

1. “Do as I say, not as I do” and “Practice what you preach” are two fairly common phrases that are rooted in this past Sunday’s preaching text, Matthew 23:1-12. Share about a situation in life where you’ve encountered either one or both of these phrases.
2. Take a moment and read Matthew 23:1-12. Jesus lists a number of offenses that the Pharisees and teachers of religious law are guilty of. If you were given the authority to judge them, which of their offenses would you deem as worst and why?
3. Again, with the list of offenses in mind that Jesus mentioned, which offense do you feel like would be the most tempting for you to give into if you were among the religious leaders?
4. In verse 4, Jesus accuses the religious officials of “crushing people with unbearable religious demands” (NLT). What he was referencing were the 613 laws that the religious officials had established based on their interpretation of God’s Law. Visit this website <http://www.jewfaq.org/613.htm> and have a member of your group scroll through the laws and share some of them. Take a few minutes to share some personal observations about the laws, and also share about what you think it might be like to try and live by such an exhaustive set of rules.
5. Just before Jesus calls out the religious officials in Matthew 23, he is questioned about what he thinks is the most important commandment in the entire law. Read the exchange that happens in Matthew 22:34-40. How is following the two commandments that Jesus mentions much easier than trying to keep up with 613 laws? How is it more difficult?
6. The Pharisees and religious officials represented a system of religion that was completely focused on keeping things and people separate. Jesus, on the other hand, represented a way of worship that was all about breaking down barriers and including everyone. Which of the two do you feel like churches of today are more like? What about Hutch 1st Naz?
7. Matthew 23:11 says that “The greatest among you must be a servant”. What’s an area of your life that you need to be more intentional about taking the role of a servant?
8. Matthew 23:12 says, “Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” What are some regular practices that we might give ourselves to in order to remember that our calling is to humbly serve and not seek to be exalted?