

Family Devotional

From September 24, 2017

What is a hypocrite? According to Merriam-Webster, a hypocrite is a person who puts on a false appearance of virtue or religion, a person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings. In other words, a hypocrite pretends to be something he (or she) isn't.

The Bible teaches that a hypocrite is one who pretends to be pious without really being so--one who talks the talk without walking the walk. Jesus confronted hypocrites vigorously in His earthly ministry. It was the anger generated by these confrontations of truth with self-deception that fuelled the religious leaders' desire to kill Him.

A hypocrite knows what is right but makes elaborate excuses for himself when he does wrong. He weaves a web of self-deception that eventually traps his thinking and keeps him from seeing the truth about himself.

Read: Galatians 2:11-21

Paul confronts his friend Cephas because he was living one way around the Gentiles and differently when he was with the Jews. He was walking in the freedom of the Spirit with the Gentiles, but let fear hold him back when he returned to the Jews. He became bound by the laws Jesus had us free from. His hypocrisy was even leaving others astray.

Consider this ...

We all tend to condemn other people's actions and attitudes we know are wrong. At the same time, we are prone to excuse the same or worse behaviors in ourselves. We put on a good front and try to hide our real attitudes and feelings. We try to convince others--and even ourselves--that we are OK.

We might be able to fool others. We might even delude ourselves for a while. But God knows our hearts. He is not impressed by our outward displays of "being religious" or following the rules. He considers what we are inside. He said this to the Pharisees: "You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy--full of greed and wickedness!" Luke 11:39 NLT

Are you putting up a good front but harboring sin in your life? Maybe the sin is something you are doing--participating in pornography, an adulterous relationship, or some other wrong behavior. Maybe it's hidden inside--bitterness, envy, un-forgiveness. Remember that whatever it is--God knows. He loves you and wants to help you overcome. You can start on the path to ending the sinful behavior by admitting your guilt to yourself--and to Him. As you confess your sin and become willing to turn from it, He will forgive and He will give you the strength to overcome.

Remember: Work together as a family to memorize and/or meditate on Jeremiah 15:19 this week.

"He said to them, 'You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts.'" Luke 16:15 NIV

Ideas: Write it down and hang it on the refrigerator. Say it together as a family during meal time each day. Write it on a chalk or white board and erase a couple words each day until you can say it by memory.

Respond: "Father, I know at times I have been living a lie. I also know that you see the real me--you see my heart. Please forgive my sin and give me the strength to overcome. Help me to be honest with You, with myself, and with others. In Jesus' name Amen!"

Devotion Adapted from: http://www.livingfree.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=977:hypocrisy-examined-god-sees-your-heart&catid=40:completely-free&Itemid=203