

Diagnostic Questions for Authentic Christianity

Matthew 23:1–12

“Jesus’ words in this passage fly from His lips like claps of thunder and spears of lightning. Out of His mouth on this occasion came the most fearful and dreadful statements that Jesus uttered on earth.”—John MacArthur

1. Do you practice what you preach? (Matthew 23:1–3)

“The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door, and deny him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.”—Brennan Manning

2. Are you living a life of humble sacrificial service? (Matthew 23:4; 12)

“Carry one another’s burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)

3. Do you live for the applause of heaven rather than the applause of man? (Matthew 23:5–7)

“Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.” (John 12:42–43)

“Bind [God’s Words] as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead.” (Deuteronomy 6:8)

Signs you are living for the praise of man (Sarah Walton):

- You are motivated and unmotivated in your work, friendships, church, etc., by the praise or lack of praise of those around you.
- Your decisions are often driven by what others will think.
- You are easily discouraged, irritated, or angry when your efforts are not appreciated by others or when others receive credit for something you have done.
- When others praise you, you begin to feel self-confident in your own abilities, rather than relying on the Lord to lead and provide.
- You are more drawn to the type of work and serving opportunities that will be noticed and praised by others.
- You struggle with competitiveness and envy when someone else succeeds or is given praise (even within the body of Christ).
- You spend less time in the Word and prayer and more time perfecting your craft, skill, job, or reputation.
- You find comfort in making sure others see your pain and shower you with attention because of it.

- Your relationships only go so deep that your struggles are not revealed.
- Your emotions and how you feel about yourself are constantly swayed by what you assume others think of you.
- You only share a surface level of your faith out of fear of offending someone or giving the perception that you are weak, strange, or narrow-minded.

Why is this so serious?

“How can you believe, since you accept glory from one another but don’t seek the glory that comes from the only God?” (John 5:44)

4. Do you humbly seek authentic relationships with other believers? (Matthew 23:7–11)

“For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (1 Corinthians 4:15)

“And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11–12)