

Matthew 12 – The Law of Unintended Consequences

Matthew 5:17-20

Fallen Condition Focus (FCF): If we do not understand the love of Christ, God's Law will drive us away from Him instead of drawing us closer.

Introduction: Jesus, Pharisees, and the Law

- Why do Pharisees think that Jesus is trying to abolish the Law?
- Three types of Law
 - Moral – those Biblical Laws which teach us right and wrong (i.e. 10 Commandments)
 - Civil – Laws instituted in the nation of Israel which applied the moral Law to civil situations
 - Ceremonial – Laws which were part of the religious life of Israel (i.e. cleanliness, food, sacrifice)

Three dangers of legalism seen in the Pharisees

1. Legalism fails to fulfill the Law of God

- Legalism teaches that if you follow all the rules you will be accepted in God's sight
 - High view of Law – unattainable – leads to despair
 - Low view of the Law – attainable – leads to pride and self dependence

2. Legalism sets up man-made religion

- Traditions become elevated to the place of Law
- Pharisees attempted to keep the Law and set up "fences" to keep them from breaking it
- There is a great danger when we take our "fences" and use them to judge others

3. Legalism kills our spirits

- As long as you relate to God by works, you will always live as an orphan instead of as His child
- If we are trying to relate to the most perfect being in the universe on the basis of our works, then our relationship can never be anything but a burden, filled with self doubt
- We cannot be worthy of that love and if we try to be through the Law, we will only drive ourselves away from God.