

GOOD WORKS WON'T WORK

No matter how hard we try, we are unable to live a righteous life.

The Bible introduces us to a group of people known as Pharisees. The word Pharisee means "set apart ones", and the Pharisees of Scripture set themselves apart from the general population by striving to live absolutely righteous lives.

In their attempt to live a righteous life, they closely examined the Scriptures trying to understand how to follow every aspect of the law. As only one example, with regard the fourth commandment (Sabbath observance), the Pharisees had determined on the basis of Exodus 31 and 35 that there were 39 categories of prohibited work.

These categories are as follows.

Planting	Shearing	Trapping	Building
Plowing	Scouring/Laundering	Slaughtering	Demolition
Reaping	Beating/Combing wool	Flaying	Extinguishing a fire
Gathering	Dyeing	Curing/Preserving	Igniting a fire
Threshing/Extraction	Spinning	Smoothing	Applying the finishing touch
Winnowing	Warping	Scoring	Transferring between domains
Sorting/Purification	Making two loops	Measured Cutting	
Grinding	Weaving	Writing	
Sifting	Separating two threads	Erasing	
Cooking/Baking	Tying		
Sewing	Untying		
Tearing			
Kneading/Amalgamation			

Each of these 39 categories then had sub-categories of work that were prohibited. So, with regard to planting, the Pharisees held discussions about whether you could pour out a bucket of water (for if you did it might water a plant and help it grow). Or...could you spit on the Sabbath? (since the spittle might water a plant and make it grow).

The point is that the Pharisees worked **very** hard at righteousness, far harder than most would try today.

Philippians 3:1-11 Paul discovered that no matter how hard he tried as a Pharisee it got him nowhere. Striving for righteousness by following the law is impossible for us as sinners to achieve.