

The Fine Work of Compartmentalizing

Matthew 23:24

Blind guides, straining out the gnat,
but swallowing the camel!

Or

Building Compartments For our Truths

The scribes and Pharisees were wonderful compartmentalizers of religion.

A compartmentalizer is someone who puts things in compartments.

Compartmentalizing IS necessary to some degree. After all, how can we 'get our minds around' certain ideas without putting them within definable limits—without putting them into mental compartments? But those limits are only limits of terminology. We have terminology, for instance, for the concept of infinity, whether we can directly experience infinity or not. So the mere fact that we compartmentalize does not make us incorrect or inaccurate. An expert compartmentalizer, then, can either be a very wise or a very perverse person. The Pharisees were very perverse people.

A proper compartmentalizer simply relates distinguishable matters to one another in proper proportion. The Pharisees had huge discrepancies between compartments and the matters in them. They could give enough *attention* to tiny details to 'strain out a gnat'; then they could *overlook* such huge universals as to 'swallow a camel'. Their study of Scripture led to the most grotesque monstrosities of doctrine. If they were going to pay such minute attention to tithing, then they should have had a vast comprehension of judgment, mercy, and faith to go along with it. In fact, in their system, tithing was *more important* than justice, mercy, or faith:

Matthew 23:23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin, and you have left aside the weightier matters of the Law: judgment, and mercy, and faith.

So the Pharisees had a rather considerable-sized compartment for tithing. It consumed a substantial portion of their lives- lives which were largely devoted to religion. Then the compartment in which they attended to matters of justice, mercy, and faith was much smaller. What's more, it was a shelf item. They simply had never perceived the proper proportions. And this was no accident. It never is. We always allot space to matters in our lives according to the workings of our spirits. The Pharisees had deformed spirits, so their doctrines had to conform to this deformity.*

Now here is the grand thing about compartments. When we make compartments for our Christianity, we

can mentally reduce the size of the surrounding world so that our compartment seems rather large by comparison. We can make our little hobby horse seem awfully important. And this is where today's Pharisees- ugly Christians- ply their trade. Rather than trying to truly evaluate what's important to God in what order, they assume that what strikes them as important is indeed the most important. They sense an area where they can make remarkable progress, so they label this area Priority One.

Obviously, this is nothing less than taking Christianity out of God's hands. It is virtually making ourselves into God.

Admittedly, we all fail in prioritizing Christian doctrine and commands properly, but there is such a thing as sincerity in motive and attempt- and then there are the Pharisees. There is such a thing as getting things in the right order- as Jesus instructed His disciples.

We all build spiritual compartments. Do ours even approximate Scriptures yet? Where do we strain at a gnat and swallow a camel?

* The correct use of doctrines is as a repair shop for our deformities.

