

WHY ARE THERE HYPOCRITES IN GOD'S CHURCH?

Matthew 6:1-18

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever asked someone to visit your church only to have them tell you they don't go to church because there are too many hypocrites in the church. That had been a problem even before there was a church. Seven times our Lord said to the Pharisees 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!' Matthew 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, and 29. What was it about the Pharisees that set Jesus off? Jesus told them exactly why hypocrisy set Him off: Matthew 23:3; Matthew 23:5-7. Jesus got hot because their public persona didn't match their private reality. There truly are hypocrites in the church and it hurts the church of Christ. The word "hypocrite" was used of actors in Jesus day. The word "hypocrite" appears seventeen times and it is interesting every time it appears it is our Lord Jesus using it. .

I. TRUE CHRIST FOLLOWERS MUST BE HOLY!

We must be changed on the inside by new birth before we can change how we live: 1 Peter 1:14-16. When God views your private life does he see someone striving to live a holy life? Our Lord stressed how His disciples should watch what they do in secret: Matthew 6:3-4; Matthew 6:6' Matthew 6:17-18. Remember; Christianity doesn't begin with our "doing" it begins with our "being." If our being does not match our doing, the Bible calls you a hypocrite.

II. BE HUMBLE IN YOUR PUBLIC LIFE!

Jesus gives us this warning about putting on a show for others: Matthew 6:1. The Pharisees were more concerned about what people thought of them than what the Lord thought of them: John 12:42-43; Matthew 6:5; Matthew 6:6. The Jewish people had three primary ways of practicing their religion and pursuing righteousness: giving, praying, and fasting. We also are to serve our Lord in these ways but not so people praise us but that our God who sees what we do in secret can reward us.

III. BE HONORABLE IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE!

Nonbelievers do not read their Bibles, they read us. Therefore our Lord wants us to live in a way that will make nonbelievers question their disbelief about God. How can someone live as a real deal and how can we know if we are the real deal? Matthew 7:15-20. We need to make sure our lives are lived in the fruit of the Spirit because the fruit reveals the truth about who we are! Matthew 10:22. All hypocrites are sinners, but not all sinners are hypocrites! There is a difference between sin and hypocrisy. The Bible says we are all sinners: Romans 3:23. But God has made a way to help us repent of our sin and to live for His glory. Repentance makes us right with God and changes the way we choose to live. A life of hypocrisy is when we choose not to repent but to walk in our sin. 1 John 3:9: that verse is not talking about momentary sin—it is talking about a lifestyle of walking in sin. Yes, there are in every church those people who claim to be walking with God who are pursuing sin instead of God. But just because there are hypocrites in every church does not mean there are not also people in churches who are honestly pursuing God and shunning evil in their lives. Remember, the presence of a counterfeit doesn't negate the reality of the real. It proves there is the real Christian trying to live a life that honors their God. Hypocrites should be in every church because they need to hear the truths of God's Word so they can be changed by their Lord. They need to hear the truth in order to respond to the truth. Yes, hypocrites are in every church but you will find no hypocrisy in the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is exactly Who He says He is! Jeremiah 29:13. Jesus Christ wants to make you the real deal: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.