

## **Time Audit Chronicles: Warnings Against Hypocrisy** (Luke 11:37-54)

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### **Prologue: The Danger of Outward Appearances**

The Presswood family was gathered together after dinner, enjoying their usual evening reflection time. Ariel had just finished reading **Luke 11:37-54**, where Jesus confronts the **Pharisees** and **lawyers** about their focus on outward appearances while neglecting the condition of their hearts. Ariel sat quietly, contemplating the depth of Jesus' rebuke. Alice, still holding Mr. Fluffernutter, was pretending to be a Pharisee, adjusting her imaginary robe and making sure everything looked "just right," much to the amusement of everyone in the room.

"Daddy," Ariel began, her voice filled with curiosity, "Why did Jesus say these things to the Pharisees? They were religious leaders, so why did He call them hypocrites?"

Ryan smiled, recognizing that Ariel was reflecting deeply on this passage. "That's a great question, Ariel. The Pharisees were focused on following the **letter** of the law—making sure their actions looked righteous to others. But Jesus was teaching them that **true righteousness** isn't about external appearances; it's about what's in the **heart**. He was warning them that **hypocrisy**—pretending to be something you're not—is dangerous because it keeps people from experiencing God's true love and transformation."

Ariel's brow furrowed as she thought about it. "So, it wasn't about the rules themselves—it was about how they were living those rules, right? They were more concerned with looking good than actually loving God and others."

"Exactly," Ryan said. "Jesus' rebuke was a call for the Pharisees—and all of us—to look beyond outward actions and examine our hearts. It's not enough to follow rules if our hearts are far from God. Let's use the **Time Audit Machine** to go back and see how Jesus addressed the Pharisees' hypocrisy in this powerful moment."

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### **The Journey Begins: A Pharisee's Invitation (Luke 11:37)**

The Time Audit Machine hummed, and with a flash of light, the family found themselves in the midst of a bustling **dinner gathering** in a Pharisee's home. **Jesus** was sitting at the table, speaking with the religious leaders, when a **Pharisee** invited Him to dine with him. At first glance, the Pharisee seemed to be a man who lived by the rules, but as Jesus began to speak, it became clear that outward appearances weren't enough.

"This is the setting," Ryan said. "The Pharisee had invited Jesus to dinner, and it seemed like a typical encounter. But Jesus saw beyond the surface of the invitation. He knew what was in the hearts of those around Him, and He wasn't afraid to speak the truth, even when it was uncomfortable."

Ariel looked around the scene, imagining the formal setting. “It must have been an important dinner. The Pharisees were supposed to be the religious experts, right? Everyone must have been paying attention to Jesus.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “The Pharisees and religious leaders held great influence, but they were also very careful about how they appeared in public. They focused on their outward actions, often neglecting what was happening in their hearts. Jesus was about to confront this head-on.”

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### **Jesus’ Rebuke: The Pharisees’ Focus on Cleanliness and Outward Purity (Luke 11:39-41)**

As Jesus sat at the table, He noticed that the Pharisee was surprised that He had not washed His hands before the meal. In Jewish tradition, washing before eating was a ceremonial act of cleanliness. The Pharisee assumed that Jesus was neglecting an important ritual, but Jesus responded with a powerful message: It’s not the outside that matters—it’s the inside.

**“And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.”** (Luke 11:39)

Ariel blinked in surprise. “Jesus was saying that the Pharisees were focused on **cleaning** the outside, but their hearts were full of wickedness. What does that mean?”

Ryan nodded. “Jesus was using the example of a **dirty cup** to illustrate that the Pharisees were concerned about their **outward appearance**—how they looked to others—while their hearts remained unchanged. They focused on rituals, like washing their hands, but neglected the deeper issues of the heart—like **love, humility, and compassion**.”

Ariel thought about this for a moment. “So, it wasn’t about being clean on the outside—it was about being **clean on the inside**. Jesus was telling them that real purity comes from the heart, not just actions.”

“That’s exactly it,” Ryan said. “Jesus wanted them to realize that **true purity** is a matter of the **heart**, not just external actions. If the heart is right, the actions will follow.”

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### **The Woes: Jesus Confronts the Pharisees’ Hypocrisy (Luke 11:42-44)**

Jesus continued to address the Pharisees, calling out their hypocrisy. He rebuked them for their **focus on tithing** even the smallest amounts—like mint, rue, and all manner of herbs—while neglecting the **greater matters of justice and love**. He also accused them of loving the **best seats in the synagogues** and seeking the praise of others. Jesus warned that they were like **unmarked graves**, where people walked over them without realizing they were defiled.

**“But woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”** (Luke 11:42)

Ariel was stunned. “Jesus was saying that they were doing small things, like tithing herbs, but ignoring the **big things** like **justice** and **love**. Why was that so bad?”

“Jesus was showing that the **heart of the law**—love, mercy, and justice—was being ignored while the Pharisees focused on the **details**. They were following the law to the letter, but they were missing the **spirit** of the law. The law isn’t just about actions—it’s about **loving God** and loving others. Without these, the rest doesn’t matter.”

Ariel nodded, beginning to understand. “So, it wasn’t enough to follow the rules if they didn’t have love and justice in their hearts. They were just going through the motions.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Jesus wanted them to focus on what really matters—**love for God** and **love for others**—and not get lost in external rituals.”

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### **The Lawyers’ Complicity: Leading Others Astray (Luke 11:45-52)**

Jesus then turned His attention to the **lawyers**, those who taught the law. He rebuked them for **burdening others** with heavy regulations and not lifting a finger to help them. He accused them of building tombs for the prophets, yet their ancestors had killed them. By doing so, they were continuing in the ways of their forebears and were guilty of rejecting the message of the prophets.

**“Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! For ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.”** (Luke 11:46)

Ariel frowned. “So, the lawyers were teaching people all these rules, but they weren’t helping them or living by those rules themselves? They were making it harder for people to follow God’s will.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “The lawyers and Pharisees were more concerned with **power** and **status** than with helping people understand the heart of God’s law. Instead of guiding people toward a genuine relationship with God, they were making it more difficult by focusing on rituals and external appearances.”

Ariel’s eyes widened. “Jesus was telling them that they were actually **preventing** people from entering God’s Kingdom by focusing on the wrong things.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Jesus was confronting their **hypocrisy**. He wanted them to realize that their actions—no matter how righteous they seemed—meant nothing if their hearts weren’t in the right place. True righteousness is about loving God and others with all our hearts, not about impressing others with how we appear.”

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### **The Reaction: Pharisees’ Hostility (Luke 11:53-54)**

After hearing these rebukes, the Pharisees and lawyers became increasingly hostile. They began to **entrap** Jesus with questions, trying to accuse Him of breaking the law, but Jesus continued to speak the truth boldly. His message of **love, justice, and inner purity** went against everything they valued—outward appearance, rituals, and the desire for status.

**“And as He said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently, and to provoke Him to speak of many things: Laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him.”** (Luke 11:53-54)

Ariel shook her head. “Instead of listening to Jesus, the Pharisees just got angry and tried to trap Him. They didn’t want to change their ways.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “The Pharisees and lawyers were so committed to their **outward righteousness** that they couldn’t see their need for true **heart transformation**. They were more concerned with maintaining their positions of power than with hearing the truth.”

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### **Reflection: True Righteousness Comes from the Heart**

Back in the garage, the Time Audit Machine powered down, and the family sat quietly, reflecting on the powerful rebuke Jesus had given to the Pharisees and lawyers. Ariel turned to her father, deep in thought. Alice, still holding Mr. Fluffernutter, was pretending to scrub her toys clean, trying to focus on the inside, just like the story had shown.

“Jesus really challenges us to look beyond just our actions and examine our hearts,” Ariel said softly. “We can’t just follow rules or look good on the outside—we need to have **love** and **justice** in our hearts.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Jesus wants us to be **genuine** in our relationship with God, not just follow the rules for the sake of appearances. It’s not about impressing others or keeping up with rituals—it’s about **loving God** and **loving others** from the heart.”

Ariel nodded, a smile beginning to form. “So, true righteousness is about living with **integrity** and **compassion**, not just doing things to look good to others.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “And when our hearts are in the right place, our actions will follow. Jesus wants us to be real, to be loving, and to focus on the things that really matter—love, mercy, and justice.”

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### **Takeaway: Guarding Against Hypocrisy**

In Luke 11:37-54, Jesus warns the Pharisees and lawyers about the danger of **hypocrisy**—living outwardly righteous lives while neglecting the condition of the heart. Jesus teaches that true righteousness comes from **love, mercy, and justice**, not from outward appearances or rituals. He calls us to examine our hearts and to live with genuine **compassion** and **humility**. Outward actions are meaningless if the heart is not right with God. True discipleship is about loving God with all our hearts and loving others as ourselves, showing mercy and justice in all that we do. Jesus challenges us to live with integrity, focusing on the things that really matter to God.