



Part 4: Good Hearts

Bad religion doesn't start with bad behaviour. What we do is the product of who we are. And so if we want to overcome all that is wrong, we need to go deeper. Good religion gets to the heart and allows God to change us from within.

Discussion Questions

1. As we come towards the end of this series, reflect on the phrases *bad religion* and *good religion*. What images or experiences come to mind from your own life or from what you see in the wider culture?
2. In Matthew 5:17–20, what does Jesus say about the Law and the Prophets, and how high is the standard he sets for righteousness? Why would his call to exceed the Pharisees' righteousness feel overwhelming to his original listeners?
3. In Matthew 23:25–28, what details stand out in the images of the dirty cup and the whitewashed tombs? What do these metaphors reveal about the difference between outward religious appearance and inward reality?
4. Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew 15:18–19 that what defiles a person comes from the heart. According to this passage, where does sinful behaviour actually originate? How does this challenge the idea that simply "trying harder" isn't enough?
5. On Sunday it was suggested that religion becomes harmful when practices (prayer, fasting, generosity, church attendance) become the goal instead of tools for transformation. Where have you seen yourself—or churches more broadly—focus on external performance rather than inner change?
6. Thinking about the "heart questions" raised (triggers, anxieties, cravings, escapes), what is one area where God might be inviting you to go deeper than behaviour management and address the root issue underneath?

Moving Forward

Jesus compares obedience to building on rock in Gospel of Matthew 7:24–27. What daily rhythms or practices could help you "train" rather than just "try," so that your life is actually rooted in Christ's love and not just religious effort?