

The Danger of Losing Your Spiritual Balance

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SHEPHERD
CHURCH

Important Lesson: **Removing** a bad tenant is only half the process. **Filling** it with a good tenant is the other half!

An Interesting Parable:

Matthew 12:43–45 (NIV84) ⁴³“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. ⁴⁴Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. ⁴⁵Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.”

1. First, this parable primarily **condemns** the religion of the Pharisees.
 - A. The Pharisee’s religion was based on their **efforts** to keep the laws.
 - A religion that is based on a person’s efforts results in a self-**sufficient** religion.
 - A religion that is based on a person’s efforts results in self-**righteousness**.
 - Their strict standards gave them an **illusion** of spiritual rightness.
 - B. There is great **danger** in basing our faith/salvation on our own efforts.
 - They failed to recognize the true source of faith/salvation even when He stood in their midst.
 - It becomes necessary to **compare** yourself to others.
 - Comparison almost always leads to **judging** and being critical of others.
2. The empty, swept clean and unoccupied house represents a person whose sins have been **cleansed**.
 - A. In Jesus’ parable, the person’s sins were forgiven but it appears the person relied on their own **efforts** to maintain their faith/salvation because the house was never filled.
 - B. Theologians call this an outer **reformation**.
 - C. An outer reformation is when you make changes and maintain those changes in your own **efforts**.
 - Spiritually this creates self-sufficient, self-righteous, **empty** people who lack power.
3. Any attempt at a moral reformation that relies on self-cleansing is never **permanent**.

Romans 7:15–20 (The Living Bible) ¹⁵I don’t understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I can’t. I do what I don’t want to . . . ¹⁶I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, . . . ¹⁷But I can’t help myself because I’m no longer doing it. It is sin inside me that is stronger than I am that makes me do these evil things . . . ¹⁹When I want to do good, I don’t; and when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. ²⁰Now if I am doing what I don’t want to, it is plain where the trouble is: sin still has me in its evil grasp.

The Two Parts of Holiness:

1 Peter 1:14–16 (NIV84) ¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

1. One side of holiness is to live in purity, or to be **emptied** of sin.
2. The other side of holiness is to be like Jesus, or to be **filled** with the Holy Spirit.

Losing Your Spiritual Balance:

1 Peter 1:14 (ESV) ¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance . . .

Romans 12:2 (NIV84) ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world . . .

1. The Negative Command: Getting out the old tenant!
 - A. We can lose our spiritual balance when we only focus on getting the sin **out** of our lives.
 - B. We can lose our spiritual balance when our primary focus is on maintaining our purity by way of our own **efforts**.
 - C. When we only focus on **not** sinning, we are out of spiritual of balance.
 - This can become detrimental to the witness of the church when we project our expectations onto others.

Finding Your Spiritual Balance

1. The Positive Command: Getting a new tenant!

1 Peter 1:15-16 (NASB95) ¹⁵but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; ¹⁶because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

Romans 12:2 (NIV84) ² . . . but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- A. Gaining a better understanding of holiness:
 - In its basic sense, the word holy means to be **set apart**, separated for a special, unique purpose.
- B. Holiness is about who I am **becoming**, not what I am not doing.

Romans 8:29 (NLT) ²⁹For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Application Questions:

- Am I more focused on what I should **not** be doing rather than what I **should** be doing?
- Am I more focused on what **others** should not be doing in a judgmental manner rather than treating them the way Jesus would treat them?
- Do people know me better for what I am against or for being like Jesus?

My Next Step:

- What do I need to change so that I can become better known for being like Jesus than what I am against?