

GOSPEL PEARLS

Being in good standing with God

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Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. But you are not to be called rabbi, for

you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Matthew 23: 1-12)

Over time, the Pharisees and the doctors of the Law had amassed a number of prescriptions concerning worship and devotion. All these rules gave those who applied them the impression that they were "in good standing with God". The reality is that no one can say he is in "good standing with God." This is so because of our fallen nature after original sin. Therefore we are prone to being sinful. No one can always have a clear conscience or even think that they have any right to claim being in good standing with God. We have only duties before God, and God has only rights before us. Have you ever considered this?