

**Title:**                **Blind Experts in the Law**  
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The scribes and Pharisees were critical of Jesus' disciples because the disciples did not wash their hands in the way prescribed by the tradition of the elders (Matthew 15:1-2). Instead of responding immediately to the charge made, Jesus took the fight to their front doorstep by noting that they were using tradition to circumvent the commandment of God to honor father and mother.

The Pharisees had adopted a tradition that allowed a man to devote all or part of his assets to the service of God. The consequence of this "loophole" was that a man could retain such assets for his own use, but refuse to use them in the aid of his parents since they (the assets) were "corban," a gift to God (Matthew 15:3-6).

Following His rebuke of the Pharisees, Jesus made a startling comment to His disciples, "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (vs. 14). "Blind" Pharisees?? Although the hypocrisy of the Pharisees was visible to some, in the opinion of many Jews the Pharisees and scribes possessed a thorough knowledge of the Mosaic Law and probably were considered living examples of righteousness.

How could Jesus describe a group of people so familiar with the Law of Moses as "blind"? It IS possible to have a lot of Bible knowledge and yet not really understand the "core principles" of the will of God. The Pharisees were experts in the details of Scripture and the rabbinical interpretations of the law, but they did not really understand what service to God demands. Their problem was not just ignorance; their attention to detail and ritual, while denying the power of godliness, created a favorable environment for hypocrisy, as previously noted.

Their blindness was illustrated by their inability to see the effect of their "corban" tradition – they were actually transgressing the commandment of God (Matthew 15:3, 6). There were other occasions when the blindness of the Pharisees was even more egregious. For instance, Jesus healed a man blind from birth on the Sabbath day (John 9), but the Pharisees, upon hearing of and confirming the miracle, could only criticize Jesus as a sinner because He "broke" the Sabbath, to their way of thinking! They never "saw" the implication of the miracle for their interpretation of Sabbath-keeping.

We ourselves can become "blind" for a variety of reasons. Sinful ambition (being self-willed) and greed, among other character flaws, often blind people to the true nature of their actions. If we shut our eyes enough times to sin in our own lives or the lives of others, we eventually become virtually "unable" to "see" the error. We must also beware of the Pharisaical blindness, the inability to distinguish between our own traditions and the actual Law of God. What a terrible waste – to dedicate ourselves to the study of God's word --only to become blind experts in details and regulations

without any real understanding of the spirit of the Law!