

THE SEVEN WOES

In Matthew 23, Jesus mentioned seven ways to provoke God's anger. These are often called the "seven woes." Jesus probably spoke these seven statements about the religious leaders with a mixed tone of judgment and sorrow. They were strong and unforgettable. And they still apply anytime we become so involved in perfecting the practice of religion that we forget God's concern with mercy, real love, and forgiveness.

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| 23:13 | Not letting others enter the kingdom of heaven and not entering yourselves |
| 23:15 | Converting people away from God to be like yourselves |
| 23:16-22 | Blindly leading God's people to follow man-made traditions instead of God's Word |
| 23:23-24 | Involving yourselves in every last detail and ignoring what is really important: justice, mercy, and faith |
| 23:25-26 | Keeping up appearances while your private world is corrupt |
| 23:27-28 | Acting spiritual to cover up sin |
| 23:29-36 | Pretending to have learned from past history, but your present behavior shows you have learned nothing |