

How to Raise a Pharisee, Part 1

By Matthew Black, Pastor

Text: Matthew 23¹

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Introduction: Open your Bible to Matthew 23.

We all want our children to have a heart for God. Of course, if you have a Christian home, your children probably say they love God. They seem to be “good kids”—obedient, kind, thoughtful as far as you can tell. But why is it then that many young people change so drastically for the worse after they are out of the home? I believe it is because we have not reached the heart. Jesus said, “This people honoreth Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me” (**Mark 7:6**). We as parents must not aim for behavior modification. Behavior modification is never the goal. Any lost person can attain behavior modification without the help of God. The goal is always to reach our child’s heart for Christ. Without reaching the heart, we are in danger of raising our children as Pharisees.

As parents and children’s workers, none of us wants to raise a Pharisee. That is why we must all be spiritual heart surgeons. Giving an aspirin to someone who has serious heart disease will not work. In the same way, no parent should be content with a superficial change of behavior. What our children need is a heart change! Has your child experienced the new birth? Has their HEART been reached for God?

In this message we will cover 12 steps to avoid an outward, shallow understanding of salvation, and ways to point our children to a passionate relationship with the living Saviour.

If you have a Bible, look at Matthew 23. Here we have the Lord’s warnings of WOE to the Pharisees. He is saying: this path may look good, but it is a path to destruction!

[Prayer for Guidance]

So let’s get started...

- I. **Step #1: If you want to raise a Pharisee, Major on the externals instead of internal issues.** The Lord said in **Matthew 23:27**, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men’s* bones, and of all uncleanness.” The Pharisees were outwardly beautiful but inwardly dead! There’s nothing the Lord condemned more than hypocrisy, which is **outward conformity without inward reality**. We can be easily deceived by the good behavior of our children and young people because we look on the outward, but

¹ Note: several of the spiritual applications for children below were adapted from Carey Hardy’s presentation on the same subject at the 2006 Shepherd’s Conference at Grace Church in Sun Valley, California.

we need to learn how we can get into their **heart**.

The Pharisees were meticulous about the outside. They may have looked beautiful on the outside. Yet when Jesus saw the Pharisees, what he saw was very **ugly**. You and I wouldn't have seen what the Lord saw. When you looked at the Pharisees outward appearance what you saw were beautiful, wonderful people. Remember that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (**1 Samuel 16:7**). These Pharisees looked awesome on the outside! Yet Christ said of them in **Matthew 15:8**, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me."

It is very easy to major on controlling the child's **behavior** without using Scripture and prayer to deal with his **heart**. This will produce a Pharisee—everything looks good on the outside, but inwardly he is corrupt.

The Lord gives us two word pictures here in verses 25 and 27 for someone who only knows an outward, shallow view of salvation.

- A. Majoring on Behavior only instead of reaching the heart is like being a **Good actor**. Christ called the Pharisees "hypocrites" which is a word that means 'actors'. He says in **verse 25**, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess". Good actors love to make the outside appearance "clean" (**verse 25**) and "beautiful outward" but inwardly they are still living the self-life. Self is still on the throne of their heart and rules every action. They'll say they love God, but their heart is far from Him. We don't want children who are only "playing the game" and "acting" their way through the Christian life. We want God to give them a radical heart change.
- B. Majoring on Behavior instead of reaching the heart is like **Dressing up a corpse**. Jesus said a Pharisee is "like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones" (**Matthew 23:7**). A child can have behavior that conforms to the strictest of standards, yet Christ says unless you deal with the inner man—the heart—they are still dead and ugly inside. We must connect the life of God to this child! We want to raise genuine children of God, not dress up dead spiritual corpses.
- C. And here is the **Most Frightening Thing** about only majoring on behavior instead of also reaching the heart. If we settle for outward conformity alone instead of God touching the heart—no matter how good our children look on the outside, without a changed heart **verse 33** says there is no way our children will "escape the [CONDEMNATION] of hell". As Jesus said, "Except a man—[or a child]—be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (**John 3:3**).

So Step #1 is to major on behaviour while neglecting the heart. Let's look at the next step.

- II. **Step #2: If you want to raise a Pharisee, instead of leading by example, never practice what you preach.** **Matthew 23:3**, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not".

We need to ask the question raised in **James 1:22**: *Are you a hearer of the*

Word only? Or are you a doer? God saved us to shine our light for Jesus, not simply to be a very biblically educated heathen. If all we do is drop our children off at church, while we live like devils at home, how can we expect any significant change? This is a sure way to harden your child's heart against Christ. He/she will equate Christians to hypocrites if you do not practice what you preach. Who wants to follow a hypocrite?

Jesus said, "This people honoreth Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me" (**Mark 7:6**). If all our children hear are empty words, and they are never backed up by a passionate commitment to Christ in our life, then we may very well raise a Pharisee.

Application: It's not enough to have our children in Bible Clubs and Sunday school and to teach them carefully from the Bible. We must be a living Bible before them. Our children need to see that our heart is so passionate for Jesus Christ that it actually affects the way we live.

If we do not practice what we preach, our children will honor God with their lips, but their hearts will be far away from God.

III. **Step #3: If you want to raise a Pharisee, Use Excessive control & Manipulation instead of relying on the Holy Spirit of God.**

Matthew 23:4, "they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers If the people did not comply with the Pharisees, they could be put out of the synagogues. The Pharisees loved to control the lives of people, but they did not want their lives to be controlled.

The Pharisee's did not rely on the Holy Spirit to convict of "sin, righteousness, and judgment" (**John 16:8**). Their preferred METHOD was to use guilt and excessive control to conform behavior. God's method is to convert the heart to change behavior.

A. **Grouchy Parent Syndrome.** When things are going all wrong—the kids are out of control, it's easy to get into GPS mode? I'm not talking about the electronic Global Positioning System in your car. I'm talking about **Grouchy Parent Syndrome.** How do you know if you have it?

1. Instead of relying on the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to press down on their heart, you use your **overbearing spirit** in order to produce the desired behavior. It is easy to nag and berate a child in order to get the desired behavior. We should never threaten or put a child down! This is a burden the child cannot bear. You will get the desired behavior, but you will drive his heart away.
2. You may even start **raising your voice** to get desired behavior. The temptation when we don't see the desired contrition is to threaten our children or make them fear. It is the job of the Holy Spirit to convict of "sin, righteousness, and judgment" (**John 16:8**). Instead of raising your voice, you must instead speak the truth in love to your children in a calm controlled manner. If you raise your voice, you will hinder your children from hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit. We must never take the place of the Holy Spirit of God in our children's lives. We must use the Word of

God to gently convert the soul of the child.

B. Let me tell you about **Grace filled parents**.

1. The grace filled parent knows we are warned never to use manipulation but to nurture our children. If you use **harshness** and **control** to get desired behavior, your children will outwardly conform, but they will inwardly rebel. You will provoke them to wrath. According to **Ephesians 6:4**, parents, specifically fathers, are not to "provoke their children to wrath" but to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition (discipline) of the Lord".
2. The grace filled parent believes **James 1:20**, "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." We should always be motivated by a God-centered love for the child, and the fruit of the Spirit. We ought never act because of being angry, annoyed, irritated or upset. What does Christ say? **Matthew 11:28**, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
3. The grace filled parent knows that "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (**Proverbs 15:1**). Raising a child should never mean raising your voice. As a parent, you can be effective in reaching the heart of your child only if you are in control. If you have a gentle humble attitude, your children will reflect that. Your tone of voice is heard louder than your words!
4. The grace filled parent believes **I Corinthians 13:1**, that "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." We've got to be a vessel for the still small voice of the Holy Spirit of God.

C. Let me finally say this: a godly humble spirit in the home does not mean that we do not deal with sin! In fact we must deal with sin swiftly and firmly. Our children are to obey immediately, sweetly, and completely. But anger and irritation are not fruits of the Spirit! It is absolutely essential to correct sin, but you must speak the truth in love.

We don't need to do the work of conforming our child's behavior—that's the Holy Spirit's job. We need to have an environment where the Holy Spirit reaches the heart of your child. He changes the heart, which in turn changes the behavior.

Transition: So, if you want to raise a Pharisee, don't rely on the power of God! Don't rely on the Spirit of God, Don't rely on the Word of God, all you need to do is make sure they know that you're boss. Raise your voice! Don't let them hear the voice of God. You just pounce on them with manipulation and an overbearing spirit, and you are sure to raise a Pharisee.

IV. **Step #4: If you want to raise a Pharisee, teach your children to please men instead of God.** The Pharisees were people pleasers! **Verse 5**, "But all their works they do for to be seen of men". The Pharisees greatest desire was to get the praise of men. Of course Jesus said in **Luke 6:26**, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!"

Remember that pleasing Mom and Dad is not the ultimate goal: **Pleasing God** is!! **1 Corinthians 10:31** says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." In the most ordinary of things, we are to please God.

Application: In the Word of God, human success is not the goal; pleasing God is the goal! How do you spell success in parenting? S-A-L-V-A-T-I-O-N! If your child experiences the new birth and lives a life hungering and thirsting after God, you have succeeded.

- (1) Some parents raise their children as a *museum piece* for you to show off to the world. "Look at how successful my child is in the world" is the attitude. My friends, our children are not our own. They are on loan from God. They don't need to succeed in the world to succeed in God's eyes. They are sinners that you ought to pray will be saved by grace.
- (2) Some parents see success as their child getting a degree from a good school or getting a job with a high income. Actually some of those things if they are pursued in place of God is spiritual failure. Success is not bad if it is in the will and plan of God. But if my child is poor and in ordinary job and loves God fervently, then I am a success. The goal is not to please men, but to please God!

Application: Our children are not going to stand before our friends and neighbors on judgment day to see if they were a success. They are going to stand before God.

- V. **Step #5: If you want to raise a Pharisee, focus on personalities instead of the Person of Jesus Christ.** Look at **verses 6-10**. Pharisees "love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ".

The Pharisees would not look to Christ. Instead they looked to all their doctors and teachers.

A Christian is not a follower of a man or a movement, but of Christ. God uses people, and for that we are all profoundly humbled. But let us not exalt the hammer! Let's exalt the Architect! You and I are just hammers. Our children need to see us not exalting each other. We are just pieces of clay in the Master's hand!

To be a Christian is not to be a man follower, but to be a Christ follower. It is to have Christ living in you—to have Him as your Master. It is not "doing what the pastor says" or even "doing what mom and dad say". Children should obey authority, but ultimately to be a Christian is to have ONE Master, Jesus Christ as the ruler of your heart. As **verse 8** says, "one is your Master, even Christ". We must get our eyes off of man and get our eyes on Christ. If you put your eyes on men, you will soon be disappointed. If you have your children esteem men, they too will be disappointed. It's not about me! It's not about you! It's about Christ! It's about Him!

Signing a doctrinal statement does not make a child a Christian. We are to have correct doctrine, but Christ must dwell in the heart by faith! Agreeing to good doctrine does not transform you. "The devils also believe and tremble" (**James 2:19**).

We ought to always have correct doctrine, that's something to contend for, but having correct doctrine does not make you a Christian. To be a Christian is to have Christ living in you, to have a new birth, raised from the dead, and to have be a new creation in Christ Jesus. It is not outward conformity. It is a total heart change that desires submission to Christ. Understand what it is to enter the Kingdom. Jesus said, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (**John 3:3**). Understand that the entire goal for the life of a child is to have a broken moldable heart for God.

- VI. **Step #6: If you want to raise a Pharisee, create an environment of pride instead of humility in the home.** The Pharisees really did think they were the next best thing to sliced bread. They sincerely believed they had it all together. Rule number one for the Pharisees was: never admit fault. They had proud, hard hearts. Look at **verses 11-12**. Jesus rebuked the proud Pharisees and said: "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

The answer to almost every spiritual problem your child has answered by Peter in **1 Peter 5:5**, "God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble!" Or as David said in **Psalms 34:18**, "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

The greatest example a child can have is that of a humble mother and father who know they are sinners worthy of the God's eternal punishment. The kind of broken home that God loves is to have a mother and father with a broken heart. Do you have a broken heart for your children? Are you gentle with them? Are you serving them up the Gospel or do you think they are there to serve you? Take the TIME to serve your children. Spend time with them. They should know you intimately.

A. Serve them through **prayer**. Pray for them. Gather them around you each night and pray for them by name. Then let them pray and listen to their spiritual heartbeat. If your children see you on fire with a broken, fervent, joyous prayer life, they will want to pray!

B. Serve them through humble **confession** when you sin.

1. Confess your sins before your children. If they see you really want to change in your life they will want to change.
2. When they sin, don't act as if you are holier than thou. You tell them, Daddy and mommy are sinners too. That's why we all need Jesus.

How to Raise a Pharisee, Part 2

By Matthew Black, Pastor

Text: Matthew 23

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VII. Step #7: If you want to raise a Pharisee, make the Ten Commandments merely rules to live by instead of a mirror to show their corruption and need for Christ. It was said of the Pharisees in **verse 13**, "woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" The parallel passage in **Luke 11:52** tells us how the Pharisees blocked the way to heaven. "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

Explanation: The 'key of knowledge' is referring to the Law. The Pharisees thought the Law was given as rules to keep to gain God's favor. The Law is given to show our corruption. It is meant to break the hard heart of stone. The Law is "our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (**Galatians 3:24**). God's commandments are our professor who says to us: "You see how corrupt you are? You see how much you stink in God's sight? You will never live in God's presence. You can never be clean through His Law. But look over there. Look at the form of the God of the universe hanging on the tree. You need Him. Go to Him. Run to Jesus. You need not fear if you are covered by His blood. He takes away all your sin!" What a good schoolmaster the Law is!

Without the brutal work of the Law, your children will never be sufficiently humbled to receive grace enough to come to Christ. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (**1 Peter 5:5**).

Charles Spurgeon said, "The Law is also very useful, because it shows us our defections and stains. It is like the looking-glass which my lady holds up to her face, that she may see if there be any spot on it. But she cannot wash her face with the looking-glass. When the mirror has done its utmost then there are the same stains. It cannot take away a single spot, it can only show where one is. And the Law, though it reveals our sin, our shortcomings, our transgressions, it cannot remove the sin or the transgression. It is weak for that purpose, because it was never intended to accomplish such an end."²

John Wesley said, "Before I preach love, mercy and grace, I must preach sin, Law and judgment." Later he said to a friend, "Preach 90 percent Law and 10 percent grace."

John Stott wrote, "We cannot come to Christ to be justified until we've first been to Moses to be condemned. Once we have gone to Moses and acknowledged our sin, guilt and condemnation, we must not stay there, we must leave Moses and go to Christ."³

J.C. Ryle said, "People will never set their faces decidedly towards heaven and live like pilgrims until they really feel they're endanger of hell. Let us expound

² Charles Haddon Spurgeon. *Barbed Arrows from the Quiver of C.H. Spurgeon* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1896), 267.

³ John Stott as quoted by Bruce B. Barton. "Galatians", *Life Application Bible Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1994), 122.

and beat out the Ten Commandments and show the length and breadth and depth and height of the requirements of the Law. This is the way of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. We cannot do better than to follow His plan."⁴

The Pharisees were trying to keep the Law to get into heaven—instead of allowing the Law to be the “Schoolmaster” that shows us how sinful we are and lead us to our need of Christ (**Galatians 3:24**)! The Law was not given to justify man. It was given to give us knowledge of our sin.

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Romans 3:19-20, says that the Law was given “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

God’s Law, the 10 Commandments does not merit us favor in God’s sight—it measures our corruption in God’s sight!

Application: We need to use the Ten Commandments to show our children their wretchedness. They need to come to Christ. The Law shows us that there is none good. We are constantly sinning

We need to hold up the 10 commandments as a mirror to show our children just how corrupt they are and how much they need Christ. They need to see themselves as lost sinners before they can be saved.

Luke 5:31-32, “And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole [WELL] need not a physician; but they that are sick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

VIII. **Step #8: If you want to raise a Pharisee, Don’t be transparent about your struggles with sin, instead use Spiritual Smokescreens.** The Lord says in **Matthew 23:14**, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.” God looks on the heart. He doesn’t care about our empty words. A pretence is a show of empty words or empty actions. In other words, the Pharisees were not transparent people. They did not let people know their struggles but instead covered them up with spiritual smokescreens.

Are you able to teach something to the children at church or in a Sunday School class, but not willing to live it out at home? Then you are making a pretense. You don’t intend to live it out.

A. Let’s look at the **Problem**. We are tempted to say, “My kid goes to church. He knows the hymns, he generally obeys. He must be saved”. Be careful.

⁴ J.I. Packer. J.C. Ryle. *Faithfulness and Holiness* (Wheaton, IL: Good News Publishers, 2002), 114.

That's an outward pretense if there is no inward spiritual reality. Be careful of spiritual smokescreens.

But let's talk about us, the parents. A Pharisaical parent has everything in order on the outside. They seem spiritual to people at church and in the grocery store. But nobody sees the real you. Except your kids see the real you. And God sees the real you. If you think adding more spiritual activities to cover all your warts at home, you might be on your way to raising a Pharisee. Spiritual smoke screens need to be taken away, and your children need to see you dealing with sins and struggles honestly.

Are you one way at church and another way at home? You may raise a Pharisee.

You may have an anger problem. Sunday morning comes along and you are having a time trying to get everyone to church on time. And you might lose it. Admit it. Your family already knows it. They need to hear it from you. The worst thing you can do is not say anything, and then act all spiritual at church.

You may have an over-commitment problem. Your family already knows it because they never see you. Admit to your wife and children that you need to say NO to others so that you can say YES to them. Again, the worst thing you can do is not say anything about your struggles, and then act all spiritual around others.

We can have all the right standards in front of others. But if who you are at church is not the same person you are at home and at work, then you are using a spiritual smokescreen.

- Can you laugh at what God hates on television? Do we say "Amen" against fleshly living at church and then go home and watch it on the TV?
- Do you act differently at church than at home? Do you speak to your children differently at church than at home?

These are just a few ways we can "make a pretense". We all struggle, that's for sure. But we ought never to make a show of spirituality with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and then act a different way with our family.

We need to deal with this because if you don't, when your child grows up he may very likely go the opposite direction of Christ.

B. What's the **solution**?

1. **Transparency.** Our kids need to see us transparent about areas of struggle against sin. They need to see us confessing our sins to one another as Christians. They need to hear us praying that God would change us. They need to see us applying the Word to areas of struggle in our lives. They need to see us repenting having the joy that follows.
2. **Time** and work. Instead of making a pretense and then living for yourself at home, take that time with your kids and invest time on your knees and in the Word. That's going to take a real investment on your part.

3. Begin **simply**. Take a walk with your family and ask spiritual questions. Take ten minutes and open the Bible after a meal time. Start applying the Word of God to your life and to your children's life. You'll be surprised how quickly you'll all begin to live a transparent life.

IX. **Step #9: If you want to raise a Pharisee, Substitute outward standards for Spirituality.** We see this in **Matthew 23:23**, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: **these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.**"

What does Christ say? Standards of holiness are good, but you left the most important part out! To jump to the outward Christian disciplines without dealing with the heart is nothing more than behavior modification.

Christians have holy fruit coming out of their life, but **following a set of rules does not make your child a Christian**. No amount of good behaviour will ever justify your child. All the good standards in the world will not balance out one of your child's sins. That is why we want to do all we can to bring our children into an encounter with the Living God!

Application: Sometimes we might forget that being a Christian is not checking off a list!

- Daily Bible reading ... check.
- Prayed for others ... check.
- Thanked God for something ... check.
- Prayed before my meals ... check.
- Listened to Christian music ... check.

You should have habits of godliness in your life. So should your children. But having these habits of godliness does not make a person a Christian.

Application: Some parents believe if their children have the right amount of verses memorized, says the sinner's prayer, dress the right way, and are baptized, then their child must be a Christian! Listen, lots of "good children" and lots of "good people" will populate the Lake of Fire (**Matthew 7:21**). None of us are good. Even our righteousnesses are as "filthy rags". We are saved by grace through faith, not of works!

We must be looking for Christ be formed in our children, not simply religious standards.

X. **Step #10: If you want to raise a Pharisee, have a critical spirit instead of building people up.** Look at **verse 24**: "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." It's so easy to strain at a gnat. Pharisees become judgmental and critical of the smallest issues. It's so easy to have our eyes on others instead of God. It's easy to measure others by our own manufactured guide to spirituality. Be careful if you don't see how big your own struggles against sin are. Sometimes find it easy to criticize others while we fail to see the glaring sin in our own life.

It is so easy to criticize others isn't it? The Pharisee says in **Matthew 7:4** Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye". But Christ says, "and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Do you have fault-finding, critical spirit? Remember your children are watching.

What is the right response?

A. ***Be real about your own sins and idiosyncrasies.*** Get the beam out of your eye. Say with David in **Psalm 139:23-24**, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." If you look at all the struggles against sin in your own life, you'll be way too busy to criticize others.

B. ***Show love to others who offend you.*** **1 Peter 4:8** "charity shall cover the multitude of sins". **John 13:35**, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Love covers sin with love and forgiveness, but Pharisees critical and complain. Instead of a self righteous spirit, genuine Christian parents don't judge others, instead they have compassion on them. Remember complaining is NOT a fruit of the Spirit.

XI. **Step #11: If you want to raise a Pharisee, teach them to feed their flesh instead of feeding on Christ.** We read in **Matthew 23:25**, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess."

The word "excess" means "self-indulgent". As parents, it is easy to give our children a hefty diet of things our kids don't need. In case you didn't know, video games, television, the internet, and cell phones can be used as a pacifier for children and young people, and these things can take massive amounts of time from children and teach them to be self-indulgent.

As parents, it is easy to give our children a hefty diet of things they don't need. In case you didn't know, hundreds of generations have raised children without video games, television, the internet, and cell phones. I know that is hard to believe. These things are not wrong, but they can be used as a pacifier for children and young people, and these things can take massive amounts of time from children and teach them to be self-indulgent.

The temptation is to think that going to church or doing spiritual things makes up for all the hours and hours of wasted time. Actually, it is as Jesus said, "cleaning the outside of the cup" but inwardly, we are teaching our children to excess—self indulgence.

We've got to deal with our children's hearts. Your child may be involved in spiritual activity and going to church. Someone once said, "Going to church does not make us a Christian any more than going to MacDonald's makes us a hamburger!" As parents need to step up to the plate and take responsibility for giving our children an appetite for Christ. How?

It's easy to set a child in front of the television, but it is a very dangerous and it will not satisfy their soul. Instead teach them to feed on Christ. How?

- First **set the example** for them. Are you feeding on Christ? Are you getting satisfied with Christ and His Word or with other things? Do your children see you wasting time or feeding on Christ? You need to set the example.
- Second, **feed** them Christ. The way a child gets an appetite for Christ is by you feeding Christ to them. "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (**Psalm 34:8**). Tell them how great a Saviour we have. Have daily times with your children, not just reading the Word but asking questions and probing their heart and praying and listening to them pray.

Listen, if you want to raise a Pharisee, teach them to feed their flesh instead of feeding on Christ.

And finally...

XII. **Step #12: Finally, if you want to raise a Pharisee, don't give time to your children—just leave the winning of their hearts to someone else.** This is not directly in the passage, but it must be said. If you don't do the work that is necessary for God to change your child's heart, he may remain unchanged.

- (1) **We must take the TIME to reach our children's heart!** Our children need RADICAL SURGERY on the heart, not "quick fixes" so that they won't embarrass or annoy you. They need the NEW BIRTH. Get to the heart issues in your child. *Don't settle for superficial change of behavior by your child.* Ask God to change their heart. We need to spend our time wisely with our children instead of letting them dry up spiritually.

The best thing you can do is to gather your children around you on your knees and plead with them to trust in God, and then on your knees worship God at His throne.

- (2) **We must take TIME to APPLY and IMPRESS God's Word into our children's hearts.** It is very easy to major on only controlling the child's **behavior** without using Scripture and prayer to deal with his **heart**. Apply the Word of God at every opportunity. Peter says we are "Being born again...by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (**1 Peter 1:23**). Paul says in **1 Corinthians 3:6**, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase". It's hard work!

Listen, if there is one thing I can leave you with in this lesson, is to introduce a real love saturated walk with God to your children, to your wife. It will radically change you. It will change your world. It will make the world bright when everyone else sees that it is dull.

Conclusion: We can't treat our children any way we want. Once a living breathing Christianity is gone from the picture, we are raising Christianized heathens. No one wants to raise a Pharisee. Remember our children are a stewardship. We will be held accountable for every action in regard to them. We cannot treat them based on whims, but with tender care and love, just as we would

treat Christ. We need to bring them to Christ, not simply reform their behavior.

I hope the goal of your home is that Mother and Father and child will all worship God and serve others from the heart! By God's grace let's have a God-focused, God-saturated atmosphere in our home, and let's all aim at the *hearts* of our children!

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We want to recognize tonight the hard work of our home schoolers for our Home School Appreciation night. After the service, you will have the opportunity to see the work that the home schooling children have done in the overflow room.

It is a great privilege to have our children home under an intense discipleship of our children. We teach them to read and write so they can read the Bible. It's a great stewardship. To whom much is given much will be required.

In a way we are all home school parents. We are all accountable for our children's education. We must do our very best to teach them not only academically and intellectually, but we need to teach and reach their heart.

It is appropriate tonight that we come together finally tonight to dedicate my son, Evan Wayne Black.

Dedication of EVAN WAYNE BLACK

I would like to call up my wife as she and I present my son Evan Wayne Black in dedication to the Lord. I would also like to call up Evan's grandparents on Jill's side, Wayne and Marie Wenger.

We dedicate Evan to Christ today. Of course this dedication comes as a result of Jill and I having given our lives in dedication to the Lord already.

It is amazing to think that in reality, though we dedicate Evan Wayne to the Lord today, it actually occurred before the foundation of the world.

God says in **Jeremiah 1:5**, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

God has a definite plan and will for Evan's life, and has given him the privilege that very few children in this world have. Evan has been born into a Christian home. And yet there is hard work involved in raising a child for the Lord. Paul spoke of how Timothy was raised: **2 Timothy 3:15**, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

As Jill and I dedicate Evan tonight, I want to call your attention to the commands of Scripture found in **Deuteronomy 6:4-7**, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

These commands were given to the Jewish people just after God made a covenant with them in **Deuteronomy 5**. God's people were given the 10 commandments—they were to reflect God, to love God, and to be holy as God was holy, and to evangelize their children for God—to keep them away from the world's idols.

When Evan was born, we entered into that covenant. Raising a child is a stewardship from the Lord. Children are an heritage—or an inheritance from the Lord. They are not our children—they are the Lord's!!

Jill and I have entered into a covenant before the Lord to raise Evan in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is the most solemn responsibility we have in this life. It is more important than obtaining material possessions, having a good job, or winning anyone's approval. As part of God's covenant we promise today to teach Evan the Word of God, to evangelize and urge him to repent of his sins and believe on Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and we dedicate him here and now to accomplish God's will for his life, whatever that may be.

Now, we do not enter into this commitment alone. This church also enters into this commitment with us. We will do all we can do to be a godly example for him, and to join in the efforts to evangelize him, to see him saved, and to see him serve the Lord all of his days.

So now let us bow our heads and dedicate little Evan Wayne to the Lord. (**Prayer of dedication**—by **Bro. Mike Klikas**.)

(Presentation of Certificate & Bible)

On this 12th day of February, 2006

Evan Wayne Black

was presented at the Tabernacle Baptist Church of Hanover Park, Illinois by his parents, Matthew and Jill Black, to the Lord Jesus Christ for God's service and for the accomplishment of Christ's will all the days of his life. To that end, both father and mother vow before the Lord to bring up Evan in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and to live godly in Christ Jesus before him in the power of God's Spirit and by His grace. They also solemnly vow before the Lord and His church to pray for Evan to be converted at an early age by repenting of his sins and putting his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Born July 14, 2008, 8pm

7 pounds 10 ounces, 21.5 inches long

Let us pray for Evan that he come to know and serve the Lord all the days of his life!

Concluding Hymn: [310 In My Life Be Glorified](#)