

Chapter 1 : Confessions of a Modern Pharisee | EFCA Today

*Confessions of a Modern Pharisee How I learned to abide in Christ. By Jamie Morrison. Abide. Prayerful dependence on Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. John*

I like to think that I am a Pharisee in the good sense of the word. Generally speaking, spirituality is exalted over mere religion. To be spiritual is to be possessed of an inner sensitivity to the presence of the divine. It is to experience the spiritual in an immediate way. It is to partake of something of the mystic, the person who has direct contact with the Great Beyond. In contrast to the inner authenticity and superlative sensitivity of spirituality, religion is merely a matter of forms, institutions, rituals, commandments, and the like. Spirituality is dynamic, individualistic, and egalitarian. Religion is static, collective, and hierarchical. I think I do. In this sense, I am not spiritual. God does not constantly whisper in my ear, nor do I surf from one profound moment of inner sensitivity to the next. To be sure, there are moments in my life when I feel that I have directly heard the voice of God, but such experiences for me can be counted on one hand with many fingers remaining. I see these moments as gifts, rather than as models for the life of my faith. Rather my faith consists largely of things like ritual, commandments, institutions, authority and hierarchy. In that sense, I suppose, I am Pharisaical. I am no doubt touched with more than my share of hypocrisy, but this is not really what I mean when I say that I am a Pharisee. Rather, what I mean is that I take the forms to be important. Indeed, it is in the forms that I generally search for God. Last week we had stake conference. I was excited by the prospect, and I enjoyed attending. On the other hand, the talks were not particularly memorable. Indeed, less than a week later, I can remember little of what was said. Nor did I have some spiritual moment at the conference. I did not open the inner core of my being and commune with the Great Beyond. Rather, for me the most meaningful part of stake conference was the sustaining of general and stake authorities. It is not that the sustaining gave me a little thrill because of my abiding conviction in the infallibility or superlative virtue of my leaders. Rather, I loved the solemnity of it. I loved the fact that my act of sustaining marked my connection not simply to a community defined by the inner bonds of the heart but an institution defined by claims of authority and historical continuity that exceeds any individual authorship. I loved stake conference in part because it marked a moment of heightened membership in the Church as a corporate entity, a moment when ritual, authority, and hierarchy were fused together. In short, it marked my participation in an order beyond myself, an order present not in the ethereal realm of inner experience but in the fleshy life of an institution. At the moment I raised my hand to the square, I was part of the fleshy rather than spiritual Kingdom of God. Oddly enough given the way that the emotive force of corporate belonging and Mormon identity overwhelm inner or immediate spiritual experience in my faith, I have little patience with those who would reduce religion to an exercise in nostalgia. Rather, I think in terms of bodies. We say that God has a body. It is a profound affirmation of the importance of the concrete and the particular over the abstract and the universal. I like to think that this means that God is quirky. I also believe in the Body of Christ, in the Church. But I do not belong to the invisible or spiritual Church, the universal Body of Christ. For me the Body of Christ is not especially spiritual at all. Rather, it is a body, a real body of concrete institutional particularity. It is in the thickly embedded particulars of Mormonism that I find more than simply historical identity or corporate belonging. I also find God.

**Chapter 2 : Essential Reading To Help You Understand The Gardner Museum Heist | Last Seen**

*Confessions of a recovering Pharisee May 7, 0 By Joe If you are in an argument with a Christian about morality or theology, and you want to insult that person, call him or her a Pharisee.*

Articles, opinions, and observations from a Baptist pastor in West Virginia Monday, June 25, Confessions of a Former Pharisee The Pharisees are some of the more interesting characters in the Bible. They are a conflicting study in both what is good, and what is not so good about how we practice our faith. Pharisees were very devout in their devotion to God. They believed in the inerrancy of the Old Testament Scriptures. They were zealous to observe the Law of God " commandments by their count. The Nelson Bible Dictionary says the following regarding the practices of the Pharisees: But they showed special zeal in insisting that laws of tithing and ritual purity be kept Matt. Furthermore since they determined that other Jews might not be careful enough in keeping those laws, they felt it necessary to place limits on personal contact with non observant Jews and with Gentiles. This was carried out to the point that they would not even eat in the home of a non Pharisee, for fear that the food may not have been properly tithed or kept pure according to all the traditional rituals. Pharisees were often quite unfair to Jesus during His ministry. The only folks I can find that Jesus harshly rebukes as hypocrites, were none other than the Pharisees. They were all about keeping the rules by the letter of the Law, but they generally missed out on the blessings of understanding the spirit of the Law. I am not discounting the Law of God. It shows us a holy God, and by comparison how sinful we are in relationship to Him. That is a losing battle. All of us have missed the mark. That is why I am thankful for Jesus. He always did the will of the Father. I think it would do us all well to take note of what Jesus said to the Pharisees in Matthew For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: It is important for us to live according to the revealed will of God, but the weightier matters in the words of Jesus involve justice, mercy, and faithfulness, not just blind rule keeping. The 23rd chapter of Matthew carries some strong indictments against the Pharisees. Read it at your leisure, and take it to heart. Chances are you have too. My prayer today is that I may be a person of Grace. That is the only way we will ever be able to effectively share the Gospel with others " by allowing Jesus to live through us, and exhibiting His Grace and mercy to needy sinners. Will you join me in that prayer?

Chapter 3 : "For What It's Worth": Confessions of a Former Pharisee

*I am not a particularly spiritual person, but I am quite religious. I like to think that I am a Pharisee in the good sense of the word. Generally speaking, spirituality is exalted over mere religion. To be spiritual is to be possessed of an inner sensitivity to the presence of the divine. It is to.*

It was only once I had a better understanding who she was and what her museum and collection meant to her that I could truly begin to feel the loss of those 13 stolen pieces. What follows are just a few of the books I turned to again and again over the course of the last 18 months. Read on for a list of the indispensable, riveting and deeply researched volumes about the heist itself by my colleague, Jack Rodolico. The result is a deeply personal account, and one that offers a glimpse into a late 19th century Boston that is more Bohemian than buttoned up. Shand-Tucci was also the first to have access to a trove of letters from such avid Gardner correspondents as Henry James, who immortalized Gardner as Isabel Archer in his novel, "Portrait of a Lady. Hers is a quest to get to know Gardner through the palace she built and the treasures she installed there. Vidgerman is a seeker, and one who writes like a dream. The result is a book that cast this reader in a kind of hypnotic state. I dip into it before every visit to the Gardner Museum and let wherever I fall in the book guide me to this painting or that tapestry that Vidgerman has mined for meaning. No other book about Gardner so transported me or made me yearn to know her. None has made me feel more deeply the loss of what was stolen on March 18, Hadley and published in , gives you an idea. To be read straight through, like a novel, or with the help of the index to pinpoint certain works. This is where I learned that, in a charming postscript in a letter to Berenson dated Aug. Here, we have the Henry James who adored Venice and Gardner in equal measure, even as he battled his envy over her considerably less burdened existence. But cry him a river: Deeply researched, compellingly written, this is the book I read before turning to any other about the Gardner Museum heist, because what I needed above all was context. Where does the Gardner heist fit in the annals of art crime? Why do thieves steal art? Why is Rembrandt so often their target? Why does it matter when a masterwork of our civilization goes missing? I brought these and other questions to my first read of this indispensable book, and I had each one answered in turn. His book takes you deep inside the gangster world that investigators have plumbed for clues about the heist and the whereabouts of the stolen art. Kurkjian overturns every rock he can find, and lays out theories with a skeptical eye. He builds his scenes around his own interactions with the suspects and investigators who have lived and breathed this case. In this book he explains how he got away with most of it – and how the law eventually caught up with him.

**Chapter 4 : Pharisee and Tax Collector | Fellowship Bible Church**

*Confessions of a Former Pharisee (1 of 7) Series: Accidental Pharisees Jim Perdue Philipians Tonight, we begin a brand new series entitled Accidental Pharisees. This has the potential to be one of the most painful series I've ever preached, but one of the most powerful series I've ever preached as well.*

In high school I only managed a decent grade in the last real math class I ever took because I figured out how to manipulate my teacher into helping me arrive at the correct answers during tests. So let me reframe that statement: In high school I succeeded in math by using my well-developed insight into how to motivate people to effectively compensate for my mathematical disadvantage. This is the story of the equation that exposed me as a modern-day Pharisee. Boo Yay In order to work this out, we first need to understand the context? See, I told you I was terrible with math! The Pharisees were the religious people of their day. They thought they loved God. They believed they loved God. They organized their whole lives around living righteously in accordance with the law of God. But actually, they were the worst! Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness. For you build tombs for the prophets your ancestors killed, and you decorate the monuments of the godly people your ancestors destroyed. Go ahead and finish what your ancestors started. How will you escape the judgment of hell? This is getting reaaaaally uncomfortable. Because bad at math or not, I can put two and two together: Even for a Pharisee like me. After all, Jesus opens the eyes of the blind Isaiah But why was that so easy? Which was the problem, because: All our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment. Realizing my true wretchedness lay in self-righteousness all the things I thought I was doing right was a hard pill to swallow. This temptation to slip into self-righteousness and become a modern-day Pharisee is a problem every one of us continually faces. So how about we find a more modern, relatable term? Like, oh, the one we just used to defend ourselves as non-Pharisees: We all know what a Good Christian does and does not do. We are capable of going through the motions of living the proper Christian life. We think our self-righteous living is evidence of true righteousness. For those of us who met Jesus later in life: We find out that Pharisees Good Christians are kind, loving, patient, generous, etc. But words like trying, striving, and attempting are all inconsistent with the fundamental nature of Christianity, which is defined by gifts like love and grace. See how good I did there? Well I think as always, it needs to start with God. Transformation and true righteousness comes only as an undeserved gift from Jesus: Ask God to open your eyes, to show you your righteous deeds as He sees them. Allow yourself to be convicted. Well I know how to be a Good Christian, a Pharisee. So take those things. Fill me with your love, your patience, your selflessness. Every time we try to be a Good Christian, we are getting into dangerous territory: So please, for your own sake, stop trying to be a Good Christian. Rather, let Christ be, in you.

**Chapter 5 : Confessions of a recovering Pharisee – Walking With A Limp**

*As a good Pharisee, I could see, Jesus was just not reading the Word like me. As a friend, I knew it was not he at fault, but me. And not just a wrong technique of Bible study - but an issue of the heart.*

May 7, 0 By Joe If you are in an argument with a Christian about morality or theology, and you want to insult that person, call him or her a Pharisee. Just the mere mention of the word “Pharisee” elicits images of snobby and arrogant religiosity. We assume the Pharisees were scum. In our preaching and in our visual depictions like movies of the Pharisees, they are law- and rules-obsessed, legalistic, fundamentalist, judgmental, and hypocritical religious leaders that heap impossible expectations onto the people. They are portrayed as caricatures of the worst of religious legalism that we cannot possibly identify with them. A few years ago, I felt the Lord prompting me to read carefully about the Pharisees, and study some Christian behavior, and then study my own behavior. I came to a scary conclusion: We are the Pharisees. I am the Pharisees. We are the religious people of the day in the same way the Pharisees were the majority belief system of Judaism of the day. When I read about the Pharisees in the New Testament, I have to see them as a warning of what I have been and what I might be, rather than as an example of what I will never be. The Pharisees were actually profoundly religious people. They were serious about God and preserving holiness in the Jewish people. Keep in mind that the Jewish people were under Roman rule and had not been its own sovereign nation for hundreds of years. They were doing what Christians often try to do amidst a culture that is hostile to Christianity. It is easy to become a Pharisee, the very thing we shake our heads at as we read the story of Jesus. Shortly after becoming a follower of Jesus, I had to adopt a lot of discipline into my life to stay on the right path, and avoid a lot of situations that would have caused me problems. As I was still wrapping my head around the meaning of grace and truth, and understanding how it applied to my life, putting guidelines into my life for my behavior was actually wise and important, even if some of them went beyond the council of scripture. A problem happens when these types of rules and guidelines become expectations and demands for the rest of the community. Hardly anyone is really worshiping or living in a biblical way. And all of a sudden, I look in the mirror and see a teacher of the law who might want to crucify another Christian. It was so subtle, it happened in such a sneaky way! But most of my mistakes with people and in community, most of my regrets, are decisions made or words said from the Pharisee in me. It changes how I interact with people. It changes how I approach a disagreement. It changes what I prioritize. It changes how I love. Hello, my name is Joe. And I am a Pharisee. But a recovering one, thank God.

**Chapter 6 : Confessions of a Pharisee | Times & Seasons**

*I have lived by the rules of the blog.quintoapp.com rules are harder to obey than those of any other Jewish group. Acts b (NIRV) Paul was a religious Pharisee and yet God used him to change the lives of more non-religious people than anyone who has lived (other than Jesus).*

I desired to disciple others into similar levels of devotion and commitment. High expectations are not necessarily a bad thing. Devotion and discipline are commendable. Yet my efforts were unsustainable, unfruitful and often unloving. In addition, I expected participation in a small group, serving in the community, evangelism everywhere from the workplace to airplanes, accountability, fasting, journaling and Scripture-memory. I worked hard at being a good disciple and pastor but was not trusting in His sanctifying grace. Yet I failed to question whether any of these things were helping me become the person God wanted me to be: I get tired just remembering all of it. I worked hard at being a good disciple and pastor and wondered what this expression might really mean for me. I had to break free from measuring my life by my disciplines and practices; otherwise I would just value and do exactly what the Pharisees valued and did, both in activity and graceless spirit. The disciplines could be varied and creative as part of a larger process of training in Christlikeness. They were not ends in themselves. It rests, it waits, it listens, it trusts and it receives love. In prayer I focus on quiet and on listening rather than listing praises or requests. My neighbors and my friends are not projects I have to win to Christ through strategic moves and invitations to Sunday services. Rather, I make myself available; I visit them and seek to be loving toward them. To be clear, my life then was not rigid and evil, and my life now is not entirely peace-filled and resting. It is present to God in new and creative ways. It is established around discovering and inventing creative adventures with God. I fight hurry by letting someone else in line ahead of me. Specifically, I pursue three creative approaches to living an abiding life with God: Therefore, I read slowly. I become available to visitors by not seeing them as interruptions. God is always at work around me, so I seek Him with a holy expectancy, hoping to recognize the potential significance of any conversation. Therefore, moment-by-moment, I ask God what I should say or do in response to a comment or observation. Also, when talking, I try to not craft my response in my head when I need to be listening. I look at inconvenient circumstances as invitations to trust His care and protection. Busy days can bring a lack of reflection. There is great value in finding time to be silent and still. Rather than filling empty time with mindless surfing or media, I dedicate some of it to asking how my day with God went. Simple, daily questions allow me to make small adjustments and to harvest what God shows me: Where was I growing, learning or seeing God in action today? What did I discover about Him? When did I feel closest to God and most in alignment with His character and His ways? By contrast, when did I feel distracted, selfish or independent of God? What sorts of things should I do more of, or less of? The questions serve as reminders to be mindful of God and my relationship with Him. They help me avoid falling into lifeless routines but rather tend to my soul throughout the day. As I see patterns in the places where I feel closest to Him, I develop a rhythm of being revitalized and rejuvenated. Moving toward a life of presence with God has freed me from my ingrained tendencies toward action, achievement, comparison and seeking to win. I prefer the freedom of training to be like Jesus in quietness and love. I prefer the fruit as well. The author recommends several helpful resources:

**Chapter 7 : Confessions of a Former Pharisee [Part 3]: Stop Trying to Be a Good Christian – Laura's Let**

*For the Pharisee, it became a life of control rather than connection with God. As I looked at how the Pharisees turned God's church into a place for themselves, not a place for others, I had to examine my own selfishness.*

**Chapter 8 : Kevin Gardner Net Worth Wiki-Bio, Married, Dating, Family, Height, Age, Ethnicity**

*Tom Chantry answers Pastor Tom Chantry, at his blog Chantry Notes, ask: Every Christian has some idea; in fact it has*

*become the Christian version of "Nazi" - you win any argument by being the first to call the other guy a Pharisee.*

## Chapter 9 : Confessions of a Nightingale | Samuel French

*Confessions of a Graverobber casting announcement Jeff Haltom as Jack Gardner "Look what the cat dragged in," exclaims Officer Donnie Marx as Officer Jack Gardner enters into the tale of two police officers and a mysterious grave robber.*