religion of mostly man-made rules and ceremonies. On the outside they appeared pious, but on the inside many were filled with sinful thoughts and intentions. Jesus says "Woe ..." to them several times to warn that God's punishment on them would be terrible.

False religion often focuses on the outward rather than the inward. It appeals to people's tastes, senses, and material ambitions rather than to hearts yearning for cleansing and renewal.

True and balanced spirituality calls for God's cleansing from the inside out. It involves daily time in prayer, meditation on the Word, and personal fellowship with God. In this training ground the Spirit of God nurtures believers and prepares them for the challenges of daily life as God's servants in this world.

One of the greatest mistakes Christians make is to put more time and energy into outside activities than into inside disciplines. Think of the religious leaders of Jesus' day who went terribly wrong because they emphasized the outside over the inside.

Prayer

Lord, renew us each day and guard us from false or superficial religion. Guide us to grow inside so that we may glow outside with love, truth, and righteousness. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Life](#), [Christian Life](#), [Seeking God](#)

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