



## WHY IS THE CHURCH FULL OF HYPOCRITES?

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Many people claim to know God, but at a glance at their life-styles we quickly know what they value and whether their lives revolve around kingdom priorities. Today's teaching answers the question "Why is the Church full of hypocrites?"

*"The single greatest cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door, and deny Him with their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable."*

*-Brennan Manning*

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What do you think about when you hear the word hypocrisy?

***Hypocrisy isn't just a Christian condition, it's a human condition.***

**Titus 1:16** says "They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him".

Too often there is a gap between what we see on the outside and the inside. Why is it important that our lives reflect what we know about God and our faith?

### **BIG IDEA: Hypocrisy REPELS...Authenticity ATTRACTS**

**Jesus hates hypocrisy.**

**READ Matthew 23:27-28.** What is Jesus condemning the Pharisees and religious leaders for doing? What does He compare this behavior to? Why?

**READ Matthew 15:7-8.** What is the difference between *acting religious* and truly having a kind and sincere heart?

***As a Christian, it is important that we are NOT hypocrites and that we live an authentic life.***

## **4 Ways to Live an Authentic Life:**

### **1. Look in the mirror.**

**READ Matthew 7:3-5 and 1 John 1:8-9 .** When you "look in the mirror" of your life, what masks did you wear growing up? How did you show yourself to be something you weren't?

***We tend to accuse others and excuse ourselves.***

### **2. Be transparent with your struggles.**

Look at these passages taken from **Romans 7:18-25**. What do we learn from Paul's authenticity?

*And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.[a] I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.*

*I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind.*

*Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

In what area of your life do you currently struggle to show your honest self? (\*Note: these are great prayer requests for your group.)

### **3. Give grace freely.**

**READ Romans 3:23-24 and Ephesians 4:31-32.** How should we treat others? In what area(s) of your life do you need to give grace more freely--to yourself or someone else--and allow Jesus Christ to "fill the gap?"

### **4. Guard your heart.**

**READ Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 12:34-35, Philippians 2:3-5 and 1 Peter 5:5.** How do we practice humility?

**READ Matthew 23:25-26.** We need to let God go to work cleaning the inside of our cup. Close in prayer based on **Psalms 139:23-24** and pray for one another.

**BOOK RECOMMENDATION:** unChristian, by Kinnaman