

V. Exegesis and Exposition of Lucan Pericopes

A comprehensive exegetical/expository study of one or more complete books of the Bible on the topic of distorted thinking was not found in the literature. The parables of Christ will not be analyzed in this study, although many of them were employed to demonstrate undistorted thinking often in contrast to the distorted thinking which was rebuked. Pericopes involving either Satan or people described in the text as being possessed by demons were not covered because the focus in this study is on discovering the distorted thinking of people in general. Others have investigated these latter issues to varying degrees.¹ Consideration was given to all other narrative or hortatory pericopes (or parts thereof), which portray the various types of distorted thinking used by people whom Christ personally confronted in the book of Luke.

The scriptures were designed to be simple enough for the uneducated seeker to comprehend the essentials of the Gospel, yet complex enough that scholars would never mine all of their riches before Christ returns to reveal all (Deut. 29:29; Eccles. 12:12; 1 Cor. 13:10-12).

The hypotheses to be investigated in this chapter include the following:

1. Several types of distorted thinking were displayed by the various people Jesus confronted in the book of Luke.
2. Jesus appropriately addressed each type of distorted thinking that was mentioned in Luke.
3. Most types of distorted thinking are based first and foremost in an erroneous understanding of God, the result of a nonexistent or less than an optimally intimate relationship with him.

¹Cf. Bubeck, 1984; Murphy, 1992; Warner, 1991; Wright, 1990; and many others.

The distorted thinking utilized by people personally confronted by Christ in each passage of scripture covered in this study will be listed according to the following fifteen different types, adapted from a few of the most commonly cited lists in the literature:

1. Filtering:

(a) Disqualifying the Positives: Taking the negative details and magnifying them while filtering out all or most of the positive aspects of a situation (also called Magnifying Negatives).

(b) Global Labeling: Generalizing one or two qualities into a negative judgment. When one makes a mistake, instead of describing the error, he or she may say: "I'm a loser." When irritated one might label another: "He's a louse" (also called Stereotyping).

(c) Tunnel Vision: Ignoring "other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions."

(d) Awfulizing: Claiming that what happened was terrible or awful: "How dare you [or they]!"

2. Polarized Thinking: "Things are black or white, good or bad. One has to be perfect or is otherwise considered failure. There is no middle ground." Also called "Dichotomous Thinking" or "All or Nothing Thinking." (There is, of course, a legitimate binary distinction in the Bible between right and wrong on several issues, and no one is perfect apart from the Trinity.)

3. Overgeneralization: "... a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence. If something ... happens once, you expect it to happen over and over again."

4. Mind Reading: Knowing "what people are feeling and why they act the way they do" without their saying so. "Mind reading is hazardous at the best of times." It is dangerous to divine "how people are feeling toward you" (also called Projection).

5. Catastrophizing: Expecting disaster. Noticing or hearing about a problem and contemplating “what if’s”—“What if tragedy strikes?”; “What if it happens to you?”
6. Personalization: “Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you.” Comparing oneself “to others, trying to determine who’s smarter, better looking, etc.”
7. Control Fallacies: When feeling externally controlled, one sees oneself as helpless, a victim of fate. The fallacy of internal control has one responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: One feels resentful, thinking he or she knows what is fair but other people do not agree. The other person refuses to get on the same page, or events are not favorable.
9. Blaming: Holding other people responsible for one’s pain, or blaming oneself for every problem or reversal.
10. Shoulds: Living by a personal “list of ironclad rules about how you and other people should act. People who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you violate the rules.” These shoulds imply that if one violates the list he or she is bad and should be shamed. But in reality, some shoulds, such as those in the Bible, are good. “The Bible does not say ... ‘you should, or else you’re bad.’ It says, ‘You should, or else you will suffer and lose’ (1 Cor. 3:15).”²
11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically. If one feels stupid and boring, then he or she must be stupid and boring.

²Cloud and Townsend, 1994, 140.

12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting “that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. You need to change people because your hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on them” (also called Manipulation).

13. Assumption: “Beliefs that have been adopted without examining their basis in fact.”

14. Being Right: Thinking one is continually on trial to prove that one’s opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and one will go to any length to demonstrate one’s rightness. Example: eisegesis.

15. Reward Fallacy: One expects all sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. One may feel bitter when the reward does not come.³

Although one may perhaps quibble with some of the interpretations below, the objective is not mainly to point out the faults of those who are no longer living on earth, or to present some special never-before-heard insight. Instead, the most productive objective of this chapter is to facilitate better understanding and correction of the wrong motivations of our hearts as we learn to more fully trust God’s perspective when we are confronted with similar temptations or experiences as people mentioned in the Bible faced:

These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31).

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it (1 Cor. 10.11-3).

It will be evident below that a statement or question even given by a well meaning person may contain more than one type of distorted thinking. It is not unusual for a person to have more

³Adapted from Shepherd, “15 Styles of Distorted Thinking”; and from <http://closetoyou.org/eatingdisorders/disthink.htm>; Internet; accessed 31 May 2002; and from Davis, Internet.

than one motive for a given utterance or behavior since every deed or comment is based upon someone's personal perspective or worldview. Some pericopes may be obvious enough without belaboring the point of the types of distorted thinking utilized, while others may contain several types which are not so obvious. Each pericope below will be introduced by the scripture reference in bold, followed by a concise heading (also in bold) and this followed by parallel or related references in the other Gospels or other books within the Bible, if applicable, enclosed in parenthesis.

Luke 2:41-52 Jesus as a youth in the temple (no parallel in other Gospels)

The first recorded pericope of Jesus Christ confronting human beings in the book of Luke took place on one of his father's annual visits to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. It is not sufficiently certain whether he accompanied his father (or both of his parents) any year preceding his twelfth birthday. The trip was only a requirement for his father. For a woman to make the trip "was a sign of great piety."

Although Jesus was old enough to be taught about vows, the Jewish culture did not hold young boys responsible before God for vows until they were thirteen years old, so he was clearly considered as being under his parents' authority (cf. Numbers 30). The fact that they even took him along and remained there "until the days were complete" (**teleiwsantwn taV hmera-**), a full week, demonstrated their diligence of training him up in the faith.⁴

It was not unusual for older children to be separated from their parents (and even parents from one another) during the day and then all be reunited each night in a caravan trip (large groups being insurance against bandits) to and from a town or village. They did not even miss

⁴Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, Vol. 1, *Evangelical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 263-4.

him “being unaware (**oukegnwsan**) of his absence” until that first night of the return trip to Nazareth. But Jesus “‘remained behind’ (**upemeinen** ...) in Jerusalem.”⁵

After three days of anxiously searching for him they attempted to confront him in or near the temple where they were greatly relieved to find him, postponing perhaps for later any comments about their amazement at his wise and insightful questions and his impressive interaction with the temple teachers (not lawyers). From the statement of Mary it is clear that his parents thought it was irresponsible behavior that he did not inform them of his intentions before they left town. Some feel that this was spoken simply as a question wanting “to know why he has done such a seemingly insensitive thing”⁶ while others have viewed it as a rebuke or a reproach implying that a responsible son would never have done this: “Child, [**pai'**~, more tender than “son”] why did you do this to us? ... [we] sought you with great pain” (**ojunaw**). Jesus, knowing that they had falsely assumed that he was in their caravan leaving Jerusalem, kindly reprimanded them for worrying about him because he was a responsible child (who would not do anything wrong that would stain their family name). He employed a rhetorical question to remind his parents that it was “necessary” or “right and proper” (**det'**) for him to be in his Father’s house learning all he could, thereby implying that he was on a mission for his other Father, God.⁷

It is conceivable that Mary (in agreement with her husband) may have demonstrated all fifteen types of distorted thinking mentioned on the list we are utilizing for this study. This could be an example proving the point that breaking one law results in being guilty of breaking all the laws (James 2:10). It is possible that one could have several wrong motives behind a given comment, silence, action or inaction.

⁵Ibid., 265.

⁶Ibid., 268.

⁷Ibid., 264-75.

1. Filtering: Magnifying the negative details while filtering out positive aspects of a situation. No comment or compliment was mentioned in the text about his eagerness to learn from scholars or about his desire to please God. The main focus was negative: “It was *terrible* or *awful* of Jesus not communicate with us about this before we left town.”
2. Polarized Thinking: Jesus’ alleged failure to communicate adequately beforehand with his parents was bad, not acceptable behavior.
3. Overgeneralization: They came to a general conclusion (Jesus was in big trouble) based on a single incident or piece of evidence—he “failed” to fulfill their expectations of keeping them informed.
4. Mind Reading: Their accusative attitude indicated that they were sure why Jesus acted the way he did.
5. Catastrophizing: After three days of searching they may have expected disaster and began to think “what if’s:” What if tragedy had struck?
6. Personalization: Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you (“He was deliberately disobeying us”). You also compare yourself to others (“Are our parenting skills lacking?”).
7. Control Fallacies: If you feel externally controlled, you see yourself as helpless, a victim of fate. They were not in control of the situation but attempted to regain control.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: They may have felt resentful because they thought they knew what was fair but other people (Jesus and perhaps the teachers) did not agree. They believed it was not fair (or even right) that Jesus did not inform them of his plans.
9. Blaming: They held Jesus responsible for their great pain. (People may also blame themselves for every problem or reversal, but it is not clear if they did this.)
10. Shoulds: They had a list of ironclad rules about how other people (especially their children) should act. People who break the rules angered them.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically, so they accused or rebuked him.
12. Fallacy of Change: They expected that Jesus would change to suit them if they could just pressure or cajole him enough.
13. Assuming: They assumed that he had done wrong by remaining behind in Jerusalem without their consent.
14. Being Right: They were continually on trial to prove that their opinions and actions were correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and they were willing to go to any length to demonstrate their rightness—even to prove that Christ was wrong.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their sacrifice and self-denial to pay off, as if someone were keeping score. They may have felt bitter when the compliment, reward, or satisfaction (for “well behaved children”) did not come due to one questionable incident—his “failure” to communicate with them.

The following two lists below are presented as an example of further oversights or failures occurring within this pericope. Due to the limitations of space, all but one or two subsequent pericopes will contain a similar list. The main focus, though, will be to view them in light of the list of the fifteen different type of distorted thinking. The passages of scripture or

direct communication Mary (in conjunction with her passive husband) may have forgotten or violated could include the following:

1. Failure to recall what had been told them about Jesus before he was born (Matt. 1:18-22; Luke 1:26, 32-35; 2:28-38).
2. Failure to trust God for the care and protection of their child (Prov. 3:5-6).
3. Failure to seek God's wisdom first (Prov. 3:7).
4. Failure to love unconditionally (Lev. 19:17-18; 19:34).
5. Failure to listen before complaining, rebuking, or passing judgment (1 Kings 3:18-28).
6. Fear of being judged on parenting skills may account for the silence or passiveness of the father (Prov. 3:5-7).

For a parent born after the New Testament was completed, a similar reaction to a child's questionable behavior could possibly violate the following New Testament passages.

1. Worry, overburdened, failure to pray about everything, failure to be thankful in every circumstance (Matt. 11:28-30; Phil. 4:6-7).
2. Unconditional love (John 13:34-35).
3. Listen well before speaking and be slow about getting angry (James 1:19-20).
4. Failure to discuss things in private first, if indeed it was not done so (Matt. 18:15).
5. Fear of being judged (1 John 4:18).

The last one may seem more applicable if Mary felt that her son's "misbehavior" was an indication that she and her husband were not adequately managing him well enough and there could have been a fear that they would be disqualified from receiving something like the "Best Parents of the Year" award. They may have felt embarrassed by his supposed failure to properly submit to their authority.

Luke 4:16-30 Jesus as a leader in the synagogue

(Matt. 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6)

Jesus having just returned to Nazareth, the town in which he grew up, resumed his regular synagogue attendance. There was no evidence of any objections to Jesus' rising at the appropriate time in the service to read from the scroll of Isaiah nor was there any objections to the passage he read (Isa. 61). But the audience was keenly attentive to his initial remarks as he began expounding on the passage from the customary seated position when He claimed that He was "the fulfillment" of this passage. His skill, poise, and gracious words amazed them, but they had difficulty comprehending how this former neighbor ("Is this not Joseph's son," implying "a common man's son" or a simple carpenter's son, cf. Matthew and Mark) could possibly have fulfilled this scripture.⁸ Being fully cognizant of their "regional jealousy" (of their neighboring village of Capernaum), he quoted the popular proverb in verse 23: "Physician, heal yourself" (heal the needy folks in your own town) and followed up by saying, "No prophet is accepted in his hometown." He then offered a caution by reminding them of what rejected prophets in the past had done: Elijah and Elisha helped only non-Jews. Instead of heeding this caution, the crowd revealed their actual sordid thoughts and character (cf. Gal. 5:19-21). The following types of distorted thinking may have been utilized by some in the crowd:

8. Fallacy of Fairness: Feeling resentful because one knows what's fair but other people won't agree. The other person refuses to get on the same page.
10. Shoulds: Living by a list of ironclad rules about how one should act. People who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you violate the rules.
11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically. If one feels stupid and boring, then one must be stupid and boring. "If you feel angry, someone must have taken advantage of you."
12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. You need to change people because your hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on them.
13. Assumption: "Beliefs that have been adopted without examining their basis in fact."

⁸Ibid., 415.

14. Being Right: Believing one needs to prove to oneself and others that one's views, assumptions, and actions are all correct. "If you've got to be right, you don't listen." "Being wrong is unthinkable and you will go to any length to demonstrate your rightness."

Luke 5:1-11 The miraculous catch of fish (Matt. 4:18; Mark 1:16-20; John 1:40-42).

Peter and his fishing companions considered themselves professionals, but reluctantly agreed to go against all their training and the previous night's futile experience (**kopiasante**) by indulging the request of Jesus (the carpenter, alias a respected religious master, **epistata**) to let down their nets (ones they usually use in deep water at night) into shallower water in broad daylight in order to ascertain whether or not he knew something they did not know about fishing. The miraculous catch amazed them and convinced them that he was also the master fisherman of all time!

The types of distorted thinking Peter may have utilized by his reluctant compliance were:

1. Filtering: He was ignoring "other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions." Very reluctantly he gave Jesus a chance to prove him wrong.
11. Emotional Reasoning: He believed that what he felt "must be true—automatically."
13. Assumption: The basis for the beliefs about fishing he had adopted were never adequately examined. (Modern fishermen continually examine their beliefs and adjust them to new research they hear or read about).

Luke 5:17-25 Healing the paralytic (Matt. 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12)

Jesus, knowing exactly (**epiginwskw**) what they were thinking, strongly rebuked the large number of Pharisees and teachers of the law (who were present that day) for their distorted thinking about healing versus forgiving sins when he healed the paralyzed man. One was not easier (**eukopo**) than the other; each one could only be done through the power of God.

In the eyes of the religious leaders Jesus overstepped the boundaries between humanity and deity; and for the first time in Luke, they begin to express hostility toward him. ... [Jesus] proposed to act in his own name, so much so that the word spoken by him was the direct, unmediated word of God.

Jesus points out the logical inconsistency in his critics' attitude. After all he had been performing the other acts of healing in the same authoritative way. They themselves believed that divine healing was preceded by forgiveness. Therefore, to speak the word of forgiveness is essentially no more than to speak the word of healing.⁹

The scriptures overlooked by their distorted thinking could include the following (New Testament passages are also included for the reader's benefit even though the audience may not have been aware of them at that time):

1. Failure to know God personally (Exod. 20:1-6; Isa. 29:13; Jer. 9:23-24).
2. Failure to trust God for help and wisdom in discerning who Jesus was (Prov. 3:5-7; Phil. 4:6-7).
3. Failure to search the scriptures for right doctrine and to see if Jesus could be the Messiah (Luke 24:27; John 5:39; Acts 17:11).
4. Failure to love unconditionally (Lev. 19:11, John 13:34-35).
5. Failure to listen before complaining, rebuking, or passing judgment (1 Kings 3:18-28, James 1:19-20).
6. Failure to discuss things in private first (Matt. 18:15).
7. Fearful of being judged for not knowing who Jesus was (John 9:29-34; 1 John 4:18).

The types of distorted thinking employed by the Jewish religious leaders here were:

1. Filtering: Ignoring "other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions." The Pharisees today would have said "Tradition rules. Don't bother me with miracles or facts." "It's unacceptable if things aren't as [we] would prefer them to be."
2. Polarized Thinking: Things are black or white, good or bad. "Jesus is definitely bad."
3. Overgeneralization: A "broad, generalized conclusion, often couched in the form of absolute statements, based on a single [incident or] piece of evidence." "If something negative happens once, it may be expected to happen repeatedly." They believed that Jesus was blaspheming, claiming authority and equality with God no human could claim.
5. Catastrophizing: Anticipating disaster. Noticing or hearing about a problem and contemplating "what if's"—"What if he's right and we're wrong? Impossible!"

⁹Allen, 52.

10. **Shoulds:** Living by a list of ironclad “rules about how you and other people should act.” People who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you violate the rules.

11. **Emotional Reasoning:** Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically. “If you feel angry, someone must have taken advantage of you.”

13. **Assumption:** “Beliefs that have been adopted without examining their basis in fact.”

14. **Being Right:** Believing one needs to prove to oneself and others that one’s views, assumptions, and actions are all correct. “If you’ve got to be right, you don’t listen.” Being wrong is unthinkable. They were willing to go to any length to demonstrate their rightness.

Although there is no mention of this event happening on a Sabbath day, the opposition of the Pharisees became “virtually constant once Jesus claims to have authority to forgive sin and [later] challenges Sabbath tradition (Luke 6:1-11).”¹⁰

Luke 5:27-32 Jesus with tax collectors and “sinners” (Matt. 9:9-13; Mark 2:14-17)

During a banquet at Levi’s house (sometime after Jesus called Levi to “Follow me”) the Pharisees and teachers of the law (who would never associate with the unrighteous, such as tax collectors and sinners, had such difficulty comprehending why Jesus would do so) complained to his disciples about this. Jesus, knowing their thoughts (cf. Luke 5:22 above), set them straight with a simple illustration about a doctor not needing to spend much time with those who are healthy, but rather with those who are not. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law violated or ignored the same scriptures and utilized the same types of distorted thinking as those in the previous pericope.

Luke 6:1-5 Jesus confronts legalism on the Sabbath day (Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-27)

This is the first of the four pericopes of Luke in which Jesus confronts the distorted thinking of man made legalistic rules for the Sabbath day (6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6). Although the rules and regulations regarding Sabbath days are very few in the Bible, the Mishnah lists in detail thirty nine activities that were prohibited. The Pharisees warned via a question that

¹⁰Bock, 37.

Christ's disciples who had just passed through a grain field were "reaping, threshing, winnowing, and preparing food—a quadruple violation!"¹¹ Jesus challenged these rules by a stronger question warning the Pharisees by saying in essence, "If you are condemning me and my disciples, you are also condemning David and the priest who gave him the five loaves of the Bread of the Presence [1 Sam. 21:3], thus setting a higher requirement or standard for the Sabbath than what God ever intended the scriptures to convey."

Just as David properly understood and administrated the Sabbath in his era, Jesus was doing so in his own era. Bock believes that "the law was never intended to be interpreted so literally that compassion was excluded in a situation of basic need like David's."¹² Jesus is also making clear to everyone that he has authority both over the Sabbath and over the interpretation of any of God's laws.¹³

In addition to the scriptures violated or ignored in the previous two pericopes, the Pharisees were adhering more closely to the traditions of man which were "not authoritative or binding" than to those of God which were (Isa. 29:13; Mark 7:8-9, see also NIV Study Bible note for Mark 7:8). The types of distorted thinking utilized by the Pharisees which were different than the previous two pericopes could include:

4. Mind Reading: They felt Jesus surely did not know what his disciples were doing, because if he had, he would have stopped them.
6. Personalization: They believed their interpretation of the Sabbath laws so firmly that they took it personally when anyone "defiled" their "law" and attempted to expose the "law breakers."
9. Blaming: They were subtly attempting to blame Jesus for not having better overseen his disciples confident that if he had been a proper mentor, he would have prevented them from violating what they fervently believed to be the Sabbath laws.

¹¹Ibid., 523.

¹²Ibid., 525-7.

¹³Ibid., 532.

12. Fallacy of Change: They attempted to manipulate Jesus, to make sure that he enforces their interpretation of the laws of the Sabbath by shaming him for allowing his disciples to break their rules.

15. Reward Fallacy: They were expecting Jesus to thank them helping him catch his disciples in the act of violating the sacred laws of the Sabbath.

Luke 6:6-11 Healing a withered hand on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6)

“Unless a life was in danger, [or] a baby was to be born,” no other healing or medical work was to be done on the Sabbath according to the traditions which were in force at that time.¹⁴ The life of the man with the withered hand was not in mortal danger. The scribes and Pharisees were surreptitiously spying (**parathrew**) to see if Jesus would heal him. If so, they would have sufficient evidence to level a charge against him. After he did so in a surprising way without even touching him (thus not technically breaking the Sabbath?) but by merely speaking to him, they reacted in a mindless (**apia**), perhaps even “pathological rage,” and began making plans to destroy him.¹⁵ There was clearly no love in their hearts for him. The types of distorted thinking utilized by the Pharisees here were at least:

1. Filtering: Ignoring “other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions.” The Pharisees today would have said “Tradition rules. Don’t bother me with miracles or facts.” “It’s unacceptable if things aren’t as [we] would prefer them to be.”
2. Polarized Thinking: Things are black or white, good or bad. “Jesus was definitely bad.”
3. Overgeneralization: A “broad, generalized conclusion, often couched in the form of absolute statements, based on a single [incident or] piece of evidence.” “If something negative happens once, it may be expected to happen repeatedly.” They suspected he would violate the Sabbath again like last time.
5. Catastrophizing: They were anticipating disaster because Jesus just blasphemed by overruling their sacred Sabbath laws, and thus claiming equality with God which no human should ever do. But “What if he’s right and we’re wrong? Impossible!”
8. Fallacy of Fairness: Feeling resentful because they knew what was fair or right but Jesus did not agree. Events did not turn out in their favor.
9. Blaming: They angrily recommitted themselves to hold Jesus responsible as soon as conveniently possible for breaking their “sacred” Sabbath law.

¹⁴Ibid., 528.

¹⁵Ibid., 531.

10. Shoulds: Their ironclad rules should not have been broken, especially not by Jesus. People who break the rules angered them.

Luke 7:11-17 Raising a widow's only son during a funeral procession (similar passages: 1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:32-37; Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; John 11:1-44)

After traveling from Capernaum and approaching the city gate of Nain (now called Nein, about six miles southeast of Nazareth), Jesus, his disciples, and a great crowd accompanying them joined a large funeral procession exiting the city. “The lot of a widow in the East was hard, since she could not easily find gainful employment, and so was dependent on her nearest male relatives.”¹⁶ Her adult son was probably her main provider and protector.

It was not normal for someone to tell the bereaved in a Jewish funeral procession to stop crying. Jesus had compassion or pity on the widow and told her not to cry (“weep no more” NEB) over the loss of her only son. Employing the present imperative in telling her “Don’t cry” (μὴ κλαῖε), Jesus was implying that she should trust him for what he was about to do. He was about to help her see the situation from God’s perspective which was much better than her own limited view. Then he touched the burial plank (**sorot**,” the bier, thus technically “defiling” himself according the Pharisees’ interpretation of Num. 19:11, 16) which bore the corpse of her cloth-wrapped son, commanded him to “get up,” and “gave him back to his mother.”¹⁷

It is possible, yet not certain, that the widow saw and recognized Jesus before he spoke to her. If she did, she may have been aware of his good reputation, power, and authority. That Jesus would honor her with his presence and concern could have comforted her, but perhaps not sufficiently to stop crying for her loss. The text does not state whether or not she actually did stop crying before Jesus brought her son to her.

¹⁶Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison, eds., *Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1962), 1040.

¹⁷Bock, 648-55.

This is not an isolated case. In a later pericope (Luke 8:52), he told those mourning for Jairus' daughter to stop wailing, but they refused to trust him, mocking him instead for claiming that she was not dead. He did, however, weep with those who were still mourning (Rom. 12:15), after Lazarus had been buried three days (John 11:39-40), but here he more strongly encouraged them to trust him. There are at least two other examples in scripture of people raising someone from the dead (though in these cases after lying on top of the body): Elijah raising the only son of a widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24), and much later, Paul saying to mourners of Eutychus, "Don't be alarmed ... He's alive!" (Acts 20:9-10). In each of the above five cases, the healer was attempting to encourage the people to trust God. Many doctors in recent years are amazed at the number of patients whose recovery (even from death) cannot be explained by anything other than a miracle of God. Besides Ezekiel obeying God by not mourning over his dead wife (Ezek. 24:15-18), there are other people who obeyed when they were told not to grieve (Neh. 8:10, 11; Jer. 22:8; Luke 23:26; Rev. 5:1).

Normally one would not consider this grieving widow as having engaged in distorted thinking. Instead, we tend to feel that bereaved people are simply attempting to adjust to the "accident" or "act of God." This emotion is the result of their "automatic" thinking or perception of the event or situation. But God has shown through the prophets and other writings (such as Ezekiel, Hosea and recent studies cited elsewhere in this paper) that one's thoughts are responsible for one's beliefs that result in the displayed emotions, actions, or non-actions. According to this study's definition, her own perspective was not coinciding with God's perspective; therefore it was at least slightly distorted. But the degree of the distortion is irrelevant in this study—only the fact that her perspective was not exactly God's perspective. Although it is healthy to grieve one's loss, though temporary, one must trust God completely, not

relying on his or her on understanding or devices. She wrongly assumed that her son had died, never to rise again in her lifetime, and probably assumed that she would have a much more difficult struggle the rest of her life (overlooking the principles of Prov. 3:5-7; Phil. 4:6-7). The types of distorted thinking involved here could include:

1. Filtering: Ignoring the positives of her situation, labeling herself, overlooking the possibility of alternative solutions to her perceived difficulty, and reacting to the death by saying it was “terrible” or “awful.”
2. Polarized Thinking: She perceived her situation or lot in life as bad, not good.
4. Mind Reading: She seemed sure others would view and treat her differently now that her only son was dead.
5. Catastrophizing: She may have been expecting to begin living a very deprived life.
7. Control Fallacies: She may have felt helpless, like a victim of fate.
10. Shoulds: Whether she actually felt like it or not, her culture dictated that she should mourn for the loss of her son and abide by all the other customs of the people she related to. “The command to stop weeping ... may have seemed rude.”¹⁸
11. Emotional Reasoning: She probably thought that what she felt must be true. It is unlikely that she thought highly of herself or of her future.

Luke 7:18-24a John the Baptist’s disciples question Jesus

(Matt. 11:2-19)

Because Jesus did not seem to “match most forms of Jewish eschatological expectation” John the Baptist, while still in prison, may have had some doubts about his messianic style. He sent two of his disciples as witnesses (not just one, cf. Deut 19:15) to ask whether or not he was the “Coming One” (**ol ejrcomeno**), a title for the Messiah. Jesus, preferring that people utilize their God-given capacity to think things out properly, and encouraging them to seriously listen to God’s Spirit who can lead them into all truth (John 16:13), offered more information for them to consider, rather than telling them, “Yes” or “No.” After they had witnessed some of the miracles and preaching Jesus had just done, they returned and reported back to John in the affirmative.

Someone was harboring doubt, or uncertainty concerning the identity of Jesus. It is conceivable (though not clear in the text) that John did not know for sure, but had a “hunch”

¹⁸Pfeiffer and Harrison, 1040.

about him. John was aware that his life was about to end and hoped his disciples could at least meet Jesus. If Jesus was indeed the Messiah, he could without reservation recommend his disciples to transfer their allegiance to him after his death. John's mother, Elizabeth, and Jesus' mother, Mary, knew each other sufficiently to know that each had raised a prophet of God (Luke 1:41-56), but there is no clear evidence in the text that the two sons had mutually known each other or even met before John Baptized Jesus (Luke 3:21). If there was any failure or lack on the part of either John the Baptist or of his disciples, it may be that they had failed to search the scriptures sufficiently to see that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Jesus implied elsewhere that it was possible to discover this from the scriptures (Luke 24:25, 27; John 5:39). It is also possible that the disciples were a bit impatient, hoping that they could get a quick "yes" or "no" so they could return promptly to John. But it is clear that Jesus had his own schedule for revealing his identity and no one, not even John the Baptist or his disciples, was going to alter it (Luke 4:34-45; 8:56; 9:21, 36).

John must have felt like his forerunner, Elijah, who once said "I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I alone am left, and now they are trying to kill me, too." God told him he still had "seven thousand in Israel" who had remained faithful to him (1 Kings 19:14, 18). Jesus was discipling twelve who would disciple many and there were many others besides (cf. John 10:16; Acts 18:9-10).

So the possible applicable labels for the distorted thinking utilized in this pericope could include:

1. Filtering: Being so overwhelmed by the negatives (and doubts) going around about Jesus that the positives had been overlooked,

2. Polarized Thinking: They seemed to have a firm list of criteria that someone must meet if they were to be considered as the true Messiah and there was some doubt as to whether or not Jesus met those requirements,
3. Overgeneralization (a result of the first two distortions above): It was not until John's impending death that this generalization was questioned. There is no evidence in the Bible that there were any meetings between Jesus and John the Baptist since Jesus' Baptism, nor is there any evidence that their disciples ever met together.
5. Catastrophizing: It would be "terrible" for John's disciples to wander about aimlessly without a mentor after his own unavoidable death.
7. Control Fallacies: John felt responsible for the pain, happiness, and future guidance of his disciples. He wanted to find out if there was any reliable person he could refer them to before his demise (the fallacy of internal control).
14. Being Right: John was continually on trial to prove that his opinions and actions were correct. Being wrong was unthinkable for such leaders (unless they repented) and he may have gone to great lengths to demonstrate his rightness. He had a hunch and wanted two of his disciples to check it out.

Luke 7:36-50 Woman anointed Jesus (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8)

The Pharisee who invited Jesus to his home for a meal did not welcome, wash, or anoint him as a proper host could have done (Luke 7:44-46; Rom. 12:3; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:10; Titus 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:9; 3 John 1:8). So much for respect and honor (Rom. 13:7; 2 Pet. 2:17). This does not imply that the Pharisee was rude, just that "the woman showed more courtesy and interest."¹⁹

In the Pharisee's mind this woman was defiled, polluted, stained, or contaminated. He would never allow her to come near him, let alone associate with him or touch him because "she is a sinner" (**amartwlo'**," the text is not explicit whether or not fornication or adultery were among her sins). He thought it incredible that Jesus would not know about this woman's past if he were a prophet. And if he did know it, how could he possibly allow her to touch him and thus be defiled! Wiping, kissing, and anointing him! Though he was tense, at least he still respected Jesus by cordially calling him "Teacher" (if it was not used sarcastically). The parable Jesus responded with portrayed why one would "reasonably" think that this woman was so much more

¹⁹Bock, 701.

devoted, loving, and grateful to God than anyone else in the room (except Jesus, of course). It was actually a rebuke, because it should not be this way.²⁰

Although this event is similar to the three parallel pericopes, the distorted thinking of the people Christ confronted in the Matthew, Mark, and John passages was clearly greed. This one, however, relates instead to legalism, self-righteousness, partiality, failing to show mercy, grace, or compassion, as well as misunderstanding forgiveness. These can be covered by the following types of distorted thinking: 1. Filtering, 2. Polarized Thinking, 3. Overgeneralization, 5. Catastrophizing, 7. Control Fallacies, 9. Blaming, 10. Shoulds, 11. Emotional Reasoning, 13. Assumptions, and 14. Being Right.

The farce of legalism is exposed by the fact that anyone who has ever sinned (and all have except Christ, John 8:45-47; cf. Rom. 3:23; 5:18-19) is as guilty as the worst sinner no matter the sin. One sin is as bad as any other (cf. James 2:10). The genuine “righteous” Pharisee should be as devoted, loving, and grateful for God’s forgiveness as the worst sinner. It is a distortion of the truth to think or believe that one person is any less of a sinner than another.

The two main distinctive types of distorted thinking here were:

- 6. Personalization: Comparing oneself to others, trying to determine who is better or in this case, who is the “worst” sinner; and
- 10. Shoulds: Living by “a list of ironclad rules about how you and other people should act. People who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you violate the rules.”

Secondarily, the priest could also have been “awfulizing” (1. Filtering), blaming (9.), and feeling helpless (7. Control Fallacies) as shown by his passive-aggressive anger at the audacity of Jesus’ condoning what the woman was doing to him since he was a guest in his home. He may have been angry at himself for neglecting his duties as host, but probably only because Jesus was pointing out this “oversight” by teaching him a lesson from the actions of the female “sinner.”

²⁰Ibid., 689-709.

Luke 8:19-21 Jesus desires more mothers and brothers (Matt. 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35)

Because of the great crowd around Jesus, his mother and his brothers could not get close enough to be heard by him so they sent a message to him through others stating that they'd like to meet with him. Jesus utilized this opportunity to invite anyone willing to become adopted into his family (spiritually). Due to the ambiguity of the term translated brother (**ajel foi**), there has been much controversy (and distorted thinking) through the centuries as to whether or not Jesus had siblings, step siblings, or only cousins. Tertullian, Marcion, Epiphanius, and Jerome all participated in the debate. Some, such as Epiphanius, were "certain" of "Mary's perpetual virginity."²¹ Luke does not offer any hint of negativity toward Jesus by his family (as does Mark 3:20). This event is similar in some respects yet may not be the same event as in the accounts of Matthew and Mark. The latter ones speak of doing God's will, while Luke's thrust is hearing and applying God's word, connecting it with the previous parable of sowing God's word on good soil and reaping a fruitful harvest of good and noble works (Luke 8:9-15).

The distorted thinking here may be that his family thought that they had a more special relationship to Jesus than any of the others in the crowd. They were not content just to be a part of the crowd. Either they just wanted to be noticed, or they actually wanted to have a chance to speak personally to Jesus. If the latter, and if there was any negativity as in Mark's account, they may have been embarrassed and were hoping to shame Jesus into making more respectable and socially acceptable remarks. His response to hearing their request was a complete surprise to them. It was a call to understand and apply the Word of God as he interpreted it, not as they or other religious leaders interpreted it. Anyone doing so would be considered by him as his

²¹Ibid., 752.

mother, sister, or brother. The possible distortions going through his actual mothers and siblings minds according to our main list may have included the following:

1. Filtering: They ignored “other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions.” “It’s unacceptable if things aren’t as [we] would prefer them to be.”
4. Mind Reading: They believed that Jesus would surely consider their advice and honor them before the crowd.
7. Control Fallacies: The fallacy of internal control has one responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around. They did not want him embarrassing them or their neighbors.
10. Shoulds: Living by a list of ironclad rules about how one should act. They may have believed that he was not conforming sufficiently to the family guidelines they all grew up with.
12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. You need to change people because your hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on them. They were attempting to manipulate him to soften his tone or approach.
13. Assumption: “Beliefs that have been adopted without examining their basis in fact.”
14. Being Right: Believing one needs to prove to oneself and others that one’s views, assumptions, and actions are all correct. “If you’ve got to be right, you don’t listen.” Being wrong was unthinkable and they were attempting to explain their rightness.
15. Reward Fallacy: One expects all sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score—about how well she (Mary) raised Jesus to fit into society. She may have felt bitter when the reward or compliments were not coming from her busybody neighbors.

Luke 8:40-42, 49-56 Jesus raises a girl

(Matt. 9:18-19, 23-26; Mark 5:22-24, 35-43)

A synagogue leader named Jairus pleaded with Jesus to come and heal his only daughter who was dying at the age of twelve. But shortly thereafter news was sent that she had died. Upon arriving Jesus said, “Stop wailing ... She is not dead but asleep.” They all laughed mockingly “at him, knowing that she was dead.” They failed to recognize Jesus for who he really was. They were definitely not as the “men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chr. 12:32).

The distortions the crowd was guilty of included:

1. Filtering: “The many clear signs of death definitely outweigh any ambiguous signs of life.” They did not consider any other possible diagnosis other than their own. “It’s awful; just terrible for you to give people hope when she is clearly dead.”

2. Polarized Thinking: “Without proper medical training, you can’t be sure that she is still alive.”
3. Overgeneralization: “There are sufficient signs of death according to the majority of us here to declare her dead.”
6. Personalization: Comparison – “You have no more training than we do, so how could you be so certain that she is not dead?”
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed their feeling that she was dead.
12. Fallacy of Change: They tried to manipulate Jesus with shame into accepting their judgment that she was dead.
14. Being right: They would not listen. They were ready to “bet the farm” that they were right.

Luke 9:51-56 Jesus rebukes the sons of thunder

On his last trip to Jerusalem before his crucifixion, Jesus sent some of his disciples ahead to a village of Samaria “to make ready for him.” But when they were told that they were not welcome, James and John, Sons of Thunder (Mark 3:17), angrily reacted by asking the Lord’s permission (**qel ei-**) “to call fire down from heaven to destroy them.” But Jesus turned and rebuked them (**epitihaw**, cf. Mark 3:17), and reminded them that his mission was not to destroy them but to save them.

Jesus had more patience with these people than he did with a certain fig tree which he cursed (Matt. 21:19) because the time for him to judge people had not yet arrived (Luke 19:11-27; 21:29-36) as it had earlier with Elijah who called down fire to burn up one hundred and two soldiers (2 Kings 1:10-12), and as it had with Elisha who called out two bears to maul a group of forty-two children who had mocked him (2 Kings 2:23-24). Luke records later (10:13-16; 17:20-36) that Jesus purpose was not yet to bring judgment upon people. The Apostle Peter spoke of the Lord’s patience before final judgment (2 Pet. 3:9).

The disciples were clearly responding with revenge (Lev. 19:18; Rom. 12:19). They were “oblivious to the murderous forces in [their] hearts. ... Paul commands us to discover what

controls us at the deepest levels (2 Cor. 13:5[-9]).”²² They did not first consider God’s perspective, only their own natural instincts. According to our list, the disciples’ reaction could be labeled as Filtering/awfulizing (1), Unfairness (8), Blame (9), as well as Emotional reasoning (11). It is possible that the distorted thinking of the people of the Samaritan village who failed at first to welcome Jesus and his disciples could be considered racism or according to our list, “Personalization” (comparing and showing partiality, James 2:1, 4, 9), and refusal to offer hospitality and empathy for weary travelers, or “Polarized Thinking”; i.e., we are good and you are bad (Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9; 3 John 1:8). It may also be that they were guilty of Control Fallacies, in that they did not want a riot to break out, but wanted their village to remain peaceful.

Luke 9:57-58 The high cost of discipleship

(cf. Matt. 8:19-20)

This is the first example of excuses three different volunteers have used who thought they were ready to follow Jesus. In today’s sports terminology they would be called “wanna-be walk-ons,” not drafted. It is not clear whether or not any of the three actually did follow, but since Jesus was aware of their thoughts (John 2:24-25), he warned all three that the cost of commitment (discipleship) would be very high, much higher than that of following any other Rabbi or coach. To the first one this was by the simple statement of not guaranteeing a place to sleep every night implying: “Are you ready to suffer, to be homeless and rejected by others?” It is very likely that he chose not to follow Christ. He had not seriously considering the cost before volunteering to follow him and may have forgotten that “there’s no free lunch” (2 Sam. 24:24; Luke 14:28-33). A more recent comparison to the kind of volunteers Christ was seeking occurred in 1913 when Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton posted the following “advertisement for men

²²Huggins, 151.

to join his expedition to Antarctica: ‘Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages. Bitter cold. Long months of complete darkness. Constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.’ More than 5,000 men applied for twenty-six slots! Sort of reminds me of the risk-rewards of following Jesus.”²³

The types of distorted thinking here were:

3. Overgeneralization: He seemed fairly certain that he was qualified and could keep all of the Ten Commandments.
4. Mind Reading.
11. Emotional Reasoning.
13. Assumption.
14. Being Right.
15. Reward Fallacy: He felt sure that Jesus would have compassion on him and offer him the easy way to eternal life as a reward for all the good he had done for others.

In addition to these, he may have also utilized the following:

1. Filtering: Awfulizing – The advice Jesus gave him was terrible, unacceptable, and not what he ever wanted to hear or do.
6. Personalization: Comparing himself to others, he was sure that he had a very good chance of securing eternal life.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: Feeling resentful because it was not fair that he had to sell everything and give it all to the poor, because he never heard of anyone else who had to do this.
12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. Knowing Jesus was a man of influence and power, and being a rich and powerful man himself, he hoped that he could network and negotiate with him (and manipulate him if necessary) to easily and comfortably obtain eternal life.

Luke 9:59-60 Jesus is serious about commitment

(Matt. 8:21-22)

Jesus said to the second volunteer, “Be my follower” (**akol ouqew**). The man responded with the best possible excuse for delay a Jewish person could come up with—the need to first fulfill his familial and cultural duty of honoring his parents by burying his father. But Jesus rejects it with a pun, a rhetorical response, reminding him that his calling superseded any familial or cultural duty (cf. Matt. 10:37, Luke 14:33, and the principle behind Gen. 2:4; John 15; 17:23).

²³Terry Gott, “Saturday Work Day,” email for the men of Bethany Community Church, 7 November 2005.

Proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God has priority over obligations to those who are dead.

Unfortunately, some pastors and Christian leaders in recent centuries have gone to the opposite extreme of this man by actually leaving their wives and children “for the sake of the ministry” and thereby ignoring the requirements for (1) loving their wives as Christ loves Israel and the church (Hosea, Eph. 5:21, 23, 25-33), (2) being blameless (1Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6-7), and (3) ruling their homes well (1 Tim. 3:4-5, 10-12; Titus 1:6-9). See also the discussion of Luke 14:26 below.

The surface problem the man displayed was procrastination instead of immediate obedience. But the types of distorted thinking involved here could include:

4 Mind Reading, 11 Emotional Reasoning, 13 Assumption, and 14 Being Right: Thinking that Jesus would surely allow him to bury his father first because that was his duty.

7. Control Fallacies: The fallacy of internal control has one responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around. He did not want to disappoint his family by shirking his funeral responsibilities.

10. Shoulds: Living by a list of ironclad rules about how one should act. He knew his obligations and did not want to shirk them. People who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you violate the rules.

Luke 9:61-62 The urgency of Jesus’ message

Though it is not clear whether this third man actually volunteered or Jesus called him, he did ask permission, as Elisha requested of Elijah (1 Kings 19:19-21), to bid farewell to those in his house. While warning him of the danger of looking back, Jesus implied that his ministry, proclaiming (cf. 9:60 above) the kingdom of God (**basileia/tou’ qeou’**), is even more important and urgent than Elijah’s message was when permission was reluctantly granted to Elisha.²⁴

²⁴Walvoord and Zuck, 232-3.

It was customary to inform family members before going on a journey. It is possible, however, that he also intended to obtain their advice as to whether or not he should follow Christ, or to obtain their blessing before bidding them farewell. It was highly desirable both in that culture then and in the Esimbi culture to date to obtain the blessings of parents or guardians before beginning a venture.

As in the previous pericope above, the surface problem this man displayed was also procrastination instead of immediate obedience. The types of distorted thinking were the same, except that the details vary slightly.

Luke 10:25-37 A lawyer sought eternal life (Matt. 22:34; Mark 12:29-31; cf. Lev. 19:18)

After asking and answering, with Jesus' prompting, his own question which he had carefully prepared testing (**ekpeirazw**) Jesus about inheriting (**kl hronomew**) eternal life (**zwhf aijmio**"), and after Jesus commended him for knowing his responsibility to love God and his neighbor, the "expert in the law" hoped (in vane) to vindicate (**dikaiow**) himself. Surely "neighbor" (**plhsio**"), he thought, would not mean anyone or everyone. But Jesus proceeded to prove it did by relating the parable of the Good Samaritan. To make sure that the lawyer would not try again to evade his responsibility, Jesus made it crystal clear: "Go and do likewise."²⁵

The types of distorted thinking involved here were:

1. Filtering: He thought it would be just awful if he had to love a despised Samaritan as he loved himself, but Christ, who knew what he was thinking, implied it was mandatory.
11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically. If he felt qualified by his good deeds then he would surely inherit eternal life without giving away everything. He was hoping that Jesus was not the final authority on this matter.
12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. He attempted to use his skills as a lawyer to manipulate Christ into giving him the answer he wanted to hear, or at least giving him some "slack."

²⁵Ibid., 1018-35.

7 Control Fallacies, 13 Assumption, and 14 Being Right: Although he was a skilled lawyer (he thought), he had not adequately examined the basis of all his beliefs, so he assumed his own opinions were right. He thought he was good enough for heaven, but no one is (Rom. 3:23; Isa. 64:6). He was also assuming that he could expose Christ's faulty logic, thereby restoring the happiness of the establishment, but he failed miserably to do so because Jesus was not guilty of guile or of faulty logic.

15. Reward Fallacy: He expected all his sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. He felt bitter when he heard that he might not ever inherit eternal life simply because he could not justify selling everything and giving it all away.

Luke 10:38-42 Martha—the hostess with the least time

It is possible, but not certain that the Martha and Mary mentioned here are the same as in John 11-12 and that the location is Bethany, about three kilometers from Jerusalem. What is certain is that Martha was striving to be the perfect hostess but was so frazzled making sure everything was properly prepared and served on time that she was annoyed that she was having to do it all alone, not getting any help from her sister. The latter chose to sit herself **(parakaqezomai)** “at Jesus’ feet ... and drink in [his] words with thirst.”²⁶

Mary expresses her annoyance “in a strong and direct request” which included (1) a rhetorical question to see if Jesus really cared about her plight, the “not” (**ouj**) implies she expected he would care, (2) a complaint that Mary had “deserted her,” and (3) “a demand that Jesus” order Mary to help her. Jesus patiently responds to such requests for help without taking sides (see Luke 12:13 below) and explained to her that people are more important than tasks, implying that the opposite is distorted thinking and that fellowship was more important than food. He also invited Martha to see that the problem with her own heart—her inappropriate emotions (which may have included anger, impatience, jealousy, envy, complaining of unfairness)—was bigger than her problem with Mary. This led her to feel abandoned. She was a

²⁶Ibid., 1040.

controller, but discovered she could not manipulate Jesus or her sister when she was with him.²⁷

Jesus commended Mary for her better choice.²⁸

The distorted thinking utilized by Martha included the following:

1. Filtering: Taking the negative details and magnifying them while filtering out all positive aspects of a situation. She ignored other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions to her frustration. She was more task-oriented than people oriented. Also Martha felt it was awful: “It’s unacceptable if things aren’t as [I] would prefer them to be.”
2. Polarized Thinking: Things are black or white, good or bad. Martha was a good hostess, but Mary was not.
4. Mind Reading: Knowing what people are feeling and why they act the way they do without their saying so. Divining how people are feeling toward you. She didn’t think Mary cared enough about her or she would have been helping. She was not sure Jesus cared about her either.
6. Personalization: Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you. She thought Mary did not care about her. Comparing herself to Mary, she was sure that she was pleasing Jesus more than Mary.
7. Control Fallacies: If one feels externally controlled, one sees oneself as helpless—a victim of fate. The fallacy of internal control has one responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around. Mary was feeling overwhelmed, yet still responsible to host well.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: Martha was feeling resentful because things were not favoring her.
9. Blaming: She was holding her sister responsible for her lack of efficiency as a hostess, and blaming herself for not insisting before hand that Mary help her. Perhaps even blaming Jesus for not insisting that she join her in the food preparation and serving.
10. Shoulds: Mary who did not do what was necessary to help angered Martha who would have felt guilty if she was at Jesus feed and Mary hosting.
11. Emotional Reasoning: Martha believed that what she felt must be true—automatically. Her pain and anger indicated that Mary had taken advantage of her, and thereby hurt her.
12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. She needed Jesus to order her sister to assist her so that together they could better host him.
13. Assumption: Martha had adopted the wrong beliefs without examining their basis in fact.
14. Being Right: She strongly believed she needed to prove to herself and others that her views, assumptions, and actions were all correct. She was willing go to any length to demonstrate her rightness even to question Jesus’ concern for her “Do you not care?”
15. Reward Fallacy: She expected all her sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if Jesus was keeping score and would compliment her for her efficiency as a great hostess. She felt hurt and perhaps bitter when he complimented Mary for having made the better choice.

²⁷Huggins, 102-3.

²⁸Ibid., 1040-2.

Luke 11:29-32 People desire proof

(Matt. 12:39-42)

After declaring that the truly blessed are those who apply what they hear of the word of God (11:28, cf. James 1:22-27), Jesus reacted to the distorted thinking and “evil character” of the increasing crowd, which he knew was seeking a sign (as another crowd did in 11:16), by stating that just as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, he (Jesus) would be an sign (though even greater) to the people of this generation because he preaches a more important message than Jonah (11:29-30, cf. Mark 10:32; John 2:19-20), because he has more wisdom than Solomon (11:31), and because he himself is greater than Jonah (Luke 22:69).

The distorted thinking of the crowd Jesus was rebuking was:

10. **Shoulds:** They were living by “a list of ironclad rules about how they and Jesus should act.” They believed that Jesus should prove his truthfulness by a sign.
11. **Emotional Reasoning:** Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically. They were sure that they would believe and would follow him if he did give them a sign, but Jesus knew they would not.
12. **Fallacy of Change:** Expecting that Jesus would change to suit them if they just pressured or cajoled him enough. They thought they needed Jesus to give them a sign because it was their only hope for happiness.
13. **Assumption:** “They were sure that a sign was necessary without examining the basis for this belief. They were like doubting Thomas—seeing was their prerequisite to believing.

Luke 11:33-36 The lamp of the body

(Matt. 6:22-23)

Then in the following verse he defined the “purpose of a lamp: to guide with light.”²⁹ The light here is the message which Jesus (who said, “I am the light of the world” John 8:12; cf. John 1:4-9; 3:19; 9:5) had been preaching, the guide to a quantity of life “so abundant as to be considerably more than what one would expect or anticipate” (ζωὴν περισσὸν³⁰ cf. John 10:9-10), to proper thinking, and to spiritual health (cf. Rom. 10:17; 2 Thess. 5). In saying this, Jesus

²⁹Bock, 1099.

³⁰*Greek-English Lexicon of the NT Based on Semantic Domains (59.51), in Translator’s Workplace.*

was not accepting any blame for keeping his message secret, because it was openly declared and it was the sign the crowds were actually seeking if they would only open their ears, hear, and obey. Those who refuse the light prefer the darkness, but once a person was receptive to his teachings and was enlightened (Matt. 15:14), others would notice (unless they were purposely hiding their light, Matt. 5:15) and some (Matt. 7:14; Luke 13:24) would choose to follow in the same enlightened path (cf. John 3:16; 14:6).

The distorted thinking Jesus was rebuking here was their refusal to consider any other view but their own. This could include Tunnel Vision (an aspect of Filtering in which alternative ideas are ignored) and Being right. He was also reacting to their pressure to cajole him into giving them a sign (Fallacy of Change).

Luke 11:37-54 Jesus warns Pharisees and teachers of the law (Matt. 23; Mark 7:1-23)

This passage contains seven of the shortest and severest rebukes in the New Testament. They were directed by Jesus toward several Jewish religious leaders. These followed his general warnings in the previous section of this chapter against people or nations who ignore or reject what he had been preaching. The word translated “woe” or “alas” (**Oujai**) “is an exclamation of pain and pity for the misfortune that awaits someone in a certain condition” and is usually contrasted with blessings or with what would be best by the word “but” (**pl hn**).³¹

1. Luke 11:37-41 Traditions elevated above scripture (Matt. 15:2-20; Mark 7:1-23)

The issue which led to addressing three “Woes” each to the Pharisees and scribes was Jesus’ awareness of their thoughts (cf. John 2:24-25) about his failure to wash his hands before a meal. Having carefully observed (spied on) him (**idwn**) since he entered until he began to eat, his

³¹Ibid., 583.

host was appalled, “amazed that [Jesus] did not first wash before the meal.”³² They thought that Jesus should not be exempt from holding to the traditions of the elders of not eating “unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing” (Mark 7:3).

Recognizing this as criticism of his spirituality or piety, Jesus took the opportunity to correct the distorted thinking of all the Pharisees on this matter. True, washing hands before a meal was recommended in the Old Testament (Lev. 11:15; 15:12), but it was not commanded. Yet they were forcing others to obey it as if it were. To them it was a very important standard by which they judged a person’s righteousness, their own included.

To Jesus it was one more of the many unnecessary requirements they were claiming people should meet, the criterion they themselves set up to measure their own and others’ spirituality. Jesus generalized the issue by stressing the minimal importance of ritual external purity compared to the supreme importance of maintaining internal integrity, which is purity of the heart, the latter of which they were clearly ignoring in their own lives.

He verbally chastised them for their unmitigated hypocrisy, the foolishness of their distinguishing between internal and external purity by saying “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but your inside is full of [habitual] extortion [**ἄρπαγῆ** robbery and greed] and wickedness” (**πονηρία**)³³. Any Pharisee would strongly resent being accused of wickedness. The main principle he stressed was that if the heart was pure, the actions would also be pure. Outside cleansing rituals do not guarantee inside purity.

Jesus’ intonation, pitch, stress, and stinging indictment was not out of character with the Old Testament prophets. His remarks referring to their obsession with hand washing were

³²Ibid., 1110.

³³Ibid., 1110, 1113.

culturally appropriate, not considered rude.³⁴ The Pharisees obviously reinterpreted his condemnation as applying to sinners rather than to themselves.

While it is true that we were created for community (with each other and with God) and that true community has the five characteristics of (1) a respected authority structure, (2) a common creed, (3) traditions consisting of “activity that reinforces beliefs, values, practices, virtues, and purposes,” (4) standards, whether written or unwritten, and (5) a common purpose or mission, the Pharisees had misused their authority by drawing attention away from God and his Holiness to their own self-proclaimed righteousness. Scripture references for this include Matt. 5:20 and Luke 18:9.³⁵

They took pride in their adherence to their own standard of purity. Unfortunately it resulted in being puritanical. Every virtue has its equal and opposite quality into which one can easily slip unawares. Their two mistakes were (1) measuring their purity by themselves, by their adherence to external ritual and (2) comparing their devotion to such rituals with that of others.³⁶ Paul also gave his view of such distorted thinking in 2 Cor. 10:12 (NASB): “For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.”

In the parallel passage of Matthew, after the disciples expressed their concern that Jesus clearly offended the Pharisees by his rebuke of them, he plainly replied and implied that the Pharisees should be ignored because they are blind to the truth. If this event occurred today he

³⁴Ibid., 1113.

³⁵Randy Frazee, *The Connecting Church: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), 57-64.

³⁶T. W. Hunt, *The Mind of Christ: The Transforming Power of Thinking His Thoughts* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 39-40.

could have said “Forget about them” (cf. Matt. 15:14, *The Message*) and perhaps, “They do not really care what God says or thinks.”

There are several possible types of distorted thinking here, but they mainly involved a gross misunderstanding of the definition and purpose of purity in particular and God’s desire in general. They had redefined it so that they could easily be seen as pure from the perspective of their elite organization. The types included:

1. Filtering: Taking the negative details and magnifying them while filtering out all positive aspects of a situation. Washing hands was to them a sign of one’s righteousness, of obeying “clear commands” It was awful that Jesus should contradict all the commandments we thought were non-negotiable, such as washing hands before meals and careful tithing.
2. Polarized Thinking: They were right and he was patently wrong. It could also refer to dividing something that should not be divided. Purity should characterize the whole person, not just one aspect such as external behavior.
3. Overgeneralization: A “broad, generalized conclusion, often couched in the form of absolute statements, based on a single [incident or] piece of evidence.” They made it appear that hand washing was an absolute requirement.
10. Shoulds: Living by a list of ironclad rules about how one should act. The Pharisees were angry at Jesus for not complying with their customs. They would feel very guilty if they themselves had not followed them.
11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically. If they felt righteous for washing their hands according to their rules then they were.
13. Assumption: This belief (mandated ritual of washing hands) had been adopted without examining its basis in fact.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their sacrifices and self-denial (delayed gratification of washing their hands) to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. They felt bitter when the reward did not come and were instead rebuked.

2. Luke 11:42 Tithe, but also be just and compassionate (Matt. 23:23; Luke 18:11, 12)

Having finished giving the first warning to the Pharisees, Jesus issued the second. They were very careful in their tithing (even “the mint, rue, and every edible herb”) but they “disregard justice and the love of God.”³⁷ Another way it could be translated is: “There will be dire consequences for you, Pharisees, if you don’t repent. Though you legalistically tithe to the

³⁷Bock, 1110.

nth degree, love and justice are no concern of yours, but they sure should be. Stop being so heartless!”³⁸

They were masters at making sure they tithed on everything that was expected of them, even down to the last grain (cf. Lev. 27:30-34) distortedly thinking that this was crucial to prove to others that they were honoring God. But Jesus reminded them that they had ignored **(parercesqe, disregarded)** the more important things God demands such as administering justice, and practicing compassion (Mic. 6:8 and Zech. 7:8-10). No doubt mercy and walking humbly before God were implied as well since these were mentioned in the scriptures referred to above. (Paul later added in addition to these that we should also cloth ourselves with kindness, gentleness, and patience, Col. 3:12-13). Basically they had chosen to follow only those scriptures which were convenient for them, ones that would enable them to continue their comfortable lifestyle ignoring all other ones. In the final analysis they were not obeying the two greatest commandments because as legalists they could not do so. A type of “Causal Fallacy” utilized here is called “Insignificant: one thing is held to cause another, and it does, but it is insignificant compared to other causes of the effect.”³⁹ It is true that tithing and financial sacrifice is important, but these are not the main proof of one’s piety—other things such as obedience are much more significant (I Sam. 15:22).

Other types of distorted thinking Jesus may have been attacking them for were:

1. Filtering: They had tunnel vision, seeing the negatives or infractions of others but were blind to the logs in their own eyes such their own lack of compassion.
2. Polarized Thinking: “You have to be perfect or you’re a failure.” Every one sins more than once each day, but the Pharisees were in denial, believing they are perfect, not defiled like sinners who do not tithed “mint and rue.”

³⁸A plausible paraphrase.

³⁹Yoder, Internet.

3. Overgeneralization: They had overgeneralized tithing (not one of the original Ten Commandments) into a rigid, absolute statement thereby elevating it to be equal to keeping the Sabbath, the fourth commandment.
4. Mind Reading: They felt sure they would be highly regarded by everyone as well as by God for their meticulous tithing.
5. Catastrophizing: Anticipating disaster. Noticing or hearing about a problem and contemplating “what if’s”: What if tithing cannot be used to determine a person’s spirituality? Our whole system may come crashing down!
6. Personalization: Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you. Comparing themselves to Jesus, trying to determine who’s more spiritual, etc.
7. Control Fallacies: They thought they were setting a good example and others, including Jesus should do as they did in tithing so that they too could be considered spiritual.
10. Shoulds: Living by a list of ironclad rules about how one should act. People who break the rules, such as requirements for tithing, angered them and they would feel guilty if they violate their own rules.
11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically. If they felt righteous for their tithing then they were.
12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. You need to change people because your hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on them.
13. Assumption: The beliefs they adopted on tithing were not sufficiently examined.
14. Being Right: They were sure that they were right, there was no way they could be wrong on tithing.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their sacrifices and self-denial (delayed gratification) to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. They were bitter about being rebuked by Jesus.

3. Luke 11:43 Lust for honor and praise (cf. Matt. 23:6; Mark 12:39; Luke 1:52; 20:46)

The third warning Jesus gave to the Pharisees concerns their seeking praise and honor for themselves from others such as sitting in the best seats in at important meetings (as in synagogues and banquets) and being greeted with great flourish by others in public. It is a matter of pride (“self-aggrandizement ... [they] love to be the center of attention, but neglect the love of God”⁴⁰) and of having no concern for others. This also served as a warning that their present status may not last long—they will be humbled in God’s time. While still pregnant, Mary

⁴⁰Joel B. Green, *The Gospel Of Luke*, of *The New International Commentary of the New Testament*, ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 417.

prophesied that through her child, God would bring down the mighty from their seats and lift up the humble (Luke 1:52). Their selfishness and pride violated the following scriptures:

Serve God first – Luke 4:8; 16:32

God hates pride and arrogance – Ps. 101:5; Luke 1:50-54; Rom. 12:16

Prov. 8:1; 11:2; 13:3; 16:8; 21:24; 29:23.

Don't show partiality – James 2:1 (sitting with the VIP) and its corollary,

Serve and honor others (i.e., Don't demand that others show partiality to you) – Rom. 12:10; Phil. 2:1-5)

The types of distorted thinking confronted here include:

1. Filtering: It would be just awful if we were not honored for our strict adherence to our creed.
2. Polarized Thinking: We Pharisees are righteous. Others are not.
6. Personalization: Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you. We deserve the best seats in the meeting because we're more righteous than the others.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: Feeling resentful because Jesus won't agree with them. Also feeling resentful because others are agreeing with Jesus.
10. Shoulds: They are angry at Jesus for criticizing their natural desire for honor and popularity in public. He should instead be going after the real criminals—the murders, thieves, and the worst sinners.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They feel certain that Jesus is taking advantage of them, building up his own popularity by continually trying to make them seem like fools in the eyes of the public.
13. Assumption: There is no need to examine the basis of their beliefs since they have been handed down to them for many generations, enduring the test of time.
14. Being Right: They were sure that their views, assumptions, and actions are all correct, but Jesus was proving that they were not. They believed he was wrong.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their sacrifices and self-denial would be rewarded with the best seats, honor, and fanfare in public. They felt bitter when they were rebuked for such expectations.

4. Luke 11:44 Pharisees compared to unmarked graves (Matt. 23:27-8; cf. Num. 19:16)

The fourth warning (but the third Woe) Jesus delivered to the Pharisees concerned their leading others to damnation: “Yes, how terrible it will be for you. For you are like hidden graves in a field. People walk over them without knowing the corruption they are stepping on.” (NLT).

Though utilizing a word picture that would be most repugnant to a Pharisee, this verse is actually a recapitulation of the purity theme in verses 39-40, only more intense. “The point is that

the outwardly correct behaviour of the Pharisees conceals the fact that they are inwardly corrupt.”⁴¹ Not only are the Pharisees far from the epitome of purity, but they were aggressively seducing and trapping others to join them in impurity. They had so deceived themselves and become so distorted in their thinking, that they were not even cognizant of the fact that they, like Saul in Acts 9:1-2, were fighting the very God they so proudly claimed to serve and honor, defiling everyone they could influence in the process. Regarding Christ’s strong rebuke one commentator wrote: “A more comprehensive renunciation of the Pharisaic project is difficult to imagine.”⁴² The main types of distorted thinking addressed here were:

1. Filtering: They ignored “other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions.”
2. Polarized Thinking: They viewed things as black or white, good or bad according to their own standards instead of according to God’s standards.
7. Control Fallacies: They believed they were responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around, especially the Jews who were afraid to offend them (John 9:22; 12:42).
10. Shoulds: They lived by “a list of ironclad rules about how they and other people should act. People who” broke the rules angered them. They would feel guilty if they violated them themselves.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt “must be true—automatically.”
12. Fallacy of Change: They expected that other people would change to suit them if they just pressured or cajoled them enough. They needed to change people because their hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on getting others to agree with them.
13. Assumption: They had adopted false beliefs as true “without examining their basis in fact.”
14. Being Right: They felt they were continually on trial (during and after Christ’s ministry), to prove to Jesus and others that their opinions and actions were correct. Being wrong was unthinkable.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their “sacrifices” and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. They felt bitter when Jesus accused them of being corrupt, implying that there was no reward for them.

⁴¹I. Howard Marshall, *The Book of Luke*, of *The New International Greek Testament Commentary on the New Testament: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, eds. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978).

⁴²Green, 473.

Luke 12:13-15 Request of Jesus to arbitrate an estate (cf. Job 20:20; Ps. 62:10)

It was not unusual for a Rabbi to settle such disputes. But Jesus was fully aware of the motivation of greed (**pl eonexia**, used in the Gospels only here and in Mark 7:22) behind the request and refused to comply. He publicly rebuked the man for his selfish and therefore distorted thinking. “Jesus invited him to shift his focus from the troubling behavior of his brother to the troubling intentions of his own heart.”⁴³ This was clearly a case of materialism since Jesus followed this with “one’s life is not from the abundance of his possessions” accumulated for himself, but toward God, as he next illustrated in the parable of a certain rich man who tore down his small barns to build bigger ones to store his abundant harvest to enjoy a life of ease (cf. also James 4:13-17, all in light of Ps. 24:1). This man was ignoring his “moral responsibility before God to love and to care for the needs of others.”⁴⁴ The following types of distorted thinking were employed:

2. Polarized Thinking: My brother is wrong, but I am right.
4. Mind Reading: He was sure that Christ would see his point and rule in his favor and that his brother would offer him a larger percentage of the estate.
6. Personalization: He was comparing himself with his brother and was sure that he should be treated as an equal to him (if not better).
7. Control Fallacies: He felt like a helpless victim unless if Christ would not intervene.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: He felt resentful that he was not getting what he considered as his fair share of the estate.
9. Blaming: He blamed either the system or his brother for his perceived unfair treatment.
10. Shoulds: His brother should not be so selfish and greedy. He sure would not have been if he had been the older brother.
11. Emotional Reasoning: He felt sure that he deserved better.
12. Fallacy of Change: He needed his brother to change because his hopes for happiness seemed to depend entirely on his brother giving him a larger share of the estate. He was hoping to cajole Jesus into agreeing with him.
13. Assuming: He believed that he deserved more of the estate in spite of the facts.
14. Being Right: Being wrong was unthinkable. He was willing to go to any length to demonstrate one’s rightness, even to asking Jesus to intervene.

⁴³Huggins, 100.

⁴⁴Bock, 1148, 1153.

15. Reward Fallacy: He hoped that all his sacrifices and self-denial would pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. He felt bitter when Jesus told him not to expect anything more, and to avoid greed implying that “can fuel disagreement and disharmony.”⁴⁵

Luke 12:54-56 Failure to interpret the times correctly

(Matt. 16:2-3)

Jesus acknowledged the crowd’s ability to discern the weather, but then strongly rebuked them calling them “Hypocrites!” (**upokriθh**) for not even trying to “interpret this present time,” that is, “the current period of God’s significant activity in Christ.” The crowd was either completely blind spiritually (veiled, 2 Cor. 3:14-16) or unwilling to study the scriptures to figure out who Jesus was as well as why and how he had done so many miracles.⁴⁶ They were not at all like the “men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chr. 12:32). The common types of distorted thinking used by the crowd were at least:

1. Filtering: They ignored “other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions” as to who Jesus is and why he came. Jesus’ point of view was awful and unacceptable.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt about Jesus must be true—automatically. He’s just a carpenter’s son, perhaps a better debater, but definitely not the Messiah.
13. Assumption: They had adopted beliefs about what the Messiah would preach without thoroughly examining the scriptures.

Luke 13:1-5 Tragedy and repentance

The motivation for some present in the crowd describing a tragic scenario to Jesus was an opportunity for him to focus their thinking on a more important issue. Physical death can happen to anyone any time, any place, and in any manner. It will not necessarily be due to a person’s sins of commission or of omission. Each person needs to be prepared before tragedy strikes by confessing, repenting of their sins, and submitting themselves to God’s care and direction. This can avoid an eternal spiritual death, “a terminal fate with even greater consequences” than mere

⁴⁵Ibid, 1150.

⁴⁶Ibid., 1197-8.

physical tragedy.⁴⁷ The parable of the fig tree that followed was a reminder that one's life may be cut short at any time, but one's fruitfulness for God may prolong it (cf. Luke 3:9).

The crowd was “awfulizing” about the wrong thing. The worst possible scenario is not to physically die in some tragic way, but to spend eternity separated from God. Only for this latter reason would “awfulizing” not be considered a type of distorted thinking. Instead, it perceives reality as God sees it.

The other types of distorted thinking that had affected these people were:

1. Filtering: They took the negative details and magnified them while filtering out all or most of the positive aspects of a tragedy. They also ignored “other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions”
2. Polarized Thinking: “Things are black or white, good or bad. But there can be good, bad, and neutral things in a tragedy.
3. Overgeneralization: “... a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence.” Pilate did this once; he'll probably do it several more times, or do something even worse.
5. Catastrophizing: Expecting disaster. Noticing or hearing about a problem and contemplating “what if's”: “What if Pilate chooses me for his next act of cruelty?”
7. Control Fallacies: They saw themselves as helpless, victims of fate. (A failure to trust God to work it all out; cf. Rom. 8:28)
11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically.
13. Assumption: “Beliefs that have been adopted without examining their basis in fact.”

Luke 13:10-17 Woman healed on the Sabbath

A synagogue ruler attempted to accuse Jesus of breaking the law of the Sabbath by healing a woman who had been bent-over for eighteen years (perhaps “*spondylitis ankylopoietica* ... a fusion of the spinal bones”) and was influenced all that time by a spirit.⁴⁸ The term Jesus called him and his colleagues, “hypocrites” (**upokriḥi'**), came from the usage in Greek theaters. “A hypocrite is not an imperfect person ... [but] an *actor*, a *pretender*. ... It was their pretense

⁴⁷Ibid., 1206.

⁴⁸Ibid., 1215.

that they were righteous ... teaching one thing and doing another ... always hiding their real selves ... never being real.”⁴⁹

Trying to live under any law (such as the Sabbath) on a performance basis, whether God’s, man’s, or one’s “own self-imposed standards” will result in “fear, guilt, frustration and feelings of condemnation. You will experience a lack of ability to love God or men” because “You who are trying to be justified by the law have ... fallen away from grace” (Gal. 5:4) instead of relying on the fact that Christ has already perfectly fulfilled the law and does not need our help.⁵⁰

It is the legalist, such as the synagogue ruler above, who thinks he has fulfilled the law. But in actuality, he or she has broken at least one and is therefore guilty of having broken all of the law (James 2:10). When this rebuke was finished, Jesus’ self-righteous “opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.” The truth was vindicated. The types of distorted thinking employed by the ruler of the synagogue were:

1. Filtering: He was focusing on and magnifying the rules against “work” on the Sabbath while ignoring the higher need for compassion for the woman’s suffering. He was thinking that healing on the Sabbath was terrible or awful. “How dare he!”
2. Polarized Thinking: We are good because we abide by the traditional Sabbath rules, but Jesus is bad for breaking them.
6. Personalization: “Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to” him or to the establishment he represented (the synagogue). He was sure that he was following the law better than Jesus!
7. Control Fallacies: The synagogue ruler felt responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around. He had to maintain the status quo and attempted to rebuke Jesus for disturbing it.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: He felt resentful because he thought Jesus was unfairly mocking the traditional Sabbath rules which he held sacred. Events were not turning out in his favor.
9. Blaming: He was holding Jesus responsible for his pain—blaming him for upsetting the status quo and for contradicting his authority about the Sabbath law.

⁴⁹Bob George, *Classic Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, Inc., 1989), 146.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 145, 148.

10. **Shoulds:** He was living by “a list of ironclad rules about how [he] and other people should act. People who break the rules anger [him].” He attempted to correct Jesus’ misunderstanding as a good lawyer should.

11. **Emotional Reasoning:** He believed that what he felt must be true—automatically. He felt righteous, so he was righteous. He really believed that Jesus was wrong or misguided.

12. **Fallacy of Change:** He was expecting that Jesus could change to suit him if he would just pressure or cajole them enough. He needed to change him because his hopes for happiness depended Jesus’ conformity to the traditional Sabbath laws.

13. **Assumption:** He never sufficiently examined the all the facts of the beliefs he held about the Sabbath law.

14. **Being Right:** He felt compelled to prove that his opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong was unthinkable. He was willing to go to any length to demonstrate his convictions and his rightness.

15. **Reward Fallacy:** He expected all his sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. He felt bitter when Jesus implied that there would no desirable reward for his legalism.

Luke 13:31-35 Herod’s contract to kill Jesus

Although there is no evidence one way or the other in this text that the Pharisees are concerned about protecting Jesus from the wrath of Herod, there is no indication of a change of heart from their rage against him and their desire to accuse him (Matt. 12:10; Mark 3:2; Luke 6:7, 11; John 5:18), or trap him (Matt. 22:15, 18; Mark 12:15; Luke 20:26) either before and after this pericope in any of the Gospels. In spite of the threat on his life, Jesus refused to allow fear of arrest or death to alter his plans (cf. similar experiences of Nehemiah in Neh. 6:10, and to Paul in Acts 21:11). His total lack of fear was proven by his portrayal of King Herod as a fox (**aj wphx**), by his certainty of his prophecy of being welcomed into Jerusalem in style on the third day, and by his certainty of being killed soon after as a prophet.

While it may be debatable whether or not the Pharisees’ motivation for warning Jesus was deceptive or distorted, it is clear that Jesus considered Herod’s perspective distorted and he know the agenda of the Pharisees. Both Herod and the Pharisees must have figured that getting rid of Jesus could not be too much more difficult than getting rid of John the Baptist and then the

status quo would be restored. None of them relished any competition from Jesus. The types of distorted thinking which were displayed here could include:

1. Filtering: The Pharisees took the negative details of Herod's death threat and magnifying them while filtering out all or most of the positive aspects of the situation.
- b) "Generalizing one or two qualities into a negative global judgment," they ignored "other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions" to Herod's revenge. They claimed to believe that Herod's threat was terrible or awful.
2. Polarized Thinking: They believed that they were good but Herod was bad.
3. Overgeneralization: "... a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence." If they could get Jesus to leave town, they could restore order and regain their authority.
4. Mind Reading: They hoped and may have even believed that Jesus would see their "compassion" for him and leave town to escape Herod's contract on his life
5. Catastrophizing: They had contemplated the "what if's?" of Jesus' undermining much of what they stood for. They were concerned more about their job security.⁵¹ They did not like what they saw, so they encouraged him to leave town under the guise of saving his life from Herod.
6. Personalization: They realized that they could not compare themselves favorably with Jesus in the eyes of the crowds, so it was time to encourage him to leave their jurisdiction.
7. Control Fallacies: They felt helpless and unrespected with Jesus around, but also felt responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone else so they were convinced that the least troublesome solution would be for him to leave town and hopefully never come back (unless he agreed to their rules and submitted to their authority).
8. Fallacy of Fairness: Events were not in their favor unless he left town.
9. Blaming: They were blaming Jesus for their pain and for contradicting their authority.
10. Shoulds: They were living by "a list of ironclad rules about how [they] and other people should act." Jesus broke their rules and this angered them.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.
12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting "that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough." They needed to change Jesus because their hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely his agreeing with them.
13. Assumption: They never sufficiently examined the all the facts of the beliefs they held.
14. Being Right: They felt compelled to prove that their opinions and actions were correct. Being wrong is unthinkable. They were willing to go to any length to demonstrate their rightness—including convincing Jesus that they cared about saving his life from Herod's wrath.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected Jesus to reward them for their concern for his life, but he did not even thank them or compliment them. He instead adamantly refused to follow their "helpful" or "compassionate" advice.

⁵¹Ibid., 141.

Luke 14:1-6 Compassion for the man with dropsy on the Sabbath

This one is less intense than the pericope above about healing the bent-over woman (Luke 13:10-17) because Jesus, fully aware of the possibility of entrapment (11:54; 19:47), asked the Pharisees directly, here, if healing on the Sabbath was permitted (**εἰκῆστι**) by the law. There is much debate among the commentators as to whether or not their silence to this question was due to a division among the lawyers and Pharisees on this matter, due to the invited guest (their test case?), or due to feeling guilty for stubbornly holding to their compassionless tradition. It is clear, though, that they were watching Jesus closely (**παρῆθρευ**) to see what he would do (cf. 11:54; 19:47). But trap or no trap, Sabbath or not, he chose to help the man.⁵² This last and final Sabbath day healing mentioned by Luke ended with a strong rebuke and a personalized rhetorical question which was in essence a call for them to repent. They were unable to offer a reply or refute him (οὐκ ἴσχυσαν ἀνταποκριθῆναι). Their silence gave no indication of their admitting any change of heart.⁵³

Pride, stubbornness, and lack of compassion were clearly involved here. These resulted from the following types of distorted thinking:

1. Filtering: They took the negative details and magnified them while filtering out all or most of the positive aspects of the situation, such as compassion. They generalized “one or two qualities into a negative global judgment” of Jesus and his followers. They ignored Jesus question, refusing to publicly admit that it was a possible alternative solution. They thought that healing on the Sabbath was terrible or awful, a major infraction.
2. Polarized Thinking: Healing on the Sabbath was wrong—bad—they thought.
4. Mind Reading: By now it was predictable that Jesus would heal on the Sabbath, but they were still powerless to do anything about it except to be silent. They knew Jesus was going to rebuke them again, but they did not know how much he could love and care about them personally.
6. Personalization: They felt “smarter, better looking, etc.” than the man with dropsy, but they could not stand up to Jesus.

⁵²Bock, 1257.

⁵³Ibid.

7. Control Fallacies: They felt responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone else around, but hindered by Jesus. They were biding their time until they could gain control over Jesus (cf. 11:54) and thus have their authority restored.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: They were resentful because Jesus refuses to get on the same page, or events are not favorable—yet.
9. Blaming: They were holding Jesus responsible for their pain, blaming him for every problem or reversal.
10. Shoulds: They lived by “a list of ironclad rules about how [they] and other people should act. People who” broke the rules angered them.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically. They felt Jesus was wrong or misguided. They also felt he would not listen to them, and since they could not compete with him in debate, they kept silent.
12. Fallacy of Change: They expecting Jesus would change to suit them if they just pressured or cajoled him enough. Their hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on him agreeing with them.
13. Assumption: They had adopted many beliefs “without examining their basis in fact.”
14. Being Right: They felt that because of Jesus presence they were continually on trial to prove that their opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong was unthinkable. They were willing to go to any length to demonstrate their rightness.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. They felt bitter when they realized that the reward they expected was not coming.

Luke 14:7-14 Overcoming pride and selfishness

1. Luke 14:7-11 Striving for the best seat

After noticing (ἐπέχω) how the invited guests each tried to choose a seat of honor (πρωτοκλισία, lit., first or best reclining place) at the same meal mentioned above, Jesus warned them all via a parable against this type of pride suggesting that it would be better to be promoted from a humbler seat by the host or master than to be demoted from a seat of honor and thereby humiliated. Those striving for the best seats were submitting to the following types of distorted thinking:

4. Mind Reading: Believing (gambling) that the host would agree with their choice of seat and grant them the honor at least appropriate to that seat or better if someone was in already in it.
6. Personalization: Comparing themselves to others, trying to determine the “correct” seating order of those present and perhaps those likely to arrive. Verifying their place in the pecking order or rank.
13. Assumption: Believing that it is not necessary to ask the busy host where they should sit.

15. Reward Fallacy: Expecting all their sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if the host were keeping score. Feeling bitter when the host does not agree with their choice of seat.

2. Luke 14:12-14 Inviting only guests who can reciprocate

Christ reminded them that the motive for inviting guests should not be for reciprocation in kind as was the normal custom. Rebuking this, he promised that inviting guests who cannot reciprocate would be repaid (ἀνταποδοῦμαι) by the Father at the resurrection of the righteous. The Bible encourages generous hospitality with no ulterior motive and no concern for cost so the guests can relax and enjoy the gathering (cf. Prov. 23:1-3, 6-8).

The types of distorted thinking that can result in following the normal custom include:

1. Filtering: They were rebuked for ignoring the biblical view of inviting guests. They believed that it would be terrible or awful to invite the poor, blind, lame, etc.
2. Polarized Thinking: It would be good to invite some respectable people but bad to invite sinners, publicans, and the less desirable folks.
3. Overgeneralization: Concluding that a certain person (or persons) who caused you pain or trouble in the past should never ever be your guest(s) or you may get hurt again.
5. Catastrophizing: Expecting disaster if you should ever invite such people.
6. Personalization: “Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you.” So, it is best not to invite such people. Comparing oneself to others—if no one else is inviting such people, why should I? If so and so invites such people, I may try it, but perhaps only once.
7. Control Fallacies: Feeling helpless to organize and fund any such gathering yet refusing to fulfill their biblically mandated responsibility to the poor and needy (cf. Luke 12:13-15; 18:18-30).
8. Fallacy of Fairness: Feeling resentful because one thinks one knows what’s fair but Jesus and perhaps others won’t agree. It is not fair to me if nobody else is willing to invite such people to their houses. I will not do it if no one else does.
9. Blaming: Holding other people, even Jesus and God, responsible for one’s pain, problem, or reversal should anything go wrong.
10. Shoulds: How can I invite people to my house who would break the rules I live by? I could become angry and send them away hungry.
11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically. I am not a good host for such people and never will be. It would be foolish to even try.
12. Fallacy of Change: Perhaps I could still get the reward if I pressure or cajole someone else (a missionary type) to host such people in their home. I’d help them with a token financial gift now and then and perhaps a letter or phone call if I have time.
13. Assumption: Even God could not protect my family and me from all the germs and bacteria that such people would bring into my house. I would have to fumigate the house and sanitize everything after they leave; check for any damage; and make appointments with our

doctor to make sure we did not catch anything from them. My neighbors would wonder about my sanity for hosting such people.

14. Being Right: Thinking one is continually on trial to prove that one's opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and one will go to any length to demonstrate one's rightness.

15. Reward Fallacy: They would expect such major sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. One may feel bitter when the reward doesn't come for all the expense and effort.

Luke 14:15-24 Who's invited to the Kingdom banquet? (Matt. 22:14-21, cf. Isa. 25:6; Matt. 8:11; 25:1-10; 26:29; Luke 13:29; Rev. 19:9)

One unnamed guest, uncomfortable with what Jesus had just said was so inspired by the last word he spoke (δικαιο," righteous, verse 14) and of the topic of a banquet that he took the opportunity to relieve the tension by dreaming out loud about how blessed he and his righteous friends would be at the future banquet of the Kingdom of God. "The underlying assumption of this remark [was] that the Pharisees will be the blessed at the table."⁵⁴ Jesus' reply made it clear in the following parable that this guest and the Pharisees were not listening, and that it was unlikely that they would be at that banquet if they continued to be preoccupied with their traditions and their own "importance." The banquet in the parable was not a "life-threatening" situation so the excuses of Deut. 20:5-7 and 24:5 would not be acceptable for refusing an invitation. The types of distorted thinking employed by the unnamed guest included the following:

1. Filtering: He ignored Jesus' point of view because it would be terrible or awful for him and the Pharisees.
2. Polarized Thinking and 6. Personalization: Things are black or white, good or bad. Comparison – He was sure that he and the Pharisees were perfect and righteous, not like the sinners who were failures.
4. Mind Reading: He was thinking that Jesus really did not mean what he had said. Surely he was going to recognize their righteousness in his next comments.
7. Control Fallacies: He felt responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: He felt resentful because he thinks he knows what's fair but Jesus was not agreeing with him.

⁵⁴Ibid., 1272.

9. Blaming: He was secretly holding Jesus responsible for his pain or uncomfortableness.
10. Shoulds: He was living by “a list of ironclad rules about how [he] and other people should act.” People who broke the rules angered him.
11. Emotional Reasoning: He believed that what he felt must be true—automatically. If he felt righteous he was righteous. If he felt Jesus was wrong or misguided, he was.
12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting “that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. You need to change people because your hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on them.”
13. Assumption: “Beliefs that have been adopted without examining their basis in fact.”
14. Being Right: Thinking one is continually on trial to prove that one’s opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and one will go to any length to demonstrate one’s rightness.
15. Reward Fallacy: One expects all sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. One may feel bitter when the reward doesn’t come.

Luke 15:1-3 Jesus fellowships with “sinners” (cf. Luke 5:30; 7:34-39; 14:23-24; 19:7)

The Pharisees and scribes present were sneering at Jesus (Οὗτος, “This one”), and grumbling thoroughly (διαγογγυῖω, murmuring, muttering or complaining aloud) about his associating and eating with tax collectors and sinners. They were “scandalized because Jesus did not treat these disreputables as they did.”⁵⁵ Jesus answered their scornful, adamant, and deeply ingrained bigotry with three parables portraying God’s gracious forgiveness, restoration, and celebration of repentant sinners (the lost who are found): the Lost Sheep (15:4-7), the Lost Coin (15:8-10), and the Lost Son (15:11-32).⁵⁶ Their distorted thinking involved:

1. Filtering: They considered tax collectors and sinners as people of bad character. They ignored “other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions,” and they claimed that Jesus’ association with sinners was terrible or awful.
2. Polarized Thinking: “Things are black or white, good or bad.” You have to be perfect or you’re a failure. They viewed these “disreputables” as chronic failures—losers.
4. Mind Reading: They were sure they knew how sinners felt and why they acted the way they did. They were hopelessly lost and could never enter the Kingdom of God.
6. Personalization: They were certain that they were more pure than Jesus who was defiling himself with sinners (if not also smarter, better dressed, and better looking).

⁵⁵Robert E. Smith, ed., *Exegetical Helps On Luke*, Vol. 2 (Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, n. d.), 139.

⁵⁶John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 244.

7. Control Fallacies: They succumbed to the fallacy of internal control by feeling responsible for the pain and happiness of their own group (Pharisees and lawyers).
8. Fallacy of Fairness: They felt resentful because they thought they knew what was fair and just but Jesus and his disciples were not agreeing.
9. Blaming: They were holding other people responsible for their pain, blaming him for associating with people Jesus knew they would never touch or communicate with.
10. Shoulds: Their “list of ironclad rules” stated that neither they nor Jesus should associate with such immoral people. When Jesus breaks their rules, they get angry.
11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically.
12. Fallacy of Change: They were extremely frustrated and angry that they could not change Jesus to their way of thinking.
13. Assumption: They believed that Jesus was defiling himself by associating with such people.
14. Being Right: It was unthinkable for them to be wrong. They were willing to go to any length to demonstrate their rightness and their righteousness.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. They would feel bitter if the expected reward did not come.

Luke 16:14-15 Warning against self-justification

Having just heard Jesus’ parable of the firing of a head financial officer due to his shrewd but dishonest management of funds (Luke 16:1-12) and that they cannot serve both God and money (v. 13), the Pharisees (unknowingly? guilty of avarice – φιλάργυρο", lovers of money), were deriding (KJV), making fun of (TEV), laughing at (JB), sneering at (NIV), scoffing at (LB, NEB, NASB, RSV), showing strong contempt for or “turning up their nose at” (ἐκμυκτηριῶ)⁵⁷ Jesus. Their negative comments were an effort to nullify his teachings in the eyes of the audience, hinting that Jesus did not know what he was talking about.⁵⁸ Here was Jesus, a poor man, teaching other poor folks about money, yet none of them were blessed by God with material things.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Bock, 1349.

⁵⁸Ibid., 1349-50.

⁵⁹Walvoord and Zuck, 246.

Jesus made it clear once again in verse 15 (cf. Luke 10:29-35; 11:39-52 and later in 18:9-14) that their prideful legalistic adherence to the law was detestable (**bdel ugma**) to God.

“Idiomatically, it ... stinks.”⁶⁰ One may well wonder if the Pharisees ever read Isa. 58 or if they realized Jesus had been indirectly pointed it out to them many times. If they were familiar with it, they certainly did not think that it applied to them, but instead to “sinners.” The distorted thinking types the Pharisees employed include the following:

1. Filtering: Since there were so many “major” negatives about Jesus and his teachings, there was not much point in considering any of his positives. Since Jesus was obviously confused on a couple of key issues, he was strongly suspect on all others and not to be trusted. They ignored and turned up their noses at Jesus’ point of view. His was not a reasonable alternative solution to them. He was definitely a loser; a bad guy; perhaps a “wannabe” leader (Global labeling). By their contempt, they claimed that what Jesus was teaching was terrible or awful.
2. Polarized Thinking: “Things are black or white, good or bad.” They were certain that Jesus could not possibly have been perfect!
4. Mind Reading: They were sure that Jesus was confused, perhaps even deluded, so they could understand why he was always contradicting them since he always insisted on conveying his ill feelings toward them and the traditions they held sacred.
5. Catastrophizing: Expecting disaster from his “tirades” against them,
6. Personalization: They were sure that nearly everything Jesus was saying was some kind of cruel reaction to them. They were hoping that their criticism of him would convince the crowd that they were more mature and educated than Jesus.
7. Control Fallacies: They felt responsible to make sure that the public did not accept the strange doctrines Jesus was teaching so they used snide remarks and criticism to help them realize that Jesus was not quite kosher. His opinions were not those of the ruling religious leaders.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: They felt resentful of his “mud slinging” critical remarks against them. He was not being fair at all, they thought. Things were not turning out in their favor.
9. Blaming: They felt that Jesus was personally responsible for the pain and public embarrassment they were experiencing.
10. Shoulds: In their opinion, Jesus was not behaving as he ought to. They were angry about all their rules he was breaking.
11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically. Since they felt Jesus was mentally unstable, he probably was.
12. Fallacy of Change: Their job security depended upon respect and admiration from the crowds so they needed Jesus to change his opinion about them or at least they needed to pressure the people into not accepting everything Jesus taught.

⁶⁰Bock, 1350.

13. Assumption: Many of their beliefs had been adopted without examining their basis in fact.

14. Being Right: They were willing to go to any length to demonstrate their rightness, including using snide and contemptuous remarks.

15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their years of sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score on their obedience to their traditional rituals. They were bitter because of Jesus' allegations that there would be no reward for them.

Luke 17:5-6 Faith is trust in God

(Matt. 17:20; 21:21; Mark 11:22)

In response to Luke's previous teachings of Jesus (7:50; 8:25, 48, 50; 12:4-12, 24-34)⁶¹ and to what they viewed as an undeveloped area in their lives, the disciples begged Jesus to help them increase their faith. Jesus responded in his characteristic way of correcting their thinking by catching them off guard with a hyperbolic metaphor not intended to be taken literally. Faith is not something that can be quantified, but it is rather something one has or does not have. It is simply trusting in God to do what would be most appropriate for the Kingdom.⁶² The writer of Hebrews reminds us that "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (11:6, NASB) The distortions portrayed here may include:

1. Filtering: The apostles were overwhelmed with what they thought was their own lack of adequate faith. It was just awful that they did not have the faith they thought that they should have.
2. Polarized Thinking: They felt they were failures in the area of faith.
3. Overgeneralization: They felt that they could not be respectable disciples if their faith could not be increased or added to by Jesus.
4. Mind Reading: They were sure that Jesus could and would add to their faith because he would surely want to empower them to serve God better.
7. Control Fallacies: They felt helpless to exercise more faith, but they were humble enough to ask for help from Jesus.
9. Blaming: They may have been blaming themselves for their lack of faith, yet it is possible that they were wondering why Jesus had not already taught them how to have more faith.

⁶¹Ibid., 1390.

⁶²Ibid., 1390-1.

11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed their feelings that they did not have enough faith.
12. Fallacy of Change: They were hoping that with a little prompting Jesus would quickly and abundantly add to their faith so that they could happily perform miracles as he did. They knew of no one else could do this for them.
13. Assumption: They did not examine the basis of their belief about their insufficient faith.

Luke 17:11-19 Teaching about gratitude

Addressing Jesus as master (**epistath**," never used by other "non-disciples"), ten lepers, standing some distance from him, pleaded urgently for his mercy (**ej eew**, which implied immediate healing). Without hesitation, Jesus had compassion and challenged their faith by commanding them to go and see the priest (Lev. 14:1-11; cf. Mark 1:44 and Luke 5:14). As they were going, they were all healed, but only one, the only foreigner—a "despised Samaritan," returned to excitedly thank and praise (**doxazw**) him. Jesus rebuked the lack of gratitude of the other nine. They may all have been Jews, but they were only healed, not reconciled to God. The Samaritan had a deeper relationship since Jesus proclaimed, "Your faith has saved you."⁶³

1. Filtering: The ten lepers more concerned about negative state of affairs than anything else. They were very tired of hearing people shout "Unclean" at them. They refused to consider any "other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions" to their leprosy. They felt that having leprosy was just terrible or awful.
2. Polarized Thinking: They were convinced that life was bad for them as lepers.
4. Mind Reading: They knew that Jesus was compassionate and were hoping that he would have pity on them and heal them.
7. Control Fallacies: They saw themselves as helpless, a victim of fate.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that life was hopeless for them if they remained lepers.
12. Fallacy of Change: They were hoping that if they used the right humble approach Jesus just might listen to them and grant them their request for healing. He was their only hope for happiness.

⁶³Ibid., 1400-5.

Luke 17:20-37 The location of the Kingdom of God

The Pharisees who have often attempted to trap Jesus by trick questions have not suddenly become serious students of Jesus. This is yet another test, or at least another challenge to see if he knows more than they do about the Kingdom of God. The controversy continues between them. Their question about the coming of the Kingdom assumes that it has not yet come.

Although “the present tense [ἔρχομαι, come] is translated by some as a futuristic present,”⁶⁴ it just is ambiguous enough that the Pharisees felt confident they should be expecting someone of a much higher stature than Jesus, a simple carpenter. They expected more spectacular events leading up to the arrival of the Kingdom. As many today speculated on the date of Jesus second coming, the Pharisees enjoyed the sport of trying to guess his first coming. Jesus responded with the same ambiguous word explaining that the Kingdom “is not coming ... ‘with observation’ ... μετὰ ἡΐς...” which is interpreted by scholars in four different ways.⁶⁵

Utilizing his skill with words Jesus said one more time clearly enough for both scholars today and some open minded people in the audience at time to understand that he himself was the sign. But this was beyond the comprehension of the Pharisees since they had ignored his previous explanations of this (Luke 4:16-30; 7:22-28; 9:1-6; 10:17-20; 11:20; 16:16). They did not realize that Jesus himself was the key to understanding the parable about the Kingdom of God in Luke 13:18-20.⁶⁶

Although this is the meaning of the passage, many English speakers of the literal persuasion still quibble over whether the translation should read “The Kingdom of God is ...” (1)

⁶⁴Ibid., 1412.

⁶⁵Ibid., 1411-4.

⁶⁶Ibid., 1411-8.

“... *within* you” or (2) “... *among/in the midst of* you.” Many commentaries support the latter, but the KJV, NKJV, TEV, NIV, JBP, LB, NCV versions support the former.⁶⁷ It is highly unlikely that the Kingdom of God was actually within either the Pharisees or within anyone today who does not accept the truths of Christ (like the followers of New Age who claim this verse as the basis for their non-biblical beliefs). The main areas of distortion utilized by the Pharisees:

- 11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what they felt must be true—automatically
- 12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting that Jesus would change to suit them if they just pressure or cajole him enough.
- 14. Being Right: Thinking they are continually on trial to prove that their opinions and actions were correct. Being wrong was unthinkable and they were willing to go to any length to demonstrate their rightness.

Luke 18:15-17 The trust of a child

(Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16)

One day, perhaps just after finishing the parable contrasting the Pharisee and the tax collector praying in the temple (18:9-14), though probably not on the customary Day of Atonement when elders and scribes bless infants, people began to bring their little ones (**brefo**) to Jesus hoping that he would touch (ἅπτω) and thereby bless each one. The disciples noticed this and rebuked these people before verifying whether such authority for rebuking them had been granted to them by their master. Jesus nullified their rebuke with his double command that they permit them to come to him (**ajfihmi**, permit; **kwl uw**, hinder). According to the parallel passage in Mark 10:14, Jesus was indignant or angry (**ajavaktew**) with his disciples for rebuking the children.

Contrary to popular belief, then and now, Jesus showed once again that there is no insignificant person in the Kingdom of God. Other times, the sick, lepers, tax collectors,

⁶⁷Jerry Allen, *Translator's Notes On Luke* (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2000), in *Translator's Workplace*.

prostitutes, and other sinners were mentioned to teach a similar lesson. But the new focus here was on childlike dependent trust and reliance on God, the example for all to follow: “whoever cannot receive the kingdom of God like a child cannot come into it.”⁶⁸ Distortions which could have been used:

1. Filtering: Children would be a nuisance to Jesus. They thought it was awful for children to bother Jesus. They could not consider any other point of view but their own.
2. Polarized Thinking: They wanted to be good disciples so they felt they needed to keep the bad people away from Jesus. Bad people were those who would bother Jesus.
4. Mind Reading: They figured that Jesus would not want to be bothered by children.
5. Catastrophizing: Expecting disaster. Noticing or hearing about a problem and contemplating “what if’s”: “What if tragedy strikes?” “What if it happens to you?”
6. Personalization: They considered the children as insignificant and as a hindrance to Jesus’ ministry.
7. Control Fallacies: They felt responsible for the keeping people from bothering Jesus.
10. Shoulds: They may have felt that “children should be seen and not heard. Breaking that rule resulted in their becoming angry at them for trying to bother Jesus.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.
12. Fallacy of Change: They expected that the people and children would change to suit them if you just pressure or cajole them enough. They thought they needed them to change because their hopes for peace and happiness seem to depend entirely on them not bothering Jesus.
13. Assumption: “Beliefs that have been adopted without examining their basis in fact.”
14. Being Right: They were sure that rebuking the children was the right thing to do.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their efforts of protecting Jesus from being bothered by children to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. They were surprised that their protection was not desired.

Luke 18:18-30 Rich ruler worships money

(Matt. 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31)

A rich young (Matt. 19:20, 22) ruler (ἄρχων), probably holding the same beliefs as the Pharisees, though not as dogmatic), addressing Jesus as “Good teacher,” enquired about how he could inherit eternal life—exactly as the lawyer did in Luke 10:25 (except without the “good”). He wanted “advice on how to make his self-centered existence more effective, more rewarding, more secure. ... He was asking for self-improvement counseling, but he needed self-deliverance

⁶⁸Bock, 1469-71.

counseling.”⁶⁹ Life depends not on his goodness, but upon God’s. Jesus responded by rejecting what he knew was the man’s attempt at flattery that could only be fit for God and by reviewing in a specific order the five human relational commands of the Ten Commandments (7, 6, 8, 9, and 5). He denied having ever broken any of them since he reached “religious and legal maturity” (νεότης, a youth).⁷⁰

Jesus challenged him: as much as you have (ὅσα ἔχεις) sell and distribute (δίδομι) to the poor, “and come and follow me.” His spiritual poverty was exposed. He became deeply grieved (περίλυπος) for he was very rich (πλούσιος) not willing to do what Peter, James and John had done (Luke 5:11). He may have faded back into the crowd since he was not mentioned again (Mathew and Mark say he walked away). This challenge related to the other half of the Ten Commandments. He had placed his love for riches above his love for God, clearly idolatry. Such an attitude, of course, is counterproductive to both humble trust in God as well as to full compliance with the five human relational commands.

1. Filtering: The rich young ruler took the negative details and magnified them while filtering out all or most of the positive aspects of Jesus’ suggestion thereby ignoring his point of view. He thought it would be terrible or awful to not have any of his possessions.
2. Polarized Thinking: He thought that he was a good man, not bad.
4. Mind Reading: He was sure that Jesus would feel good about him and grant him eternal life for all the good he has done.
5. Catastrophizing: He was expecting disaster and perhaps poverty if he did sell all and give to the poor. He could not bear such an experience.
6. Personalization: Comparing himself to others, he was sure that he was better than most and should be granted have eternal life.
7. Control Fallacies: He thought that he had everything under control in his life and business, but upon hearing Jesus’ response he began to see himself as helpless, a victim of fate.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: He felt resentful because he thought he knew what was fair but Jesus did not agree. Events did not turn out in his favor.
10. Shoulds: He was sure that he was fulfilling the rules about how he and other people should act.
11. Emotional Reasoning: He believed that what he felt must be true—automatically.

⁶⁹Huggins, 89.

⁷⁰Bock, 1480.

12. Fallacy of Change: He expect that Jesus would accept him if he could just convince, pressure or cajole him enough to recognize his own good deeds. His hopes for eternal life and happiness seemed to depend entirely on Jesus' giving him the response he desired.

13. Assumption: He had adopted his beliefs without examining their basis in fact.

14. Being Right: He was sure he was deserving of eternal life. Being wrong was unthinkable so he attempted to prove his righteousness.

15. Reward Fallacy: He expected all sacrifices, self-denial, and good works to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. He felt bitter when the reward did not come.

Luke 18:35-43

Blind man healed

(Matt. 9:27-31; Mark 8:22-26)

This pericope contains the last miracle mentioned by Luke, but it demonstrated again the tendency of crowds or mobs to become distorted in their thinking and to withhold compassion from “the poor and rejected” of society.⁷¹ They were kind enough to inform him that Jesus was passing by, but they were unkind in their strong rebuke (**epitimaw**) of him when they told him to be quiet (**sigaw**, i.e., to “shut up”) after he had cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Their compassionless “knee jerk” reaction to his cry only fueled his earnestness to cry out even louder.⁷² Jesus' command for him to be brought before him was a mild reprimand to the crowd which forbade him to speak out. The crowd complied, and Jesus mercifully healed him, perhaps as a reminder that he was indeed fulfilling the prophecy of Isa. 61:1 as proclaimed back in Luke 4:18.

1. Filtering:

The crowd was concentrating on the negative details of the blind man's shouting while filtering out the positive possibilities of his situation, proximity to Jesus the healer.

The crowd was considering him rude and inconsiderate with his loud outbursts.

It was awful of him to holler out like that.

2. He was bad because of his behavior, but they were good since they were keeping him quiet so they and others could hear what was happening or being said by Jesus.

4. Mind Reading: They felt that Jesus did not need this blind man to interrupt him because he had more important things to do than to pay any attention to this blind obnoxious beggar.

⁷¹Ibid., 1501.

⁷²Ibid., 1508-9.

5. Catastrophizing: The blind man knew that it would be a major tragedy if he missed this opportunity, perhaps the last ever for him, to be heard and healed. He did not want to remain blind the rest of his life.
7. Control Fallacies: The blind man saw himself as helpless, a victim of fate. The crowd felt responsible for the pain in the ears and for happiness of everyone nearby.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: The blind man felt resentful because the crowd was not agreeing with his desire to be heard by Jesus. It appeared that events were not in his favor until Jesus called him.
9. Blaming: The crowd was holding him responsible for the pain in their ears and for their failure to understand what was going on.
10. Shoulds: The crowd was angry at him for not being quiet as he should have been. He had violated the social rules of events such as this (like parades?).
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.
12. Fallacy of Change: They expected the blind man would change to suit them if they just pressured or cajoled him enough. They needed him to change because their hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on his being quiet so they could enjoy the situation.
13. Assumption: The beliefs they adopted were not examined in light of reality.
14. Being Right: They were sure that they were right to keep him quiet.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their sacrifices and self-denial in missing out on what was happening in order to keep him quiet would pay off, as if there were someone keeping score.

Luke 19:1-10 Jesus visits Zacchaeus

Similar to the above, the crowd became an obstacle again to a person striving to have a personal encounter with Jesus. In both cases, Jesus willingly obliged out of compassion. In this case not only was the crowd large and failed to allow a short man through to see Jesus as he passed by, but they also later grumbled or mumbled (**diagogguzw**) about Jesus' associating "with sinners" (**para; amartw'lw'**) such as tax collectors. It is this unrepentant habitual grumbling of the crowd that was distorted (cf. 5:30; 15:2).⁷³ They still did not comprehend why Jesus bothered with such outcasts. They continued believing that "eating with a person who had ill-gotten gain made one a 'partner in crime.'"⁷⁴ While there is wisdom in avoiding such people (Prov 1:8; 10:1) as well as those who deceive or teach false doctrine (2 John 7-10), Jesus was

⁷³Ibid., 1519.

⁷⁴Ibid., 1521.

demonstrating that even the worst sinners are not beyond the reach of God's love and forgiveness.

Except for the grumbling of the crowd against Jesus, the types of distorted thinking of the crowd toward Zacchaeus were the same as those of the crowd hushing the blind man. The types of distorted thinking utilized by the crowd about Jesus included:

1. Filtering: They were focusing on the negative details of Jesus associating with a "sinner" and magnifying them while filtering out all or most of the positive aspects of a situation. They could not imagine Jesus point of view. They could only see their own. They believed it was terrible or awful for Jesus to go to Zacchaeus' home.
2. Polarized Thinking: They were good and Zacchaeus was bad.
3. Overgeneralization: Jesus must also be bad for associating with Zacchaeus, a sinner.
6. Personalization: They thought they were better than Zacchaeus.
7. Control Fallacies: They felt responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around and wanted to make sure everyone knew that what Jesus did was not OK.
10. Shoulds: They felt angry that Jesus violated their religious rules and grumbled about it.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They felt that their beliefs must be true—automatically.
12. Fallacy of Change: They may have been hoping that Jesus would change to suit them if they just pressured or cajoled him enough with their grumbling. They needed him to change because their hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely Jesus conforming to their rules.
13. Assumption: Their beliefs had been adopted without examining their basis in fact.
14. Being Right: They thought they had to prove that their opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and they were willing to go to any length to demonstrate their rightness such as by grumbling loud enough for many to hear.

Luke 19:35-40 Offended by Hosannas

(Matt. 21:15-16)

Matthew states that the Pharisees were "indignant" when they heard the children joyfully saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David." They asked piquedly, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" But Luke states that when "the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen ... Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!'"

The Pharisees clearly took offense because they believed that such praise was not appropriate. They demanded that Jesus stop this at once. The spiritually deaf and blind Pharisees never understood Jesus' previous explanations to them which would have clarified the

excitement of the people that day (12:54-56; 13:31-35). The types of distorted thinking engaged in by the Pharisees include:

1. Filtering: They believed that the praise was inappropriate, and felt it was terrible or awful.
2. Polarized Thinking: They believed that the praise was bad, even wrong and that Jesus failed to curb it.
6. Personalization: They believed that they had more sense than Jesus, because they would not have tolerated such public praise of a human.
7. Control Fallacies: They felt responsible for the proper conduct of everyone around.
9. Blaming: They held Jesus responsible for the inappropriate conduct since he did not intervene.
10. Shoulds: They seriously believed that Jesus should not have allowed the people to praise him so. They were angry with him about this.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed their feelings must be true—automatically.
12. Fallacy of Change: They expected Jesus to change if they just shamed, pressured, or cajoled him enough. They needed him to change because they themselves had no power or authority to stop the “inappropriate” praising, only he did.
13. Assumption: They believed they were right without examining the scriptures.
14. Being Right: They were certain they were right, but they could not prove it to Jesus.

Luke 19:45-47 Jesus cleared the temple (Matt. 21:12-16; Mark 11:15-18; John 2:13-16)

The cleansing was a rebuke for the distorted thinking of the temple leaders and of the merchants and money changers who were mocking God by their greed and by their failure to carry out the original purpose of the temple (Isa. 56:7; Jer. 7:11, see also Ps. 69:9). Even the Chief priest was getting a percentage of the exchange rate. Luke does not mention other aspects such as his overturning the tables, scattering money, chasing out animals and birds, and chasing out those who were taking shortcuts through the temple, as do the parallel passages. The already bitter and revengeful attitude of the chief priests, scribes, and leaders of the people toward Jesus reached its zenith during this event. They began scheming more seriously than ever before to terminate him but were temporarily frustrated due to the crowd of people who were entranced (**ekkremannumi**) by his words.

1. Filtering: They took the negative details (driving out the sellers) and magnified them while filtering out the positive potential of the situation (honesty, unhindered worship, better smell, etc.). They viewed what he did as terrible or awful.

- 6. Personalization: They were sure that he was reacting against them.
- 7. Control Fallacies: They felt helpless to stop Jesus. (Yet they felt responsible for restoring everything back to its previous state, business as usual).
- 9. Blaming: They were holding Jesus responsible disturbing “worship” in the temple.
- 10. Shoulds: They were angry about his failure to abide by their rules.
- 11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.
- 13. Assumption: Their beliefs had been adopted without examining their basis in fact.”
- 14. Being Right: They were certain that their opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and they will go to any length, even scheming against him to demonstrate their rightness.

Luke 20:1-8 John’s authority for baptism (Matt. 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33)

One day “the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him [Jesus]. ‘Tell us by what authority you are doing these things [that you do],’ they said. ‘Who gave you this authority?’” (Luke 20:2) They did “not believe that Jesus [had] the right to do what he [was] doing, despite the evidence.”⁷⁵ They recognized that he had more respect and popularity with the people than they did. They were naively hoping that he would give a direct answer to this question and were expecting that it would to expose him as a fraud.

Instead, Jesus responded with a similar challenging question, turning their own trap against them knowing that they would not say what they really believed for fear of what the people would do to them. His question, whether John’s baptism was “from heaven or from men,” had to be honestly answered before he could answer their question. This was an acceptable form of argumentation utilized by the rabbis. Jesus was not refusing to answer their question. But since they did not want their hypocrisy exposed, they pretended that they did not know the answer to his question. So Jesus, keeping in line with the form, could not answer their question.⁷⁶ The types of distorted thinking used by those questioning Jesus could have included the following:

⁷⁵Ibid., 1585.

⁷⁶Ibid., 1587.

1. Filtering: They believed they could safely ignore Jesus view' (and any other view) since they were sure that only they were right.
2. Polarized Thinking: They believed they were right and Jesus was a fraud.
3. Overgeneralization: "... a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence. If something negative happens once, it may be expected to happen" repeatedly.
4. Mind Reading: They felt sure that Jesus knew they had finally trapped him.
5. Catastrophizing: They expected disaster. No matter which answer they gave they would greatly suffer—humiliation and rebuke from Jesus for not believing John or stoning by the people if they rejected John's authority.
10. Shoulds: They felt that Jesus should state very clearly who had authorized his actions. They were angry that he refused to, yet grateful that he had not succeeded in exposing their own motives.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.
12. Fallacy of Change: They expected Jesus to admit he was a fraud if they just pressured or cajoled him enough. Their happiness seemed to depend entirely upon exposing him.
13. Assumption: Their beliefs had been adopted without examining their basis in fact.
14. Being Right: They were certain that their own opinions and actions are correct and tried their best to prove it, but failed once again.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their sacrifices and self-denial in trapping Jesus would pay off, but felt bitter when their plan failed—no celebration.

Luke 20:9-19 The wicked manager

(Matt. 21:33-45; Mark 12:1-12)

After relaying the parable of the wicked vineyard managers who killed the owner's messengers and son, and who's owner returned to kill them (verses 9-16), the very attentive crowd (**ἰσὺν**) reacted strongly "May it never be!" Jesus then utilized for the third time in Luke (13:35; 19:38) quotations from Ps. 118, but this time in less veiled manner than ever before identified himself (alluding conceptually also to Isa. 8; Dan. 2) as the one who would be their final judge, the cornerstone (κεφαλὴ ἡ γωνίας). That this was a direct rebuke to those who were rejecting him was clearly evident by the rekindled hostility of the scribes and chief priests who, in the last verse, "knew he had spoken this parable against them." But their anger was less than their fear of what the crowd might do to them if they had laid hands on him (ἐπιβῶντων).

1. Filtering: They continued to ignore Jesus' point of view. They believed that his claim of being the cornerstone was terrible or awful.
2. Polarized Thinking: It was very clear to them that he was against everything they held sacred—he was very bad.

3. Overgeneralization: "... a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence. If something negative happens once, it may be expected to happen" repeatedly.
4. Mind Reading: They were certain that Jesus was not feeling good about them.
5. Catastrophizing: They expected disaster or injury if the crowd turned on them.
6. Personalization: They were sure that Jesus was speaking directly against them. Actually he was, so this may not be a valid type of distorted thinking here.
7. Control Fallacies: They felt more responsible than ever before to rid the earth of Jesus for the good of the nation.
9. Blaming: They were holding Jesus responsible for stealing their followers and leading them astray.
10. Shoulds: They were angry that Jesus was not abiding by the same rules they had claimed to follow.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.
13. Assumption: Their beliefs had been adopted without examining their basis in fact.
14. Being Right: They were right. Jesus was clearly wrong, but they still lacked sufficient evidence to prove this to the public.

Luke 20:20-28 Tax questions

(Matt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17)

Having been embarrassed by their failure to successfully confront Jesus, and by the previous harsh rebuke of them by Jesus (via Ps. 118:22), the religious leaders chose to avoid further unpleasant encounters by hiring skillful, and polite, spies (ἐγκαθέτοϛ) to entrap Jesus with flattery and trick dichotomous questions with no right answers (similar to those in Luke 20:1-8) so he could be handed over to the established authorities.

Noticing their craftiness (πανουργία), Jesus undermined their scheme by replying with a question about the coinage which required an answer from them first. They were dumbfounded at his marvelous reply. They were as unsuccessful as the others before them (6:7; 11:53-54; 14:1; 19:47) in entrapping him. He was not guilty of "political insubordination."⁷⁷ The types of distorted thinking here were the same as those that of 20:1-8.

⁷⁷Ibid., 1609-1615.

Luke 20:27-39 Resurrection and marriage

(Matt. 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27)

The heretofore silent (in Luke) Sadducees,⁷⁸ the most conservative religious group which did not believe in the resurrection or in angels, attempted to confound their peers and entrap Jesus with their own specially devised question about the complications of marriage if there was to be a resurrection. Knowing that they only accepted the Torah as authoritative (not the book of Daniel and especially not 12:2), Jesus proved to them from Exod. 3:6 that their own “patriarchs are alive, they await the promise’s fulfillment.”⁷⁹ The parallel passages include what is the underlying thrust of this paper, viz., that no one this side of the resurrection really understands the character of God. That’s why Sadducees and everyone else cannot fully comprehend the details of the resurrection (or any doctrine, including the Trinity). The Sadducees were speechless at Jesus’ response, but some lawyers marveled and declared their approval of it. The Sadducees were the last group of the religious leaders to realize that there was no further use in trying to entrap or embarrass Jesus publicly by argumentation. They too had to seek for some other means to expose the limits of his knowledge and authority. The types of distorted thinking here are the same as the previous pericope.

Luke 22:24-30 Pecking order

(Matt. 18:1-6; Mark 9:34-37)

The insistence of every species (bird, fish, animal, reptile, or human) of determining the pecking order of its members is apparently part of the natural order, and the disciples were trying to do the same. But Jesus was always crusading that his conspiracy of love required the order to be turned upside down. He came not to be served, but to serve (cf. Matt. 20:20; Mark 10:45).

⁷⁸The Sadducees attempted to test Jesus in Matt. 16:1 by asking him for a sign from heaven.

⁷⁹Bock, 1617.

They too should be willing to serve. The types of distorted thinking the disciples were rebuked for include:

1. Filtering: They were taking the negative details or failures of their fellow disciples and magnifying them while filtering out all or most of the positive aspects of a situation, They were ignoring “other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions” as to who of them should be considered the greatest. It is very likely that one or more of them thought that it would be terrible or awful of certain ones of them were to be considered the greatest of them.
3. Overgeneralization: It is very likely that one or more of them had concluded based on a single incident or piece of evidence that certain ones would not qualify to be the greatest.
4. Mind Reading: Some of them may have felt that they knew which one Jesus would consider to be the greatest among them
5. Catastrophizing: One or two may have expected disaster if the wrong person was designated as the greatest among them.
6. Personalization: They were comparing themselves with each other trying to determine who was the best disciple, the greatest of them all.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: As each of several men was ruled out by general consensus he may have felt resentful because the others did not agree with him. Events did not turn out in his favor.
9. Blaming: Each one not selected may have been holding one or more others responsible for their pain, or loss.
10. Shoulds: They were living by a list of ironclad rules about how they should act. As they found out later, it was not the criteria Christ was using for leadership.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.
13. Assumption: They had adopted their beliefs without examining their basis in fact.
14. Being Right: They were sure that they could figure out who was the greatest disciple among them.
15. Reward Fallacy: Each expected all his sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score and he'd be awarded the trophy for being the greatest disciple. They felt bitter when the reward did not come.

Luke 22:31-34 Disloyalty disclosed

Although the use of the plural “you” (ὁμᾶς) in verse 31 applies to all of the disciples for the inevitable escalated test of their loyalty knowing beforehand that “they all forsook him and fled” (Mark 14:50), Jesus’ main focus was on the character of his second-in-command. He seriously warned him (Simon, Simon) about Satan’s plans to severely test his commitment while assuring him that he had already begun praying for him. Peter, however responded to him with pride and overconfidence boasting about his personal loyalty even to the point of prison and

death, but this was over exaggerated, affirmed by the later fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy about his increasingly blatant thrice betrayal of having any connection whatsoever with him (Luke 22:57, 58, 60). The types of distorted thinking employed by the fearful disciples were:

1. Filtering: Ignoring Jesus' prophecy of suffering, claiming that it would be terrible or awful and that should not be allowed to happen.
2. Polarized Thinking: They decided that this was a bad thing.
3. Overgeneralization: They concluded that they would protect Jesus from suffering.
4. Mind Reading: They felt Jesus was testing their loyalty so they wanted to reassure him that they would be loyal to their death.
5. Catastrophizing: They could not bear for Jesus to experience such a tragedy. If he were taken away from them, what would they do? Who would employ them? How could they feed their family?
6. Personalization: They felt he really did not understand their loyalty to him.
7. Control Fallacies: They felt he needed their help to avoid suffering.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: They felt Jesus' assessment of their loyalty to him was unfair.
10. Shoulds: They were Living by the ironclad rule of loyalty to their leader, or teacher, and they would be angry at any among them who would break the rule.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.
12. Fallacy of Change: They expected that Jesus would change and allow them to protect him from harm if they just pressured or cajoled him enough. They needed him to change because their hopes for happiness and for the future seem to depend entirely on his healthy presence with them.
13. Assumption: They had adopted their beliefs without examining their basis in fact. They forgot all about the scriptures and prophecies he had told them throughout the last three years.
14. Being Right: They wanted to prove that their opinion and action was correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and they (or at least Peter) were willing to bet their lives on their loyalty.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected that all their sacrifices and self-denial was going to pay off if they could just keep him alive and safe. They would feel bitter if something terrible was to happen to him and they received their rewards for following him for three years.

Luke 22:39-46 Persistence in prayer

(Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42)

The stark contrast in levels of understanding and commitment in prayer between the disciples and Jesus was a lesson the disciples would never forget. They found short term relief from their deep grief by sleeping. Jesus reprimanded them for their failure to pray in a more disciplined manner against inevitable temptation. The following types of distorted thinking may have been used by these three disciples:

1. Filtering: They took the negative details and magnified them while filtering out all or most of the positive aspects of a situation. It was past their bedtime, and they were very tired. Their spirits were willing but their flesh was weak. They ignored Jesus' view because they did not believe that sleeping instead of praying was not so terrible or awful.
3. Overgeneralization: They believed that extra sleep would restore their energy for the future battle to keep Jesus safe.
4. Mind Reading: They felt they understood Jesus' anxiety (Catastrophizing?) about the coming danger, but they felt they were ready to protect him.
6. Personalization: They clearly did not personalize Jesus' harsh reprimand for their sleeping the first two times, but they did the third.
7. Control Fallacies: They felt helpless to avoid sleep, but they were sure that they could make up for it by taking responsibility for Jesus' safety.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: They felt Jesus was being unfair in his scolding them for sleeping; after all, they were not being paid to pray or to stand guard. They were only human and were very tired.
9. Blaming: They may have blamed each other for not keeping each other awake and praying.
10. Shoulds: (They should have felt guilty for failing to obey Jesus' order to watch and pray.)
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.
12. Fallacy of Change: They were hoping that Jesus would not be so demanding about watching and praying since they were so tired. Their peace of mind seemed to depend upon him “giving them a break.”
13. Assumption: They had adopted their beliefs without examining their basis in fact.
15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all sacrifices and self-denial to pay off at least in a little sleep. They felt deprived when they were scolded for sleeping.

Luke 22:47-48 Judas confronted

(Matt. 26:47-50; Mark 14:43-46; John 18:2-8)

Judas was committed to betraying Jesus (cf. John 6:70; 17:18, 26; Luke 22:1-6) not only for the thirty pieces of silver he was already given for this task (Matt. 27:3-10), or for his major disappointment that Jesus was not the leader to overthrow the Romans soon as he had hoped when he first joined the other eleven, but perhaps also for his very embarrassing experience when Jesus rebuked him for complaining about a certain woman's wasting expensive perfume on Jesus which should have been sold and the proceeds added to the purse he was “managing” for Jesus (John 12:4-8). He may have wanted to make sure that he would never be held accountable for his questionable accounting practices—only Jesus seemed to be aware of them. Even Jesus'

question “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” did not hinder his determination to fulfill the contract with the kiss.

1. Filtering: He took what he considered the negative details and magnified them while filtering out all of the positive aspects of Jesus’ life and ministry. He ignored Jesus’ point of view since he considered it inadequate to overthrow the Roman rulers. He believed that it would be terrible or awful if Jesus continued stirring up trouble.
2. Polarized Thinking: He believed he was doing the world a favor getting rid of a hindrance to their social order.
5. Catastrophizing: If word ever got out about his accounting practices, he knew it would not go well with him. It was time to exercise “damage control.”
6. Personalization: He was sure that he knew better than Jesus what needed to be done.
7. Control Fallacies: For the right price he was willing to be responsible for the happiness of the religious leaders who wanted to arrest Jesus.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: He felt resentful that Jesus was not pursuing the course of action he thought would be best. Yet he himself seemed to believe in light of his own actions that “anything is fair in love or war.”
9. Blaming: He was holding Jesus responsible for his guilt of financial mismanagement and for not helping the religious leaders to overthrow the Romans.
10. Shoulds: He may have seriously believed that a serious leader should join the most important cause that the majority Jewish leaders were fighting for—freedom from the tyranny of the Romans. He never quite figured out that Jesus was fighting for freedom from any and all evil, an even higher cause.
11. Emotional Reasoning: He really believed that what he felt must be true—automatically.
13. Assumption: His beliefs had been adopted without examining their basis in fact.
14. Being Right: He was sure that Jesus was not who the people or the religious leaders were looking for and was willing to betray him so that things could return to their previous state in which he could more easily cover his tracks.

Luke 22:49-51 Jesus’ army halted (Matt. 26:51-52; Mark 14:47; John 18:10-11)

Jesus’ “fearless” disciples believed that they were able and willing to protect Jesus with their very lives if need be (especially after recalling his statement in Luke 22:36-38—“if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.”). They knew from their three years of following him that he had power over nature, over Satan over demons, and that he could lead them to victory though they were vastly outnumbered in men and especially in weapons having only two swords (22:38) so they asked him in verse forty-nine, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?” After the first unsanctioned strike by impulsive Peter who could not wait for the order

(John 18:10), Jesus commanded all his disciples to stand down, to cease and desist, “Stop! No more of this!” (Ἐὰν τις ἐξ ὧς τούτου) or “Let them do this”⁸⁰ (i.e., let them arrest me). Only Matthew’s account gave further explanation to the disciples at that time as to why they should stop resisting: “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.” The types of distorted thinking these disciples may have utilized include:

1. Filtering: Ignoring Jesus’ prophecy of suffering (18:31-34, not having understood the meaning). They did believe that it would be terrible or awful if something “bad” were to happen to Jesus.
2. Polarized Thinking: They were sure that this was a bad situation.
4. Mind Reading: Peter seemed fairly certain that Jesus wanted them to engage the soldiers before them in battle. He did not wait for Jesus response to the others’ question.
7. Control Fallacies: Peter and the others saw themselves as responsible for protecting Jesus.

Luke 22:52-53 Rebuking those arresting him

(Matt. 26:55; Mark 14:48-49)

Jesus’ rebuke was in the form of a rhetorical question which communicated the audacity of the religious leaders for arranging to treat him as if he were a dangerous thief (λῆστίην) and for choosing this particular dark time and place because of their fear of the public. The types of distorted thinking employed by these people included:

1. Filtering: Ignoring Jesus’ point of view, claiming that it would be terrible or awful if he continued teaching and preaching against them.
2. Polarized Thinking: They were sure that this was a false prophet.
5. Catastrophizing: They were expecting disaster to their authority and career if his exposure of their hypocrisy was not stopped.
6. Personalization: They thought that nearly everything Jesus said was some kind of reaction to them. In reality it was true, but they were too proud to repent and follow him.
7. Control Fallacies: They felt responsible to arrest him and to convince the people that he was a fraud so that they could carry on their business as usual.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: They felt resentful that Jesus was not being fair about them in public; after all, they were not sinners like those who defiled themselves (tax collectors and sinners).
9. Blaming: They were holding Jesus responsible for every problem or reversal in their popularity among the people.
10. Shoulds: They believed that Jesus should be living by the same list of ironclad rules they had prided themselves for following. Since he refused, he should be arrested.
11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.

⁸⁰Ibid., 1771.

12. Fallacy of Change: They expected that the crowds would change to suit them if they just pressured or cajoled them enough into believing that Jesus was a fraud.

13. Assumption: Their beliefs had been adopted without examining their basis in fact.”

14. Being Right: They thought they had to prove that their opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and they were willing to go to any length to silence Jesus.

15. Reward Fallacy: They expected all their sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. They were congratulating themselves on successfully arresting Jesus.

Luke 22:66-71 Rebuking for unfair question

(Matt. 26:57-67; Mark 14:53-65)

Verses 67b and 68 contain the main rebuke in this passage but it does not have a parallel in the other synoptics. Once again Jesus realized it really would not matter what answer he gave to the dichotomous question before him (“If you are the Christ, tell us.”), he knew that the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin (council) were committed to his demise. He rebuked them for asking him a question they themselves were afraid to answer in public. He answered in the affirmative and continued with a statement of his future glory thereby demonstrating to all the contrast between his courage and that of his accusers. The types of distorted thinking portrayed by the chief priests and the council which were slightly different from the above periscope were:

1. Filtering: They collected all the negative details they could dredge up and magnified them while filtering out all of the positive aspects of Jesus life and teaching. They ignored Jesus’ point of view and felt that it would be terrible or awful if they could not sentence him.

2. Polarized Thinking: They were sure that this was a menace to their society.

Luke 23:6-25 Jesus’ silence rebukes Herod

Some rebukes need not be verbalized. Jesus was already declared innocent by Pilate who was superior to Herod. After failing to cajole a miracle or any verbal defense from Jesus, Herod gave up but to demonstrate his power and authority, in verse eleven, “He and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate.” Jesus’ silent rebuke was effective since Pilate stated in verse fifteen that Herod also considered Jesus

innocent. “The church later saw this silence as a fulfillment of Isa. 53:7-8 (Acts 8:32[-35]).”⁸¹

The types of distorted thinking Herod employed may include the following:

6. Personalization: Herod may have been comparing himself with Jesus trying to determine if he was smarter, but since Jesus never spoke, tried to prove he was more powerful by ridicule and mocking.
7. Control Fallacies: Herod felt responsible to maintain his reputation as a powerful Roman ruler so he made an example of Jesus by harshly treating him.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: Herod felt resentful because Jesus refused to answer his questions. He may have feared this would not look good for him.
9. Blaming: He held Jesus responsible for his inability to force him to speak or act.
10. Shoulds: Herod lived by a list of ironclad rules about how people should act in his presence. Jesus did not obey his commands, so this angered him.
11. Emotional Reasoning: He believed that what he feels must be true—automatically.
12. Fallacy of Change: He expected that Jesus would respond if he just pressured or cajoled him enough. He needed Jesus to change so that his Roman power and authority over him would be clear to everyone.
13. Assumption: “Beliefs that have been adopted without examining their basis in fact.”
14. Being Right: Herod thought he was continually on trial to prove that his opinions and actions are correct and that he was the authority in his region. Being wrong or being seen as powerless was unthinkable and he was willing to go to any cruel length to demonstrate his authority.
15. Reward Fallacy: He felt bitter when Jesus refused to respond to him.

Luke 23:26-31 Jesus rebukes his mourners

After Simon from Cyrene began carrying his cross, Jesus was being followed by several women who were mourning (**koptw**-beating breast in grief, wailing) and lamenting (θρηνηῶ) him. He told them to weep instead for themselves and their children because there would be much more trouble ahead for them and their nation. He then quoted a passage from Hosea 10:8 that they could relate to. Although the women attempted to empathize with him, they did employ the following types of distorted thinking:

1. Filtering: Taking the negative details of Jesus suffering and magnifying them while filtering out all or most of the positive aspects of the cause he was dying for (they may have been unaware of the his cause).
2. Polarized Thinking: They were sure that his suffering was a bad thing.

⁸¹Ibid., 1815.

- 4. Mind Reading: They felt Jesus would surely appreciate their kind words of encouragement and their grieving for him.
- 7. Control Fallacies: They felt responsible to encourage Jesus in spite of his sufferings. They wanted to let him know that they were mourning for him and praying for him.
- 8. Fallacy of Fairness: They probably felt resentful toward the Romans because they knew that what they were doing to him was not just or fair.
- 9. Blaming: They were holding the Romans responsible for condemning Jesus to death.
- 11. Emotional Reasoning: They believed that what they felt must be true—automatically.
- 12. Fallacy of Change: They expected that what they said to Jesus would enable him to better endure his suffering.
- 13. Assumption: Their beliefs had been adopted without examining their basis in fact.

Luke 24:13-35 Rebuking Cleopas and friend

(Mark 16:12-13)

After pretending to be a stranger trying to find out the latest news from Cleopas and his friend who were returning to Emmaus from Jerusalem where they had heard, along with the eleven apostles, the women's report of Jesus missing body (24:9), Jesus rebuked them in verse twenty five for their slowness "to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" This rebuke followed their expression of surprise that Jesus did not seem to know anything about the biggest news ever to happen in their lifetime. The types of distorted thinking that the two travelers were guilty of may include the following:

- 1. Filtering: They took the negative details of Jesus sufferings and magnifying them while filtering out all or most of the positive aspects of the situation. They had ignored many passages in the scriptures that related to this event and only wondered what all the recent events could mean.
- 4. Mind Reading: They thought that Jesus would be grateful for their bringing him up to date on what had transpired in Jerusalem.
- 7. Control Fallacies: They felt they were in control and were responsible inform Jesus of the news.
- 13. Assumption: Their beliefs had been adopted without examining their basis in scripture.

Luke 24:36-49 Confronting their lack of faith

(Mark 16:14; John 20:19-20)

When Jesus suddenly appeared before them "They were startled [**ptoew**] and frightened [**mfobo**]", thinking they saw a ghost." John makes no mention of this, though this may be inferred, but Mark simply recorded Jesus' rebuke for their "stubborn refusal to believe" the

previous witnesses of his resurrection (i.e., the women mentioned in Luke 24:1-10, and Cleopas and friend from Emmaus in 24:33-35). Jesus did not deny that ghosts exist (“a ghost does not have flesh and bones”). He coaxed them to discover firsthand that he was not a ghost by observing his hands, his feet, and his eating “a piece of broiled fish.” The disciples’ lack of faith and strong doubt was a result of their use of the following types of distorted thinking:

1. Filtering: They had ignored or doubted the witnesses of his resurrection and failed to recall his previous references to his suffering and death. They still believed that what had happened to Jesus was very terrible or awful.
3. Overgeneralization: They may have thought, “How could he enter a locked room unless he was a ghost?” A general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence.
4. Mind Reading: Knowing “what people are feeling and why they act the way they do” without their saying so—divining “how people are feeling toward you.”
5. Catastrophizing: They were expecting disaster because of the presence of what they thought was a ghost.
7. Control Fallacies: When feeling externally controlled, one sees oneself as helpless, a victim of fate. The fallacy of internal control has one responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around.
8. Fallacy of Fairness: One feels resentful, thinking he or she knows what is fair but other people do not agree. The other person refuses to get on the same page, or events are not favorable.
9. Blaming: Holding other people responsible for one’s pain, or blaming oneself for every problem or reversal.
10. Shoulds: Living by “a list of ironclad rules about how you and other people should act. People who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you violate the rules.”
11. Emotional Reasoning: Believing that what one feels must be true—automatically. If one feels stupid and boring, then one must be stupid and boring.
12. Fallacy of Change: Expecting “that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. You need to change people because your hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on them.”
13. Assumption: “Beliefs that have been adopted without examining their basis in fact.”
14. Being Right: Thinking one is continually on trial to prove that one’s opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and one will go to any length to
15. Reward Fallacy: One expects all sacrifices and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. One may feel bitter when the reward doesn’t come.