

Hypocrisy



Getting Started

Do you ever pretend that you are something you're not? How does it make you feel when others do this? Hypocrisy most often involves dishonesty, or pretending to have qualities that one does not have. The Bible talks especially about those who pretend to be religious or virtuous, but really aren't. Jesus referred to such people as hypocrites and viewed them very negatively.

Improving Your Vocabulary

pretend (v) - act in a way to make people believe something is true when it is not

virtuous (adj) - behaving in the correct way; highly moral and righteous

hypocrite (n) - a person who pretends to have qualities that they really don't have

Pharisees (n) - a group of Jews who believed in strictly obeying the religious laws

legalistic (adj) - paying too much attention to the details of rules and law

tomb (n) - a large grave that is above ground and usually has a sculpture or decoration on it

decay (v) - to gradually destroy something such as a dead body by a natural process

corpse (n) - a dead body, especially a human body

yeast (n) - a kind of natural substance which is used to make bread rise

Reading God's Word

Jesus warned us about judging others when we ourselves have sin.

Matthew 7:3-5

3 Why, then, do you look at the speck in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the log in your own eye? **4** How dare you say to your brother, 'Please, let me take that speck out of your eye,' when you have a log in your own eye? **5** You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will be able to see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

The Pharisees were Jewish religious leaders. Jesus often criticized them because they were legalistic in keeping the laws. His point was that they only tried to appear holy on the outside. They did this without having the right change of heart on the inside.

Matthew 23:25-28

25 How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! You hypocrites! You clean the outside of your cup and plate, while the inside is full of what you have gotten by violence and selfishness. **26** Blind Pharisee! Clean what is inside the cup first, and then the outside will be clean too! **27** How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! You hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look fine on the outside but are full of bones and decaying corpses on the inside. **28** In the same way, on the outside you appear good to everybody, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and sins.

Luke 12:1-3

1 As thousands of people crowded together, so that they were stepping on each other, Jesus said first to his disciples, "Be on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees – I mean their hypocrisy. **2** Whatever is covered up will be uncovered, and every secret will be made known. **3** So then, whatever you have said in the

dark will be heard in broad daylight, and whatever you have whispered in private in a closed room will be shouted from the housetops.”

For further study, see [Matthew 23:1-24](#); [Luke 11:37-54](#) and [Luke 16:15](#).

Taking a Closer Look

1. Why does Jesus say we shouldn't worry about the speck in our neighbor's eye? What should we be concerned about? (Matthew 7:3-5)

2. Why does Jesus criticize the Pharisees? (Matthew 23:25-28)

3. Why do you think Jesus refers to them as being like “whitewashed tombs”? (Matthew 23:27-28)

4. Why does Jesus warn people about the Pharisees? (Luke 12:1-3)

5. How do you think the hypocrisy of the Pharisees is like “yeast”? (Luke 12:1)

6. Why is it important to make sure that what we do in private matches the way we are in public? (Luke 12:3)

Taking Action

1. What are some ways you can make your private life more consistent with your public life? Is there any part of your private life that you are ashamed of? Pray and ask God to help you change this for good.

2. What kind of feelings and desires do you carry inside your heart? Do you wish good for others? Do you truly seek to help other people? Or do you carry any feelings of selfishness or hatred toward others? Pray and ask God to change your heart and make it like his.
3. Pray and ask God to help you be more truthful and honest about who you really are.

Memory Verse: Psalm 51:6-7

6 Sincerity and truth are what you require; fill my mind with your wisdom. 7 Remove my sin, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Review the Vocabulary

Fill in the blanks with the correct vocabulary words.

1. Don't be so _____. The spirit of the law is more important than the law itself.
2. The fallen tree had been there for a long time. The wood had already started to _____.
3. Some people think he is a _____. They feel he doesn't really do what he says.
4. It's not a good idea to _____ to be something you are not.
5. He is respected as an honest and _____ person.



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