

Outward appearance – Pt 2 of the spiritual man

Last week we began a new topic on “outward appearance”, and we established that (1) man looks on the outward appearance of man, (2) the ungodly look on the appearance of man and see good as evil, and (3) the ungodly man can be transformed by Satan into the ministers of righteousness. In this study we answer the question – how do we discern the wolves from the sheep and establish (1) God looks on the inward appearance of man – his heart, (2) a spiritual man cannot look on another man’s inward appearance, (3) a spiritual man discerns the heart of another by their outward appearance – their fruit, their works.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded

1. God looks on the inward appearance of man – his heart.

“But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature...for the Lord[seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Sam.16: 7).

2. A spiritual man cannot look on a man’s inward appearance his heart

“But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance” (1 Sam.16: 7).

3. The heart of another is only seen by their outward appearance.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Mt 7:15, 16).

Additional information

We ended our previous teaching with a question – how do we discern the wolves from the sheep? Answer from this study – by their works, their fruit.

Illustration to help apply our teaching to our life

Let us imagine for the purpose of this study that – In a land where it is lawful to register multiple wives a pastor takes two wives having searched the scriptures and established in his own mind that such action is not contrary to the Bible. Other believers are not so convinced as the doctrine is not easy to understand.

Question to think about.

IF taking multiple wives is lawful in the scriptures (and I am not saying that it is, or it is not) then how has the man sinned?

Our answer from the scriptures.

“Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thes.5: 22). If a doctrine is hard to understand from the scriptures, why not err on the side of caution so that we – “Let not then your good be evil spoken of” (Rom 14:16). Why?

If a weak brother sees the lifestyle where the pastor has multiple wives, and decides to go out and take two, three or more wives and ends up like Solomon, then the pastor has contributed to their sin. “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Rom. 14: 21)– c.f. 1 Cor.8: 12 – “But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.” Therefore, let us be mindful of our outward appearance – “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth” (Rom.14: 22).