

Don't Be Fooled!

by John Hines

James 1:22 gives us one of the most important warnings in all of Scripture: ***“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*** It is one of the great temptations, to see ourselves as great doers when the reality is very different. Often, we judge others by their *actions* but we judge ourselves by our *intent*. It is a mistake and one that leads us toward apostasy. Indeed, one of the signs of that very thing was that evil men would grow worse and worse, *“deceiving and being deceived”* (2 Tim. 3:13). We cannot make that mistake. What bigger fool is there than the man who fools himself?

In the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus would speak of the priest and the Levite who would pass by the man in need of help, intentionally avoiding him (Lk.10:31-32). They were examples of the typical religious elitists of the day, as many of the Jews trusted in themselves that they were righteous while despising others. They were not righteous at all. They did not practice mercy or sacrifice. They did their works to be seen by men and as they had their reward, their egos swelled and they were more convinced than ever that they were righteous.

How can we avoid their fate? How can we make sure we are not filled with delusions of grandeur concerning ourselves?

Look For The Fruit. Judge yourself by what you have done, not by what you could do, or intend to do. Be honest.

Keep It Quiet. If you have to tell people about your work, there is a good chance your motives are not pure.

Expect Nothing. If you do good hoping to be repaid, you are in the wrong profession. You should be a banker.

Hear The Word. Many only hear themselves. They pray to themselves. They consult themselves. They honor themselves. Make sure you are humbling yourself to God, looking into His Word, and following Jesus.

We can be the sort of people God wants us to be (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We can bridle our tongue and our whole body. We can discipline ourselves. As we submit to God, He will mold us. Anything less, and we are just fooling ourselves.

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