

Doctrine of External Religion

1. External religion focuses upon the symbol rather than the substance of an issue. True religion seeks to comprehend the spiritual dimension of a matter.
2. External religion tries to control what other people do with their time, their talents, their treasures, their dress and their speech. True religion gives freedom of movement and liberty of conscience.
3. External religion breeds anger and resentment when there is a sense of loss of control over others. True religion loves others enough not to seek to control and so puts away anger.
4. External religion is demanding. It operates according to threats and ultimatums with a thundering voice and a harsh spirit. It must have its way. True religion is long suffering and makes no demands. Freely it has received grace; freely it shows grace to others.
5. External religion cries, "*Law! Law! Law!*" True religion cries, "*Love! Love! Love!*" Authentic love is defined according to gospel terms in 1 Corinthians 13.
6. External religion is willful because it is self-centered. True religion bends to bless others.
7. External religion exalts the writings of man. True religion exalts the *Word of God* believing that God's way is better than man's way in every matter that pertains to the Church.
8. External religion exalts the wisdom of man reflected in Judaism in the Mishnah and the Kabbalah. True religion seeks that wisdom from above which is "*first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*" (*James 3:17*).
9. External religion is self-righteous. It will not admit when it is wrong. It thanks God it is not like others. True religion is humble and cries out, "*God, be merciful to me the sinner.*"
10. External religion puts on an outward façade of happiness. True religion knows a joy unspeakable and full of glory.
 - *1 Peter 1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*
11. External religion strains at a gnat and swallows a camel. A gnat or a small detail of life does not upset true religion nor does true religion swallow a camel by calling wrong right and right wrong.
12. External religion promotes self-knowledge having given a particular matter a lot of deliberation. True religion subordinates itself to the wisdom of the *Scriptures* and terminates there. It seeks the mind of Christ.

13. External religion fastens its eyes on what others are not doing and thinks it knows best what others should be doing much like Martha had her eyes on Mary. True religion recognizes that the most important work a person can do is to spend time with Christ and then rise to go forth into His field of service taking the gospel near and far as God supplies the reach and resources.
14. External religion engages in religious activity more out of duty than delight and after a while the spirit is one of dread and drudgery. True religion never grows weary of the work of the Lord, though a person may grow physically weary in faithful service.
15. External religion walks by sight and not by faith and therefore it cannot please God. Therefore, external religion is an enemy of faith. It does not comprehend believing in things not yet seen. True religion will take a leap of faith into the unknown in order to trust in the everlasting arms of the Father.
16. External religion is bold to invite the judgment of God. *“Let the blood of Christ be upon us and our children”* cried the priests and the members of the Sanhedrin. True religion fears the judgment of God knowing that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
17. External religion stands on form and ceremony, and the traditions of men. True religion stands on the more sure word of prophecy, even the Word of God. True religion will renounce any attempt to abandon God’s way as revealed in His word.
18. External religion is very critical in spirit and always complaining about something much like the members of the Exodus generation. The people complained about food. They complained about water. They complained about their clothing. They complained about Moses. And finally the Lord had enough and swore in His wrath they would not enter into the Land of Promise. True religion does not complain but is grateful and complimentary and seeks to build others up instead of tearing them down.
19. External religion is incapable of producing love. True religion loves from the heart and is sincere.
20. External religion leads individuals to posture for position and power.
21. External religion exalts man-made rules and regulations.
22. External religion moves to terrorize others until they are paralyzed in spiritual performance less they meet with the glaring eye of disapproval.
23. External religion makes a person feel trapped; but religion that is from the heart and in the spirit is free, joyous, spontaneous, lasting – and criticized as per Mark 2:15-17.

- *Mark 2:15 And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. 16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? 17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*
24. When external religion manages to prevail it comes to rob the spirit of the joy of ministry and the desire to do something for the Lord from the heart.