

## Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is the practice of professing beliefs, feelings, or virtues that one does not hold or possess. In other words, insincerity by pretending to have qualities or beliefs not really held. Other words for it are deceitfulness, pretense, pharisaism, phoniness, sanctimoniousness, sanctimony, tartuffery, two-facedness, and dishonesty. This shows in inconsistent behavior, which shows their lack of integrity. Because of this, hypocrisy is also the act of condemning or calling for the condemnation of another person when the critic is guilty of the act for which he demands that the accused be condemned. The word originates the Greek word for acting or playing a part. Some psychologists explain hypocrisy by saying that individuals are more likely to explain their own actions by their environment, yet they attribute the actions of others to 'innate characteristics', thus leading towards judging others while justifying one's own actions. In other words hypocrites judge themselves by their motives and others by their actions. The issue is that hypocrites try to hide in themselves the things they dislike in others. When caught they excuse themselves, when others are caught they are fast to judge and condemn.

This was the issue with the Pharisees. They seemed very strict in their public practice, but in private they were worse than public offenders. In many ways, John was as strict as a Pharisee, but not a hypocrite. John practiced what he preached. The Pharisees did not. They told the people that they did one thing and that the people should follow suit, but hid to do other things. They claimed to love and follow God, but mistreated those whom God loved. It is no wonder John spoke so strongly against them. When they and the Sadducees went to see John in the wilderness, he said to them,

Mat3:7 ...O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Mat3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Mat3:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Mat3:10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Christ had also harsh words for the Pharisees. In Luke 11:37 one of them invited Jesus to dine. After observing that Jesus did not wash His hands before eating the disciple pointed out that Jesus was breaking or defiling the tradition of the elders. Jesus replied to him that what defiles a body – wickedness and ravening - is already inside. In other words, what is on the outside shows what is in the inside. The Pharisees tithed on everything, but refuse to give care to their elderly parents, thus violating the commandment of giving honor to your parents (Mark 7: 8 – 11). So Christ proceeds to proclaim His famous woe to the Pharisees in Luke 11: 42 – 44,

Luke11:42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Luke11:43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

Luke11:44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

In contrast, Christ words for the John the Baptist, were praiseworthy. Jesus said of John, that he was more than a prophet, and "...Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11). Was John inherently better than the Pharisees? No. John just made better choices. He chose to allow the Holy Spirit to dwell in him, and lived a life of total dependence on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit cleansed Him of the wickedness and ravening in his heart.

The difference between John and the Pharisees was that the John allowed the Holy Spirit to do in him, what the Pharisees professed they could do on their own. The Pharisees represent those will be lost and John represents those who will be saved. Which one are you?