

# Hypocrisy-Hypocrites

## QUOTES, ILLUSTRATIONS, DEVOTIONALS

It is but a short step from the critical to the hypocritical. Anon.

A hypocrite has God on his tongue and the world in his heart.

A hypocrite is a person who isn't himself on Sunday.

A hypocrite prays on his knees on Sunday and preys on his neighbors on Monday.

If we pray to catch the ear of man, we can't expect to reach the ear of God.

Longer prayers in public usually mean shorter prayers in private.

How we behave reveals what we truly believe.

Hypocrites are like pictures on canvas, they show fairest at farthest.

Don't stay away from church because there are so many hypocrites. There's always room for one more. A. R. Adams

Hypocrites are like pictures on canvas: they show fairest at farthest. Thomas Adams

The hypocrite fries in words, freezes in works. Thomas Adams

The hypocrite has much angel without, more devil within. Thomas Adams

If thou hast an angel's tongue and a devil's heart thou art no better than a post in the cross-way, that rots itself to direct others. Thomas Adams

A hypocrite is like the Sicilian Etna, flaming at the mouth when it hath snow at the foot: their mouths talk hotly, but their feet walk coldly. Thomas Adams

The hypocrite sets his watch, not by the sun, that is, the Bible, but by the town clock; what most do, that he will do. Vox populi is his vox Dei. Thomas Adams

It is a poor worship to move our hats, not our hearts. Thomas Adams

The hypocrite is like Hosea's dough-baked cake, only hot on the visible side. Thomas Adams

Hypocrites are certain to miscarry at last; so true is that proverb, "Frost and fraud have dirty ends." Thomas Adams

Nothing is more amiable than true modesty, and nothing more contemptible than false. The one guards virtue, the other betrays it. Joseph Addison

I will have nought to do with a man who can blow hot and cold with the same breath. Aesop

The hypocrite desires holiness only as a bridge to heaven. Joseph Alleine

A clean glove often hides a dirty hand. Anon.

A hypocrite is a man who lets his light so shine before men that they can't tell what is going on behind! Anon.

A hypocrite preaches by the yard but practises by the inch. Anon.

Many wear God's livery but are not his servants. Anon.

To profess to love God while leading an unholy life is the worst of falsehoods. Augustine

A bad man is worse when he pretends to be a saint. Francis Bacon

Jesus warned His disciples, we must beware of hypocrisy—pretending to be something we aren't, acting with a mask covering our face. Hypocrisy is a terrible sign of trouble in our hearts—it waits only for the day of exposure. For as John Milton put it in *Paradise Lost*, "Neither men nor angels can discern hypocrisy, the only evil that walks invisible—except to God." Joseph Bayly

God hates the sanctimonious hallelujah more than he hates the godless curse. Donald Grey Barnhouse

The hypocrite's bellows blow out the candle under pretence of kindling the fire. Richard Baxter

Keeping up appearances is the most expensive thing in the world. A. C. Benson

A man who hides behind the hypocrite is smaller than the hypocrite. W. E. Biederwolf

I saw about a peck of counterfeit dollars once. Did I go to the window and throw away all my good dollars? No! Yet you reject Christianity because there are hypocrites, or counterfeit Christians. William E. Biederwolf

If the world despises a hypocrite, what must they think of him in heaven? Josh Billings

Hypocrisy is nothing better than skin-deep holiness. John Blanchard

It is possible to be back-slapping and backsliding at the same time. John Blanchard

Spoken faith is not necessarily saving faith. John Blanchard

What you are in public will never blind God to what you are in private. John Blanchard

A man who does not practise what he preaches destroys what he builds. Bonaventura

An apple, if it be rotten at the core, though it have a fair and shining outside, yet rottenness will not stay long, but will taint the outside also... hypocrisy will discover itself in the end. John Bond

Hypocrites are not those who live worse than they profess-that's all of us. Hypocrites are those who cannot see, or are not honest about the gap between their talk and their walk. Jerry Bridges

God will not be put off with the shell while we give the devil the kernel. Thomas Brooks

They say of the nightingale, that when she is solitary in the woods, she is careless of her note, but when she conceives that she hath any auditors, or is near houses, then she composes herself more quaintly and elegantly. Verily, this is the frame and temper of the best of hypocrites. Thomas Brooks

Self-ends are the operative ingredients in all a hypocrite does. Thomas Brooks

Ambition is a gilded misery, a secret poison, a hidden plague, the engineer of deceit, the mother of hypocrisy, the parent of envy, the original of vices, the moth of holiness and blinder of hearts, turning medicines into maladies and remedies into diseases. High seats are never but uneasy and crowns are always stuffed with thorns. Thomas Brooks

The hypocrite is a cloud without rain, a blossoming tree without fruit, a star without light, a shell without a kernel. Thomas Brooks

The hypocrite is only constant in inconstancy. Thomas Brooks

There is not more counterfeit coin this day in the world than there is counterfeit holiness in the world. Thomas Brooks

Sometimes God takes away a barren professor by permitting him to fall into open profaneness. There is one that hath taken up a profession of the worthy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but this profession is only a cloak; he secretly practiceth wickedness; he is a glutton, or a drunkard, or covetous, or unclean. Well, saith God, I will loose the reins of this professor, I will give him up to his vile affections. I will loose the reins of his sins before him, he shall be entangled with his filthy lusts, he shall be overcome of ungodly company. John Bunyan

Do not seek to cover up your sins with the varnish of hypocrisy, the fine gloss that pleases men. William C. Burns

Hypocrites are so stupid that they do not feel their sores. John Calvin

The heart of man has so many recesses of vanity, and so many retreats of falsehood, and is so enveloped with fraudulent hypocrisy, that it frequently deceives even himself. John Calvin

Hypocrisy can plunge the mind of a man into a dark abyss, when he believes his own self-flattery instead of God's verdict. John Calvin

The worst possible heritage to leave with children: high spiritual pretensions and low performance. D.A. Carson,

A bad man is worse when he pretends to be a saint. Oswald Chambers

Without a heart transformed by the grace of Christ, we just continue to manage external and internal darkness. Matt Chandler

A hypocrite may well be termed a religious atheist, an atheist masked with religion. Stephen Charnock

Without the heart it is no worship. It is a stage play. It is an acting a part without being that person, really. It is playing the hypocrite. Stephen Charnock

A running sore may lie under a purple robe. Stephen Charnock

God is not taken with the cabinet but the jewel. Stephen Charnock

It is a sad thing to be Christians at a supper, heathens in our shops, and devils in our closets. Stephen Charnock

If the devil ever laughs, it must be at hypocrites; they are the greatest dupes he has. C. C. Colton

Feigned equity is double iniquity. George Downname

Men defend nothing more violently than the pretensions they live by. Allen Drury

Many pray with their lips for that for which their hearts have no desire. Jonathan Edwards

Godliness is more easily feigned in words than in actions. Jonathan Edwards

The hypocrite has not the knowledge of his own blindness, and the deceitfulness of his own heart, and that mean opinion of his own understanding, that the true saint has. Those that are deluded with false discoveries and affections are evermore highly conceited of their light and understanding. Jonathan Edwards

Hypocrisy only proves that there's a real thing out there somewhere. Tony Evans

Some Christians live a 'cat and dog' life—they purr at the prayer meeting and growl at home. Celestine Fernanda

A man can be outwardly conformed to the Christian way of life while he is inwardly conformed to the spirit of this world. Sinclair Ferguson

A man may have the tongue of an angel and the heart of a devil. John Flavel

Religion is the best armour in the world, but the worst cloak. Thomas Fuller

There is nothing worse than being something on the outside that you are not on the inside. Mohandas Gandhi

There are three things I don't like—they are liver, kidneys and hypocrisy. A. Lindsay Glegg

Hypocrisy not only covers faults, but swiftly eats out of the soul every remnant of truth and honour left in it. Richard Glover

Integrity is the glue that holds our way of life together. What our young people want to see in their elders is integrity, honesty, truthfulness, and faith. What they hate most of all is hypocrisy and phoniness . . . Let them see us doing what we would like them to do. Billy Graham

Ask God to reveal hypocrisy in your life—an inconsistency between what you profess and what you practice. Then ask God to bring you so close to Christ that you won't have any desire to live an inconsistent, deceitful life. Billy Graham

Piety outside and corruption inside is a revolting mixture. Michael Green

It is all in vain to preach the truth,  
To the eager ears of a trusting youth,  
If, whenever the lad is standing by,  
He sees you cheat and he hears you lie.—Edgar A. Guest

Hypocrisy is a lie with a fair cover over it. William Gurnall

Hypocrisy is a sin that offers violence to the very light of nature. William Gurnall

Hypocrisy is too thin a veil to blind the eyes of the Almighty. William Gurnall

We must not spread our sails of profession in a calm and furl them up when the wind rises. William Gurnall

He that walketh not uprightly in his house is but a hypocrite at church. William Gurnall

Many a Christian, many a church, has everything in the showcase and nothing on the shelves. Vance Havner

Many a Christian, many a church, has everything in the showcase and nothing on the shelves. Vance Havner

There is no use singing of milk and honey, figs and pomegranates, if all we have to show is crab apples! Vance Havner

Sunday-morning Christianity is the greatest hindrance to true revival. Vance Havner

(On the Lord's Prayer) "Thy will be done." For one thing, the man who asks that and does nothing to help realize God's will on earth is a rank hypocrite....there is no more flagrant hypocrisy abroad in the land than the superficial repetition of these stupendous words, unsupported by surrendered wills and lives. Verily, we call Him Lord but do not His commands. Vance Havner

Using Christian terminology means nothing if one is not a Christian. Having a case of athlete's foot doesn't make you an athlete! Vance Havner

It is an awful hypocrisy that declares with the lips what it denies with the life. The shame of too many church members is that they lead a double life; they fear the Lord and serve their own gods. Vance Havner

(On Matthew 23) The charges He brings are terrific! They do not practice what they preach. They love clerical show and high places at conventions, and lofty titles. They obstruct the conversion of others. They cheat the poor and pray long prayers. They encourage dishonesty. They see little faults in others and commit great sins themselves. They are hypocrites—righteous without and vile within; whitewashed, not washed white. Their fathers had killed the great prophets of the past. They are snakes, sure for hell! No more awful condemnation of any group of people has ever been delivered! It is noteworthy that our Lord never spoke of or to the Pharisees except in judgment, for they were blind leaders of the blind, and His attitude was "Let them alone." Some people cannot be won, they can only be let alone. Vance Havner

One of Havner's favorite stories is one he likes to tell on himself. It seems that when he went to preach a trial sermon at a Baptist church in Charleston, South Carolina, many years ago, he preached on the subject of hypocrites. One of the deacons was heard to respond, "Well, he's not looking for work." (Havner ended up serving for five years at the church.)

"Moses wist not that ... his face shone," (Ex 34:29). The hypocrites were conscious of a sad face; Moses was unconscious of a shining face. Think it over. Vance Havner

Hypocrites and betrayers of Christ are no better than devils. Matthew Henry

Hypocrites do the devil's drudgery in Christ's livery. Matthew Henry

Piety from the teeth outward is an easy thing. Matthew Henry

The day is coming when hypocrites will be stripped of their fig-leaves. Matthew Henry

Where the hypocrite's work ends, there the true Christian's work begins. Matthew Henry

The wound religion receives from hypocrites is far more dangerous and incurable than that inflicted on it by the open and scandalous sinner. For religion is never brought into question by the enormous vices of an infamous person; all see and all abhor his sin. But when a man shall have his mouth full of piety and his hands full of wickedness, when he shall speak Scripture and live devilish, profess strictly and walk loosely, this lays a grievous stumbling-block in the way of others; and tempts them to think that all religion is but mockery, and that the professors of it are but hypocrites. Ezekiel Hopkins

A good name upon an unchanged nature is but white feathers upon a black skin. William Jenkyn

A rotten apple discovers itself in a windy day. William Jenkyn

Hereafter all paint must fall off which is not laid in the oil of sincerity. William Jenkyn

There are many who are lip-servants but not life-servants. William Jenkyn

Solemn prayers, rapturous devotions, are but repeated hypocrisies unless the heart and mind be conformable to them. William Law

How difficult it is to avoid having a special standard for oneself! C. S. Lewis

Of all bad men religious bad men are the worst. C. S. Lewis

God is not deceived by externals. C. S. Lewis

I care not for a man's religion whose dog and cat are not the better for it. Abraham Lincoln

The most exhausting thing in life is being insincere. Anne Morrow Lindbergh

It is impossible that Scripture should contradict itself; it only appears so to senseless and obstinate hypocrites. Martin Luther

Repentance which is occupied with thoughts of peace is hypocrisy. Martin Luther

I had rather that true and faithful teachers should rebuke and condemn me, and reprove my ways, than that hypocrites should flatter me and applaud me as a saint. Martin Luther

We play the game; God keeps the score. Erwin W. Lutzer

Take heed also of being hypocritical Christians. Take heed you do not receive the truth without receiving the truth in the love of that truth. . . . It is just with God that they should fall into errors whose hearts did never love real truths. Better never to have received the truth, than to receive it, and not in the love of it. Thomas Lye

There are over many who have much knowledge and little virtue, and who often speak of God while rarely speaking to him. Malaval

Painted fire needs no fuel; a dead, formal profession is easily kept up. Thomas Manton

It is the mark of a hypocrite to be a Christian everywhere except at home. Robert Murray M'Cheyne

For neither Man nor Angel can discern  
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks  
Invisible, except to God alone. —JOHN MILTON, Paradise Lost

Whitewashing the pump won't make the water pure. D. L. Moody

They Knew It - Let me tell you how I had my eyes opened about the theater question. I had an assistant superintendent of a Sabbath school, a very promising young man, who seemed to be very happy in the work. A star actor came to the city, and he went to see him. I knew nothing of it, but the next Sunday when he came into the Sunday-school all over the building the boys cried out:

"Hypocrite! Hypocrite!"

The perspiration started out of every pore of my body; I thought they were looking at me. I said to the little newsboys:

"Who are you calling a hypocrite?"

They mentioned the assistant's name. I asked the reason, and they said:

"We saw him going into the theater."

I had never said anything about the theater to those children, but they saw that man going in, and called him a hypocrite. They seemed to know it was no place for a Christian to go. He lost his influence entirely, withdrew from the school, and after a while gave up Christian work altogether. He was just swept along with the tide in Chicago and his influence was lost. D. L. Moody

A man may preach with the eloquence of an angel, but if he doesn't live what he preaches, and act out in his home and his business what he professes, his testimony goes for naught, and the people say it is all hypocrisy after all; it is all a sham. Words are very empty, if there is nothing back of them. Your testimony is poor and worthless, if there is not a record back of that testimony consistent with what you profess. What we need is to pray to God to lift us up out of this low, cold, formal state that we live in, that we may dwell in the atmosphere of God continually, and that the Lord may lift upon us the light of His countenance, and that we may shine in this world, reflecting His grace and glory. D. L. Moody

"I won't become a Christian because of hypocrites in the churches." My friend, there won't be a hypocrite in the next world; and if you don't want to be associated with hypocrites in the next world, you will take this invitation. You find hypocrites everywhere! One of the apostles was himself the very prince of hypocrites, but he didn't get to heaven. You will find plenty of hypocrites in the Church. They have been there for the last nineteen hundred years, and will probably remain there. But what is that to you? This is an individual matter between you and your God. D L Moody

If a man preaches but does not practice what he preaches, he is like a well of water where everyone can quench their thirst and wash their dirt, but which cannot clean away the filth and dung that is around it. Poemen

There is something of the hypocrites in us all. Derek Prime

There are many who agree with God in principle but not in practice. Richard Owen Roberts

People say that the church is full of hypocrites. I'd rather spend some of the time here on earth with some of the hypocrites — than

eternity in Hell with all of them! Adrian Rogers

A man snubbed the local vicar at a cocktail party. "The church is full of hypocrites!" "Why don't you join?" suggested the vicar. "One more won't make any difference." Rolling in the Aisles

The hypocrite will have the lowest place in hell. J. C. Ryle

It must not content us to take our bodies to church if we leave our hearts at home. J. C. Ryle

Grace that cannot be seen, like light, and tasted, like salt, is not grace but hypocrisy. J. C. Ryle

Whatever we are in our religion, let us resolve never to wear a cloak. Let us by all means be honest and real. J. C. Ryle

A painted harlot is less dangerous than a painted hypocrite is. William Secker

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain. William Shakespeare, Hamlet

No hypocrite can bear the cross. Henry Smith

Sin, and heresy, and superstition are hypocrites; that is, sin hath the appearance of virtue, and heresy hath the appearance of truth, and superstition hath the appearance of religion. Henry Smith

A professor of ethics at a leading university was attending a convention. He and another teacher of philosophy had lunch at a restaurant and were discussing deep issues of truth and morality. Before they left the table, the professor slipped the silverware into his pocket. Noticing his colleague's puzzled look, he explained, "I just teach ethics. I need the spoons." The Speaker's Quote Book

A farmer once said to a friend, "I have some delicious apples growing in my orchard. If you come over, I'll give you a bushel." He repeated the offer, but his friend never came. Finally he asked, "John, why didn't you accept my offer?" "Well, to tell you the truth," said the other, "I have tasted them. As I went along the road a few weeks ago, I picked one up that had fallen over the wall and frankly, I have never eaten anything so sour!" "Oh," laughed the farmer. "I thought that might be the case. Those apples around the outside were placed there because we have so many boys in the neighborhood. In order to protect my crop, I selected the sourest varieties to plant around the outer edge of my orchard. When the boys tasted these, they gave up stealing, thinking all the fruit was just as bad. However, if you will come with me, you'll find that I grow a very different quality on the inside. You'll really enjoy them. They're as sweet as honey."

Those who judge the church by its worst members make the same mistake when they allow the "sour apple hypocrites" to keep them away from the "orchard of fellowship" they might enjoy with God's saints. The Speaker's Quote Book

Why condemn the church because all its members aren't fine saints? You don't tear down the hospital because not all the patients recover. The Speaker's Quote Book

Finding himself desperately in need of money, a man went to the city zoo, hoping to find a job feeding the animals. Although no such opportunity was available, the manager, seeing the size and the strength of the applicant, suddenly got an idea. "You know," he said, "there are a few creatures who attract attention like a gorilla. Unfortunately, ours died yesterday. If we got you a special fur suit, would you be willing to imitate him for a few days?"

The hungry man agreed to try. He was quite successful as he beat his chest, bellowed, and shook the bars of the cage—much to the amusement of visitors who said they had never seen a gorilla with such intelligence.

One day, while swinging on his trapeze, he accidentally lost his grip and landed in the lion's den. The huge beast gave a ferocious roar. Backing away, the impostor realized he couldn't cry for assistance without revealing that he was a fake. He retreated, hoping to crawl back over the fence into his own cage. The lion, however, followed him.

Finally, in desperation, he yelled, "Help!" Immediately the lion said in an undertone, "Shut up, stupid! You'll get us both fired!" The Speaker's Quote Book

A hypocrite is one who complains there is too much sex and violence on his VCR. The Speaker's Quote Book (Did you need to think about that one a second? So did I!)

The General Electric Company uses about two million sapphires a year for bearings in their meters and other delicate apparatus. To separate the real from the synthetic they use a cathode ray tube, which, when turned on a tray of stones in a dark room, makes them all glow. But when the ray is turned off, the artificial sapphires continue to glow and are picked from the tray. The real sapphires cannot be seen.

It is also said that under this ray, artificial diamonds turn brown while the genuine stones are unaffected. The Speaker's Quote Book

The expression "face the music" is said to have originated in Japan. According to the story, one man in the imperial orchestra couldn't play a note. Being a person of great influence and wealth, he had demanded that he be given a place in the group because

he wanted to “perform” before the emperor.

The conductor agreed to let him sit in the second row of the orchestra, even though he couldn’t read music. He was given a flute, and when a concert would begin, he’d raise the instrument, pucker his lips, and move his fingers. He would go through all the motions of playing, but he never made a sound. This deception continued for two years.

Then a new conductor took over. He told the orchestra that he wanted to audition each player personally. One by one they performed in his presence. Then came the flutist’s turn. He was frantic with worry, so he pretended to be sick. However, the doctor who was ordered to examine him declared that he was perfectly well. The conductor insisted that the man appear and demonstrate his skill. Shamefacedly, he had to confess that he was a fake. He was unable to “face the music.” The Speaker's Quote Book

Lead your life so you wouldn’t be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip. The Speaker's Quote Book

Nothing devalues the truth more quickly than the counterfeit. R. C. Sproul

Conviction of ignorance is the doorstep to the temple of wisdom. C. H. Spurgeon

Nothing is more to be despised than a mere painted fire, the simulation of earnestness. Sooner let us have an honest death than a counterfeit life. C. H. Spurgeon

Of all things in the world that stink in the nostrils of men, hypocrisy is the worst. C. H. Spurgeon

It is a terribly easy matter to be a minister of the gospel and a vile hypocrite at the same time. C. H. Spurgeon

Public prayer is no evidence of piety. It is practised by an abundance of hypocrites. But private prayer is a thing for which the hypocrite has no heart. C. H. Spurgeon

Pedley, who was a well-known natural simpleton, was wont to say, “God help the fool.” None are more ready to pity the folly of others than those who have a small share of it themselves. “There is no love among Christians,” cries the man who is destitute of true charity. “Zeal has vanished,” exclaims the idle talker. “O for more consistency,” groans out the hypocrite. “We want more vital godliness,” protests the false pretender. As in the old legend, the wolf preached against sheep-stealing, so very many hunt down those sins in others which they gladly shelter in themselves. C. H. Spurgeon

In common matters of daily life, a double-minded man is despised, but in religion he is loathsome to the last degree. C. H. Spurgeon

I heard one man say, a little while ago, that he did not believe there was a true Christian living, because he had found out so many hypocrites. I reminded him that there could be no hypocrites if there were no genuine ones. No one would think of passing a bad sovereign if there were no sterling coin. So the fact of there being some hypocrites proves that there are some genuine characters. C. H. Spurgeon

WE cannot prevent hypocrites arising; it is only a proof that true religion is worth having. You took a bad half-sovereign the other night, did you? Did you say, “All half-sovereigns are worthless, I will never take another”? Not so, you became more careful; but you were quite sure there were good half-sovereigns in currency, or else people would not make counterfeit ones. It would not pay anybody to be a hypocrite, unless there were enough genuine Christians to make the hypocrites pass current. C. H. Spurgeon

PERIODICAL godliness is perpetual hypocrisy. C. H. Spurgeon

Of all the things in the world that stink in the nostrils of an honest man, hypocrisy is the worst. C. H. Spurgeon

Hypocrites do not love one another; though they are always talking about the want of love there is in the church. C. H. Spurgeon

I warrant you there were not many hypocrites in the catacombs of Rome, when to be a Christian involved almost certain death. C. H. Spurgeon

Those who are walking in the light are free from pretence, and are living in real earnest: is it so with you? Contentment with unreality is a sign of dwelling in darkness. Careful keeping up of shams, diligent puffing out of wind-bags, and constant creation of make-believes—all this is of the night and its dreams; but to be what you seem to be, to be true in all the phases of your life, this is surely seen in those who walk in the light of God. C. H. Spurgeon

Men and brethren, if you pray at all, pray God to make you real, through and through. C. H. Spurgeon

Profess only what you possess, and rest only in that which has been given you from above. C. H. Spurgeon

I have sometimes been obliged to a wicked world for what it has done to inconsistent professors of religion. I remember a young man, in my early pastorate, going to a certain place of doubtful fame, and in the midst of a dance, somebody cried out, “That is one

of Spurgeon's people. Fling him out of the window." And out he went. C. H. Spurgeon

Every Sunday morning some folks take out their godliness and touch it up, while they are turning the brush round their best hat. Many women, after a fashion, put on the fear of God with their new bonnet. When the Sunday is over, and their best things are put away, they have also put away their best thoughts and their best behaviour. We must have a seven-days' religion, or else we have none at all. Periodical godliness is perpetual hypocrisy. C. H. Spurgeon

If the preacher says anything about hypocrites, very often the hypocrites will not take it to heart, but the most sincere saint in the congregation very likely says, "Oh, I am afraid that I am a hypocrite!" If you are, you are an odd sort of hypocrite, for I never knew of a hypocrite who was afraid that he was one. C. H. Spurgeon

Again, methinks you have great cause for questioning, unless your holiness is uniform; I mean, if your life is angelic abroad and devilish at home. You must suspect that it is at home that you are really what you are. C. H. Spurgeon

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**William Barclay** writes that the related word "**Hupokrites** (hypocrite) is a word with a curious history. It is the noun from the verb hupokrinesthai which means to answer; a **hupokritēs** begins by being an answerer. Then it goes on to mean one who answers in a set dialogue or a set conversation, that is to say an **actor**, the man who takes part in the question and answer of the stage... It then came to mean an actor in the worse sense of the term, a **pretender**, one who acts a part, one who wears a mask to cover his true feelings, one who puts on an external show while inwardly his thoughts and feelings are very different... it comes to mean a **hypocrite**, a man who all the time is acting a part and concealing his real motives... one whose whole life is a piece of acting without any sincerity behind it at all. Anyone to whom religion is a legal thing, anyone to whom religion means carrying out certain external rules and regulations, anyone to whom religion is entirely connected with the observation of a certain ritual and the keeping of a certain number of taboos is in the end bound to be, in this sense, a **hypocrite**. The reason is this—he believes that he is a good man if he carries out the correct acts and practices, no matter what his heart and his thoughts are like. To take the case of the legalistic Jew in the time of Jesus, he might hate his fellow man with all his heart, he might be full of envy and jealousy and concealed bitterness and pride; that did not matter so long as he carried out the correct handwashings and observed the correct laws about cleanness and uncleanness. Legalism takes account of a man's outward actions; but it takes no account at all of his inward feelings. He may well be meticulously serving God in outward things, and bluntly disobeying God in inward things—and that is hypocrisy... There is no greater religious peril than that of identifying religion with outward observance. There is no commoner religious mistake than to identify goodness with certain so-called religious acts. Church-going, bible-reading, careful financial giving, even time-tabled prayer do not make a man a good man. The fundamental question is, how is a man's heart towards God and towards his fellow-men? And if in his heart there are enmity, bitterness, grudges, pride, not all the outward religious observances in the world will make him anything other than a **hypocrite**... The **hypocrite** is the man whose alleged Christian profession is for his own profit and prestige and not for the service and glory of Christ." ([Daily Study Bible](#))

**Spurgeon** adds that **hypocrisy** is that sin "whereby men are not so much robbed and injured as deceived. A Christian can be no hypocrite. Hypocrisy, like all other sins, lurks in man till the very last, but a believer hates to pretend to be what he is not. A man who has once tasted that the Lord is gracious is a true and transparent man in his profession. If any suppose him to be better than he is, he does not wish to wear feathers that are not his own. He would not be glorified by another man's labors nor build upon another man's foundation. He utterly detests hypocrisy, and would sooner die a pauper than live a pretender."

**Spurgeon** - "And hypocrisies" of all sorts. Let us not profess to be what we are not, nor pretend to know what we do not know, or talk of experiences which we have never felt; in fact, let us never be hypocrites in any respect whatsoever. The God of truth loves his children to be the embodiments of truth. Hypocrisy he hates with a perfect hatred. ([1Peter 2 Commentary](#))

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All of the following in this section are from C H Spurgeon's Feathers for Arrows

#### HYPOCRISY

IN the olden times even the best rooms were usually of bare brick or stone, damp, and mouldy, but over these in great houses when the family was resident, were hung up arras or hangings of rich materials, between which and the wall persons might conceal themselves, so that literally walls had ears. It is to be feared that many a brave show of godliness is but an arras to conceal rank hypocrisy; and this accounts for some men's religion being but occasional, since it is folded up or exposed to view as need may demand. Is there no room for conscience to pry between thy feigned profession and thy real ungodliness, and bear witness against thee? Remember, if conscience do it not, certainly "the watcher and the Holy One" will make a thorough search within thee.

#### HYPOCRISY

IN the pursuit of pastoral duty, I stood a little while ago in a cheesemonger's shop, and being in a fidgety humour, and having a stick in my hand, I did what most Englishmen are sure to do, I was not content with seeing, but must needs touch as well. My stick came



gently upon a fine cheese in the window, and to my surprise a most metallic sound emanated from it. The sound was rather hollow, or one might have surmised that all the tasteholes had been filled up with sovereigns, and thus the cheese had been greatly enriched, and the merchant had been his own banker. There was, however, a sort of crockery jingle in the sound, like the ring of a huge bread or milk pan, such as our country friends use so abundantly; and I came to the very correct conclusion that I had found a very well got-up hypocrite in the shop window. Mark, from this time, when I pass by, I mentally whisper, "Pottery;" and the shams may even be exchanged for realities, but I shall be long in believing it. In my mind the large stock has dissolved into potsherds, and the fine show in the window only suggests the potter's vessel. The homely illustration is simply introduced because we find people of this sort in our churches, looking extremely like what they should be, yet having no substance in them, so that if, accidentally, one happens to tap them somewhere or other with sudden temptation or stern duty, the baked earth gives forth its own ring, and the pretender is esteemed no longer.

#### HYPOCRISY

THE shops in the square of San Marco were all religiously closed, for the day was a high festival: we were much disappointed, for it was our last day, and we desired to take away with us some souvenirs of lovely Venice; but our regret soon vanished, for on looking at the shop we meant to patronise, we readily discovered signs of traffic within. We stepped to the side door, and found when one or two other customers had been served, that we might purchase to our heart's content, saint or no saint. After this fashion too many keep the laws of God to the eye, but violate them in the heart. The shutters are up as if the man no more dealt with sin and Satan; but a brisk commerce is going on behind the scenes. From such deceit may the Spirit of truth preserve us.

#### HYPOCRISY—Easy, but Dangerous

THE counterfeit will always have some admirers, from its cheapness in the market. One must dig deep in dark mines for gold and silver; the precious treasure must be brought from far across the seas; it must be melted down, it must pass through many assays, and the dies must be worked with ponderous engines before the coin can be produced; all this to the sluggish many is a heavy disadvantage. Hush! hearken! steal silently upstairs; the spirit of deceit invites you to her chamber; a little plaster of Paris, a fire, a crucible, molten lead, the mould, and there is your money, sir, without troubling Peru, Potosi, California, or the Mint. Slink out and change your fine new shillings, and your fortune's made without the ignoble waste of sweat and labour. But be quiet, for a detective may be near, a coarse-minded minion of unpoetic law, who may cruelly block up your road, or even lead you into prison. Short cuts to wealth have brought many to the hulks; and, let me add, there are short cuts to godliness which have brought many to perdition!

#### HYPOCRISY—a Fall Fatal

"THE meteor, if it once fall, cannot be rekindled." When those who once flashed before the eyes of the religious public with the blaze of a vain profession, fall into open and scandalous sin, it is impossible to renew their glory. Once break the egg of hypocrisy, and who can repair the damage?

#### HYPOCRISY—Present Age Suitable to

THERE was an age of chivalry, when no craven courted knighthood, for it involved the hard blows, the dangerous wounds, the rough unhorsings, and the ungentle perils of the tournament; nay, these were but child's play: there were distant eastern fields, where Paynim warriors must be slain by valiant hands, and blood must flow in rivers from the Red-cross knights. Then men who lacked valour preferred their hawks and their jesters, and left heroes to court death and glory on the battle-field. This genial time of peace breeds carpet knights, who flourish their untried weapons, and bear the insignia of valour, without incurring its inconvenient toils. Many are crowding to the seats of the heroes, since prowess and patience are no more required. The war is over, and every man is willing to enlist. When Rome commenced her long career of victory, it was no pleasant thing to be a soldier in the Roman legions. The power which smote the nations like a rod of iron abroad, was a yoke of iron at home. There were long forced marches, with hunger and cold and weariness; heavy armour was the usual load when the legionary marched at ease; but "ease" was a word he seldom used. Rivers were forded; mountains were scaled; barbarians were attacked; proud nations were assailed; kingdoms were subdued. No toil too stern for the scarred veteran, no odds too heavy, no onslaught too ferocious, no arms too terrible. Scarcely were his wounds healed, ere he was called to new fields; his life was battle; his home the tent; his repast was plunder; his bed the battle-field; while the eagle's bloody talons removed all need of sepulchre for his slaughtered body. But afterwards when Rome was mistress of the world, and the Prætorian cohorts could sell the imperial purple to the highest bidder, many would follow the legions to share their spoils. It is not otherwise to-day. Into the triumphs of martyrs and confessors few are unwilling to enter; in a national respect to religion, which is the result of their holiness, even ungodly men are willing to share. They have gone before us with true hearts valiant for truth, and false traitors are willing to divide their spoils.

#### HYPOCRISY—of no Service

COALS of fire cannot be concealed beneath the most sumptuous apparel, they will betray themselves with smoke and flame; nor

can darling sins be long hidden beneath the most ostentatious profession, they will sooner or later discover themselves, and burn sad holes in the man's reputation. Sin needs quenching in the Saviour's blood, not concealing under the garb of religion.

HYPOCRITES—Discovered on nearer Inspection

HOW many are like that famous painting of the olden time, in which the artist depicted what seemed at a distance a holy friar with a book before him, and his hands crossed in devotion, looking like a saint indeed, but when you came close to the venerable impostor, you found that his hands, though clasped, enclosed a lemon, and instead of a book there was a punch-bowl into which he was squeezing the juice. To seem to be, answers men's purposes so well, that it is little marvel if pretenders swarm like the flies in Egypt's plague; yet if they would remember the last great day, men would abhor hypocrisy.

HYPOCRITES—Season for

AFTER a refreshing shower which has made all the flowers to smile till the teardrops of joy stand in their eyes, you will see your garden-paths spotted over with slugs and snails. These creatures lay concealed till the genial rain called them forth to make their slimy way towards whatsoever they might devour. After this fashion revivals, of necessity, develop hypocrites, yet who would deplore the shower because of the snails, and who would rail at "times of refreshing" because mere pretenders are excited to make a base profession of a grace to which they are strangers?

HYPOCRITES—Seeking their own Advantage

GOD is in the hypocrite's mouth, but the world is in his heart, which he expects to gain through his good reputation. I have read of one that offered his prince a great sum of money to have leave once or twice a-day to come into his presence, and only say, "God save your Majesty!" The prince wondering at this large offer for so small a favour, asked him, "What advantage would this afford him?" "O sire," saith he, "this, though I have nothing else at your hands, will get me a name in the country for one who is a great favourite at court, and such an opinion will help me to more at the year's end, than it costs me for the purchase."

Thus some, by the name they get for great saints, advance their worldly interests, which lie at the bottom of all their profession.—Gurnall.

HYPOCRITES—their Sinister Motives

SEE yonder eagle, how it mounts! Does it care for the ethereal blue, or aspire to commune with the stars of heaven! Not a whit; such airy considerations have no weight with the ravenous bird; and yet you will not wonder that it soars aloft when you remember that it thus obtains a broader range of vision, and so becomes the more able to provide for its nest. The bird mounts towards heaven, but it keeps its eye evermore upon the outlook for its prey. No celestial impulse is needed, its love of blood suffices to bear it aloft. It soars only that it may flash downwards with fell swoop upon the object of its desires. Wonder not that men with the hearts of devils yet mount like angels: there is a reason which explains it all.

Sincerity makes the very least person to be of more value than the most talented hypocrite. Charles Spurgeon

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Religion which is begun in hypocrisy will certainly end in apostasy. William Spurstowe

How few of us live one life and live it in the open! We are tempted to wear a different mask and play a different role according to each occasion. This is not reality but play-acting, which is the essence of hypocrisy. John R. W. Stott

Hypocrisy is Hideous. What cancer is to the body, hypocrisy is to the church. It is a killing agent. Unfortunately, hypocrisy is also addictive. And even though Jesus reserved His most severe words of condemnation for the hypocrite, we still seem to prefer that lifestyle to truth and authenticity. John R. W. Stott,

Some people weave around them such a tissue of lies that they can no longer tell which part of them is real and which is make-believe. John R. W. Stott

Ignorance is the mother of superstition, not of devotion. Augustus H. Strong

Prayer is good, but when used as a substitute for obedience, it is naught but a blatant hypocrisy, a despicable Pharisaism. C. T. Studd

Hypocrites in the Church? Yes, and in the lodge and at the home. Don't hunt through the Church for a hypocrite. Go home and look in the mirror. Hypocrites? Yes. See that you make the number one less.

In The Pilgrim's Progress John Bunyan talked about "the parson of our parish, Mr. Two-Tongues." In that same congregation was Mr. Smooth-Man, Mr. Anything, and Mr. Facing-Two-Ways. These are all people of duplicity. Charles Swindoll

Hypocrisy is the loudest lie. George Swinnock

Ignorance and confidence are often twins. George Swinnock

A man may wear Christ's livery and do the devil's drudgery. George Swinnock

When grapes come to the press they come to the proof. George Swinnock

To be proud of learning is the greatest ignorance. Jeremy Taylor

I cannot believe that a man is on the road to heaven when he is habitually performing the kind of deeds that would logically indicate that he ought to be on his way to hell. A. W. Tozer

When hypocrites ran up against Jesus it was like a cat running into a mowing machine. A. W. Tozer

We must not think to dine with the devil all day and sup with Christ at night. John Trapp

The righteous man hath grace beyond expression; the hypocrite hath expression beyond grace. Ralph Venning

Hypocrites cannot sail in stormy weather. Thomas Watson

Hypocrites love a cheap religion. Thomas Watson

The hypocrite hath a squint eye, for he looks more to his own glory than God's. Thomas Watson

The hypocrite's tongue may be silver, yet his heart stone. Thomas Watson

The white devil is the worst. Thomas Watson

Not ignorance, but the ignorance of ignorance, is the death of knowledge. Alfred North Whitehead

No matter how spiritual the song you are singing, no matter how poetic the prayer you are praying, if it isn't sincere then it isn't worship, it's hypocrisy. Donald S. Whitney

Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy. Warren W. Wiersbe

The alternative to integrity is hypocrisy, and that eventually leads to duplicity—becoming two persons inside, neither of whom knows the other. Without inner wholeness, we can't function successfully in life or enjoy all that God wants us to enjoy. Warren W. Wiersbe

Integrity is the opposite of duplicity. A person who practices duplicity is a hypocrite, a pretender. Integrity means to have one heart and one mind and to serve one master. It means not being divided, not always changing. Warren W. Wiersbe

Psychologists tell us that childhood is a time for pretending, but maturity demands that we be authentic and not wear masks. Maturity can only be developed from reality. In Matthew 23, Jesus accused the Pharisees of being hypocrites. The meaning of the Greek word translated "hypocrite" is "play actor," for ancient Greek players wore masks to depict their various parts in the play. This does not mean that we cannot fulfill several adult roles during the day — parent, sibling, employee, friend, and neighbor — but we must always be the same person no matter what our roles might be. Being true to ourselves unifies our lives, but once our false self appears, we become double-minded and this brings instability (James 1:8). We may briefly impress others, but we are not building the kind of mature character that honors the Lord and leads to a fruitful Christian life. Warren W. Wiersbe

A hypocrite is not a person who fails to reach his desired spiritual goals, because all of us fail in one way or another. A hypocrite is a person who doesn't even try to reach any goals, but he makes people think that he has. His profession and his practice never meet. Warren Wiersbe

The tragedy of hypocrisy is not only that God sends judgment, but that hypocrisy brings its own judgment. It destroys character; and when character is gone, when the salt has lost its flavor (see Matt. 5:13), what does a person have left? Warren Wiersbe

Jesus compared hypocrisy to yeast: it starts small, spreads, and eventually infects the whole. The Jews would recognize yeast as a picture of impurity (Ex. 12:15–20; see 1 Cor. 5:6–8; Gal. 5:9). But hypocrisy is destined to fail because eventually God will reveal all things (Lk 12:2–3), and God is the final judge. Warren Wiersbe

If we are living in sin ("walking in darkness"), then our lives will contradict what our lips are saying, making us hypocrites. Warren Wiersbe

The remedy for hypocrisy is to forget about what people may say and do and fear God alone. The fear of God is the fear that conquers all other fears, for the person who truly fears God need fear nothing else. All that men can do is kill the body, but God can

condemn the soul! Since He is the final Judge, and He judges for eternity, it is logical that we put the fear of God ahead of everything else. Our God knows us and cares for us. He cares for the sparrows, and we are of more value than they, so what do we have to fear from men? Warren Wiersbe

Remember that hypocrisy robs us of reality in Christian living. We substitute reputation for character, mere words for true prayer, money for the devotion of the heart. No wonder Jesus compared the Pharisees to tombs that were whitewashed on the outside, but filthy on the inside! (Matt. 23:27–28) But hypocrisy not only robs us of character, it also robs us of spiritual rewards. Instead of the eternal approval of God, we receive the shallow praise of men. We pray, but there are no answers. We fast, but the inner man shows no improvement. The spiritual life becomes hollow and lifeless. We miss the blessing of God here and now, and also lose the reward of God when Christ returns. Hypocrisy also robs us of spiritual influence. The Pharisees were a negative influence; whatever they touched was defiled and destroyed. The people who admired them and obeyed the Pharisees' words thought they themselves were being helped, when in reality, they were being hurt. The first step toward overcoming hypocrisy is to be honest with God in our secret life. We must never pray anything that we do not mean from the heart; otherwise, our prayers are simply empty words. Our motive must be to please God alone, no matter what men may say or do. We must cultivate the heart in the secret place. It has well been said, "The most important part of a Christian's life is the part that only God sees." When reputation becomes more important than character, we have become hypocrites. Warren W. Wiersbe

Sincerity is the prime requisite in every approach to the God who requires 'truth in the inward parts' and who hates all hypocrisy, falsehood and deceit. Geoffrey B. Wilson

A man sat through a church service and then on the way home he fussed about the sermon, he fussed about the traffic, he fussed about the heat, and he fussed about the lateness of the meal being served. Then he bowed and prayed. His son was watching him all the way through this post-church experience. Just as they were beginning to pass the food he said, "Daddy, did God hear you when we left the church and you started fussin' about the sermon and about the traffic and about the heat?" The father sort of blushed and said, "Well, yes, son, He heard me." "Well, Daddy, did God hear you when you just prayed for this food right now?" And he says, "Well, yes, son, He ... He ... He heard me." "So, well, Daddy, which one did God believe?" Spiros Zodhiates

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**TALKING AND WALKING** You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? --Romans 2:21

A professor of ethics at a leading university was attending a convention. He and another teacher of philosophy had lunch at a restaurant and were discussing deep issues of truth and morality. Before they left the table, the professor slipped the silverware into his pocket. Noticing his colleague's puzzled look, he explained, "I just 'teach' ethics. I need the spoons." By vocation that man was paid to instruct his students in the principles of right and wrong. But outside the classroom he failed to put those principles into practice. Profession without practice is hypocrisy, and hypocrisy is a sin. Jesus reminded the hypocrites of His day that God had declared through Isaiah, "These people ... honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me" (Is. 29:13). He could just as well have cited God's rebuke to Israel through Ezekiel, "They hear Your words, but they do not do them" (33:32). The Christian life is like a coin. One side is belief; the other is behavior. If our behavior isn't consistent with our belief, we are hypocrites. By God's enabling grace, we need to bring practice and profession into alignment. We must walk our talk, then we can talk our walk. Author: Vernon C. Grounds

Unless my talk about my faith  
Is mirrored in my walk,  
The faith that glibly I profess  
Is merely empty talk. --Anon.

How we behave reveals what we truly believe. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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Hypocritical Excuse - The man who says he is kept away from religion by hypocrites is not influenced by them anywhere else. Business is full of them, but if he sees a chance at making money he does not stop for that. Society is crowded with them, and yet he never thinks of becoming a hermit. Married life is full of them, but that does not make him remain a bachelor. Hell is full of them, and yet he does not do a thing to keep himself from going there. He wants to have you think that he is trying to avoid the society of hypocrites, and yet he takes not a single step toward heaven, the only place where no hypocrites can go! AMG Illustrations

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Those who don't practice what they preach are hypocrites, perhaps none more so than those who preach God's Word. Yet according to a newsletter of the Global Evangelization Movement, ecclesiastical crime is on the rise. From a tab of just \$300 at the start of this century, and only \$5 million in 1970, the loss is expected to top \$13 billion by the year 2000. As the newsletter's editor

points out, that will exceed the total spent for global foreign missions! Ministers stealing? What a shocking inconsistency between words and actions! A similar situation of inconsistency developed in Antioch, and it led to Peter's being guilty of hypocrisy.

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Several customers were waiting in line at a London cheese shop one day when the famous preacher C. H. Spurgeon came in to make a purchase. Not one to stand around calmly, he became a little fidgety as he stood behind the others and waited his turn. Noticing a fine block of cheese in the shop window, he couldn't resist touching it, and gently tapped the cheese with his walking stick. To his surprise, the "cheese" made an empty metallic sound—like the ring of a big bread pan. Spurgeon later recounted, "I came to the conclusion that I had found a very well-got-up hypocrite in the window." People can be like fake cheese—they look like something they aren't. Many use the name Christian and make a rather pretty display on Sunday morning, yet they have the hollow sound of a hypocrite. A person may look like a Christian but lack genuine faith. When tapped with temptation or spiritual duty, the sham becomes evident. What seemed to be spirituality is a veneer of profession—without the substance of possession.

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A DOUBLE-MINDED PERSON IS A FRUSTRATED PERSON.

Isa 29:13 These people . . . honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me.

Tourists throughout the centuries have visited the famous Acropolis, the ancient hilltop religious citadel in Athens. And thousands of sightseers from all over the world have picked up marble chunks as souvenirs. Why hasn't the supply of marble pieces been exhausted long ago? The answer is very simple. Every few months a truckload of marble fragments from a quarry miles away is scattered around the whole Acropolis area. So tourists go home happy with what they think are authentic pieces of ancient history. We can be deceived by other kinds of imitations. Religious language and music, religious objects and services may fool us into imagining that we are experiencing a firsthand relationship with God when in reality we are simply going through empty routines. The possibility of religious deception prompts personal soul-searching.

Our pious practices may be only imitations of the true heartfelt faith the Lord desires.—V. C. G.

A HYPOCRITE HAS GOD IN HIS MOUTH AND THE WORLD IN HIS HEART.

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**Matthew 6:5-8 PRAYING IN PUBLIC** When you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. --Matthew 6:5 When Jesus told people to pray in secret, He didn't mean that praying in public is wrong. What He condemned are insincere prayers made only to impress people. We may all sense that subtle temptation at times. A group of delegates from a Christian conference stopped at a busy restaurant for lunch and were seated at several different tables around the room. Just before eating, one member announced in a loud voice, "Let's pray!" Chairs shifted and heads turned. Then followed a long-winded "blessing" that did more to cool the food than warm hearts. Finally, amid snickers and grumbling, came the welcome "Amen." Contrast that story with another scene. A history teacher at a large state university was having lunch with his family in the school cafeteria. As they began their meal, their little 3-year-old cried out, "O Daddy, we forgot to pray!" "Well, honey" said the man "would you pray for us?" "Dear Jesus," she began, "thank You for our good food and all these nice people. Amen." From nearby tables came "amens" from professors and students alike who were touched by that child's simple and sincere prayer. May all our public praying be like that. Author: Dennis J. De Haan

Though lines to heaven should ever be  
Attuned to praying ceaselessly,  
Let's take that extra special care  
To guard our words in public prayer.  
--H G B

If we pray to catch the ear of man, we can't expect to reach the ear of God. [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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"CARELESS PREACHERS"

Do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. - Matthew 23:3

Some opponents of Christianity may not be so much against Christ as they are against hypocrisy. Ironically, it hasn't occurred to them that no one was more opposed to hypocrisy than Christ Himself. We've all met scoffers who mindlessly parrot the phrase, "The church is full of hypocrites!" But let's not be mindless in our response and dismiss such pronouncements without taking heed lest they be true. We tend to think that it's not true of us. But let's think again. How many times have we been like the Christian woman who glanced through her window, only to see a nosy, noisy neighbor approaching her door! Her young, impressionable children heard her as she growled, "Oh, no - not her again!" Whereupon she opened the door and gushed insincerely, "How very nice to see you!" Our lips and our lives often preach a mixed message. In today's reading, Jesus described the hypocritical teachers of the law

and warned His disciples, "Do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do" (Mt. 23:3).

God forbid that some opponent of Christ would be influenced by careless hypocrisy in our lives. Lord, help us to be careful "preachers.": Joanie E. Yoder

You can fool the hapless public,  
You can be a subtle fraud,  
You can hide your little meanness,  
But you can't fool God!  
- Kleiser

A hypocrite prays on his knees on Sunday and preys on his neighbors on Monday. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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MATTHEW 23:3 READ: Matthew 23:1-12

SOME opponents of Christianity are not so much against Christ as they are against hypocrisy. Apparently it hasn't occurred to them that no one was more opposed to hypocrisy than Christ Himself. We've all met scoffers who mindlessly parrot the phrase, "The church is full of hypocrites!" But let's not be equally mindless in our response to them by dismissing their pronouncements without heeding the part that is true. We all want to believe that the term hypocrite does not describe us. But how many times have we behaved like the Christian woman who glanced through her kitchen window and saw a nosy neighbor approaching the back door. "Oh, no—not her again!" she groaned in the presence of her young children. Seconds later she greeted the woman at the door with a warm, friendly welcome, "How very nice to see you!" Our lips and our lives often preach conflicting sermons. Jesus described the hypocritical teachers of the law and warned His disciples, "Do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do" (Matthew 23:3). God forbid that some opponent of Christ would be influenced by careless hypocrisy in our lives.—J E Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH

Woe unto you . . . hypocrites. Matthew 23:27

Webster defines a hypocrite as "one who feigns to be something he is not." According to this, he is a "counterfeit," a mere pretender. Jesus, in speaking to the scribes and Pharisees, called them "blind guides" and "whited sepulchers," and said they were "full of . . . all uncleanness." He added that they appeared outwardly righteous, but were "full of iniquity."

One of the weakest excuses offered by Christ-rejecters today, and yet one of the most common, is this: "I'm not interested because there are too many hypocrites in the church." A born-again believer, presenting the Gospel to a certain man, ran into this objection. Mentioning the name of a prominent person who had been a church member, the unbeliever said, "Look at the awful crime he committed, while parading under the name of religion." The other replied, "Do you suppose that man ever was a true Christian?" "Of course not," said the unbeliever. "Exactly!" answered the saved one. "He was not actually one of us. He was just trying to play along with God's people."

"But," I can hear someone say, "I know of those who really do seem to be what you would call 'born again,' and yet they're quite inconsistent. They surely don't 'walk' the way they 'talk!'" Much as I dislike it, I must admit this is true. There are some like this in our churches today, but is that an excuse for rejecting Christ? Was He a hypocrite? We are amazed that intelligent people should use such a flimsy argument as this.

Remembering Jesus' words, "Woe unto you, hypocrites," never allow such a one to stand between you and Christ, lest you be included in their condemnation.

As many men, their vows fulfilling,  
By God's grace are true and willing,  
You must not let the false "professors"  
Quell your faith in true "possessors"! —Anon.

Christianity isn't worth a snap of your finger if it doesn't straighten out your character. —Moody

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## IMITATION FAITH

Read: Isaiah 1:1-4,12-17

These people . . . honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me. —Isaiah 29:13

Tourists throughout the centuries have visited the famous Acropolis, the ancient hilltop religious citadel in Athens. Thousands of sightseers from all over the world have picked up marble chunks as souvenirs.

Why hasn't the supply of pieces been exhausted long ago? The answer is very simple. Every few months a truckload of marble fragments from a quarry miles away is scattered around the whole Acropolis area. So tourists go home happy with what they think are authentic pieces of ancient history.

We can be deceived by other kinds of imitations. Religious language and music, religious objects and services may fool us into imagining that we are experiencing a firsthand relationship with God when in reality we are simply going through empty routines.

During the time of the prophet Isaiah, many of the people of Israel were merely going through the motions. That is why God told them, "Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. . . . Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates" (Isaiah 1:13-14).

The possibility of religious deception prompts personal soul-searching. Our pious practices may be only imitations of the true heartfelt faith that the Lord desires. —VCG

Hypocrisy is a common sin  
That grieves the Lord above;  
He longs for those who'll worship Him  
In faith and truth and love. —Bosch

A hypocrite has God on his tongue and the world in his heart. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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A young man was being interviewed for a position in a small business firm. The applicant had a neat appearance and made a good impression on the owner. He had also prepared an excellent resume in which he listed, as references, his pastor, his Sunday school teacher, and a church deacon. The owner of the business studied the resume for several minutes, then said, "I appreciate these recommendations from your church friends. But what I would really like is word from someone who knows you on weekdays." Sorry to say, in too many instances there is a striking contrast between the behavior of Christians in church and out in the world. The principles we hear preached on Sunday should be practiced all week. A good Sunday Christian will also be a good weekday Christian. —R. W. D.

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## **HYPOCRISY**

George Jeffreys, a sixteenth-century English judge infamous for his cruelty and ruthlessness, once pointed his cane at a man about to be tried, denouncing him, "There is a rogue at the end of my cane." The accused glared at Jeffreys. "At which end, my lord?" he demanded.

Although Jeremiah warned Judah of its sin for more than four decades, the people refused to acknowledge their waywardness. They dropped their sins at the temple door and picked them up again when they left. They were spiritual streetwalkers, giving their souls to other gods. Doing an about-face at the steps of justice, they cheated widows, orphans, and strangers. Because of their hypocrisy, God led them to the slaughterhouse in 586 B.c., the year of the final thrust against Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

In Greek theater the "hypocrite" held a painted mask in front of his face to portray a character. Today, hypocrites are those who try to disguise their true identity; they say they are one thing, but their actions prove otherwise.

Peter, who played the phony at Christ's trial, tells Christians to put aside hypocrisy if they want to grow close to Jesus (1 Peter 2:1-5, 22). Those who know themselves live in humility and honesty—never pointing canes.

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## **HYPOCRITICAL**

MATTHEW 23:25-33

"Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy" (Matthew 23:28).

Our society encourages hypocrisy. Even before our children enter school they begin to master the art of artificiality. It isn't long until they become as sophisticated as their adult counterparts at the slick little deceptions of modern life. This practice is bad enough in social circles, but it is even worse when it occurs in the church. When Sunday morning comes, we adjust our behavior to fit what others expect of a good Christian. We sit piously in our "Sunday best," hiding from everyone that we are selfish, stingy, unforgiving people. In his book *Improving Your Serve*, Charles Swindoll tells of speaking at a singles retreat in a Rocky Mountain resort. He had purposely brought along a full-faced rubber mask that his children had given him as a funny present. One evening he wore it as he

began to speak on authenticity. As expected, the crowd went wild with laughter. Each new sentence increased the effect. After removing the mask, he observed, "It's a funny thing, when we wear literal masks, nobody is fooled. But how easy it is to wear invisible ones and fake people out by the hundreds. . . . Servants who are 'pure in heart' have peeled off their masks. And God places special blessing on their lives." We all struggle with the problem of hypocrisy. But when our hearts are pure, we will have no reason to cover our faces. —D. C. Egener

A hypocrite is a person who isn't himself on Sunday. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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Deceptive Packaging - Through its laws, our country declares it a crime to lie about the contents in a box of cereal. These laws demand that the outside of the package tell the truth about what is on the inside. Deceptive packaging is illegal. "Truth in advertising" regulations are another way to protect the public. A good example of this is the warning on a pack of cigarettes: "Smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and may complicate pregnancy." Unfortunately, there are no such laws about people. We require no one to tell what really lies behind the packaging—the clothes, facial expressions, mannerisms, speech patterns, or affected behavior. No one is forced to tell you what he or she is really feeling, thinking, or planning to do. Our deceptive packaging—the way we appear to others—is an accepted, even an expected part of our way of life. We have become experts in this type of trickery. Before we are going to get the help we need, we need to confess this sin of hypocrisy. Only then can we go on the path of discovering and knowing our real selves. AMG Illustrations

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"Hypocrites!"—Matthew 23:23

To those whose comprehension of God is one of love alone, what a chapter is this! Woe! Woe! Woe! Eight times, like the toll of the death bell! Who could possibly deny that God is a God of righteous judgment after reading a chapter such as this? "But why such strong language?" the soul asks. The answer is because of the existence of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is the greatest of all abominations before the Lord. Men who were outright sinners, the Lord called sinners and dealt with them in grace (Mark 2, John 8; 15:2, etc.). But when it came to hypocrites, the Lord scathingly denounced them. Notice in Acts 5, that even among His own people in the early Church, the Lord did not tolerate hypocrisy. O, that I might recognize any hypocrisy in my life and deal with it swiftly and decisively! - Stephen Olford

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Hebrews 4:15 The Hypocrite Excuse

The rest . . . also played the hypocrite with him. —Galatians 2:13

Read: Galatians 2:11-18

I have a neighbor who can't stand hypocrites. In fact, he tells me that he stopped going to church because he saw too many hypocrites there.

He's not alone. That's one of the most popular reasons people give for rejecting Christianity. My neighbor is right—there are too many hypocrites in the church.

The problem of hypocrisy, though, is not the issue to pursue with people who reject the gospel. The key is validity. Does the presence of hypocrites in the church invalidate the gospel message?

In today's Bible reading, Paul accused Peter of hypocrisy (Galatians 2:13). Did that invalidate the gospel Peter preached? Some people may think so, perhaps because they expect Christians to be perfect. What might surprise them, however, is that Jesus Himself warned against and condemned hypocrisy (Matthew 6:1-18; 23:13-33). He hates it more than they do.

That brings us to a key point: The validity of Christianity is not based on imperfect Christians but on the perfect Christ. Therefore, if a person could show that Jesus was a hypocrite, he would have an argument. But that's impossible. Jesus was sinless and without fault (John 8:46; Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus is the answer to the hypocrite excuse.

Lord, help me make my witness clear,  
And labor faithfully,  
So friends and neighbors turn to Christ  
Through what they hear from me. —Anon.

Instead of looking at hypocrites, look at Jesus. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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Unpaid-for Teeth - After attending a church service a dentist said to the pastor, "I cannot attend your church again." When the pastor asked why, the dentist said, "One of your members was singing praises to God through teeth she refused to pay for." Unpaid bills can bring shame to God and His work. Croft M. Pentz

A Soldier's Wish - "By profession I am a soldier and take pride in that fact, but I am prouder to be a father. A soldier destroys in order to build; the father never destroys. The one has the potentialities of death; the other embodies creation and life. And, while the hordes of death are mighty, the battalions of life are mightier still. It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me not from the battle, but in the home, repeating with him our simple daily prayer, "Our Father Who art in Heaven ... "—General Douglas MacArthur

We Are Social Hypocrites - The famous Robert Redford was walking one day through a hotel lobby. A woman saw him and followed him to the elevator. "Are you the real Robert Redford?" she asked him with great excitement. As the doors of the elevator closed, he replied, "Only when I am alone!" AMG Illustrations

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### **Gutters And Windows 1 Timothy 1:5**

By Jennifer Benson Schuldt

While we were out for a family drive, a spotless white sign with perfect red lettering caught my attention: "Gutters and Windows—Quality Work Guaranteed." The sign was pristine, but I feared the house and barn directly behind it might collapse at any moment. The paint was peeling, the windows were cracked, and the gutters were nonexistent!

Many of us "advertise" for Jesus, but our spiritual houses are in disrepair. We may attend church, speak in "Christianese," and mingle nicely with others. But when our conduct does not align with our hearts, our first-class behavior is just a performance of piety. When Jesus confronted the Pharisees, He said, "You . . . outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matt. 23:28).

Jesus had a different but equally direct message for His followers: "Do not be like the hypocrites" (6:16). The Bible encourages us to "love from a pure heart . . . and from sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5). These inner attitudes should pour out through our words and actions (Luke 6:45).

Today, consider the state of your spiritual house. If people look beyond the beautiful outward display, will they discover an authentic heart?

Hypocrisy is a common sin  
That grieves the Lord above;  
He longs for those who'll worship Him  
In faith and truth and love. —Bosch

God desires that our actions be a reflection of a pure heart.

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Contradictory Testimony - If you do not recommend Christ by your life, you need not expect that your words will carry conviction with them. A young female voice student was very enthusiastic over her music professor, and went about among her friends telling them what a good teacher he was and advising them to sign up for his voice classes. That would have been all very well but for the fact that the young woman's musical performances were atrocious. They spoke of just the opposite to efficient teaching. It may have been that her teacher was not responsible for her mannerisms, but because of them his reputation certainly suffered. AMG Illustrations

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### **Numbers 32:23 Sourdough Bread**

Sourdough bread became popular during the California Gold Rush of the mid-1800s. In the 1890s, it was a favorite during the great Gold Rush in Alaska. Prospectors would carry with them a small portion of sourdough mix that contained a natural yeast. It could then be used as a starter to make more of their favorite sourdough bread.

In the Bible, though, yeast or leaven can have a negative connotation. For example, in the New Testament, "leaven" is often referred to as a corrupting influence. This is why Jesus said: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1).

Hypocrites put on a show of righteousness while hiding sinful thoughts and behavior. Christ warned His disciples and us that secret sins will someday be exposed to full disclosure. He said, "There is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not

be known" (v.2). Because of this, we are to reverentially fear God, to ask for His grace to forsake any sin, and to grow as authentic believers.

Yeast may be a blessing in the bakery, but it can also remind us to guard against the permeating influence of sin in our hearts.

The holiness of God demands  
A heart that's pure within,  
Yet grace unites with holiness  
To purge the heart from sin. —D. De Haan

Be sure your sin will find you out. —Numbers 32:23

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What Is Your Business? - "What is your business?" or, "What are you driving at?" is the question that shapes everything about our lives. It forms our habits, chooses our friends, and determines the road we will take. If you meet a man with his fishing-rod on his shoulder, you do not need to ask him what he is seeking. You do not wonder if he is not going out to pick grapes. I believe that each one of us carries about us that which proclaims the object that we have in view. A man who goes into the mines dressed like a miner, and with a pick on his shoulder, may say that he is merely going to look at the scenery, but nobody will believe him. So, if we are dressed in the garments of the world and persist in hanging about its quarters, the fact that we call ourselves Christians is not going to carry much weight with it. AMG Illustrations

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## WASTED WORSHIP

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart." -- Psalm 51:17

If you are able to go to church on Sunday, you probably will. For most Christians, it's almost automatic -- and rightly so. But is it possible that our efforts to go to church for worship might be wasted? Could it all be in vain? Yes. Before we even enter the church, the worth of our worship can be reduced to nothing because of the way we've lived during the week. In Amos 5, the Lord had some harsh words for those who attempted to worship Him while bringing with them the guilt of an ungodly lifestyle. His people were constantly angering Him by following false gods (v. 26). When they assembled to worship the Lord through sacrifices and songs, God despised their hypocrisy. In Isaiah 1, God instructed His people that before they could worship Him, they were to "cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice" (vv. 16-17). What a challenge to us! Before we worship God, we are to put things in order by confessing our sins, seeking His forgiveness, and then serving Him. Our daily walk with God and our obedience to His commands are the elements that prepare us for church. Anything less will lead to wasted worship. -- J. David Branon

O holy God, undone by guilt depressing  
We come to Thee our every sin confessing;  
Grant us, we pray, Thy cleansing and Thy blessing;  
We worship Thee, O God!  
-- Frost

Worship that pleases God comes from an obedient heart. [\(Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved\)](#)

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God's Honor Needs No Defense - King Olaf of Norway was the bloody foe of heathenism. He reigned twenty five years, the scourge and terror of his own people, and never made a friend. Their maimed bodies, burned homes, and plundered property were a perpetual memorial to his merciless zeal. He called to his aid robbers and vagabonds and enrolled them in his army, requiring only one condition, that they should be baptized in the name of Christ. He had white crosses painted on the shields and helmets of all his soldiers. He gave a battle cry, "Forward, Christian men! Crossmen!" With all this, his last battle was a sad defeat in which he was slain in A.D. 1030. He justified himself and his horrible barbarities by saying, "I had God's honor to defend." The question is, does God's honor really need our defense, a defense that harms others? We can be sure any zeal that harms others is evil, no matter how we try to justify it. AMG Illustrations

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## "SPEAK AND DO"

READ: James 3:13-18

The wisdom that is from above is...without hypocrisy.- James 3:17

In ancient Greek dramas, a person behind a curtain spoke the lines while the performer on stage acted out the role. We might refer

to the speaker behind the scenes as the one who didn't "practice what he preached." This person behind the curtain reminds me of a problem we as Christians experience today. Many of us are skilled at sounding religious, but we don't put our words into action. This is hypocrisy. When there is a discrepancy between what we say and what we do, we create confusion in the minds of our "audience." That's why many nonbelievers do not take the gospel message seriously. A Christian who makes the greatest impact on a watching world, and who furthers the cause of Christ, is one whose actions harmonize with his speech. When James spoke of the "wisdom that is from above," he described it as "pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (3:17). Our role as Christians is vastly different from the ancient Greek actors. They had speakers who didn't do and doers who didn't speak. We are to be people who speak and do the truth! Author: Richard W. De Haan You're writing a "gospel," a chapter each day, By the deeds that you do, by the words that you say; Men read what you write, whether faithless or true - Say, what is the "gospel" according to you? -Gilbert

When actions and words agree, the message is loud and clear. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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Pretending - Judge Rooney, of Chicago, fined a man \$100 plus court fees and sentenced him to jail for ninety days for impersonating a doctor and practicing medicine without a license. I wonder how many professing Christians, ministers, and laymen would be "hit" by a law fining those who pretended to be Christians and were not. Are we leading or misleading people by our pretensions? AMG Illustrations

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**HYPOCRITES** - Speechwriter Peggy Noonan, in her book *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness*, noted that appearances can be deceiving. "People never look like what they are," Noonan wrote. Of one unscrupulous businessman she commented that if we could see him as he really is, "He'd be sitting there at the dinner party with a dagger in his teeth." To all outward appearances he was an upstanding citizen, yet he was a hypocrite to the core.

Jesus called the religious leaders of His day "hypocrites" (Mt. 23:13-15). He meant that they were actors. In ancient theaters, each actor played several parts. To change identities, he would simply wear a different mask. Those religious leaders were changing masks. They were putting on a performance to win the applause of the community, but they didn't care what they were like deep inside.

Jesus instructed us not to be like the hypocrites, who perform their religious "duties" to be seen by others (Mt. 6:1-6). He said, "When you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (v.3).

God isn't impressed by the masks we wear to get approval. Instead, He reserves His applause for those who worship Him and give themselves in love to others. — by Haddon W. Robinson

Oh, how we fear to drop our masks!  
We know so well what lies within;  
Yet Christ could use our lives to bless  
If we would first be cleansed from sin.  
—Fasick

**BEWARE! DON'T DECEIVE YOURSELF!**

A false life never goes with a true faith. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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"Do as I say, not as I do," is one of the worst kinds of parenting. Children left with no clear example to follow don't know what to do or who to be! The angry retort of a child infuriated by his parents' hypocrisy is: "Practice what you preach!" The example of leaders is powerful in the church, whether for good or for bad. When leaders make bad choices, churches are deeply wounded by their hypocrisy, sometimes even causing people to doubt the gospel.

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A godly life brings credit and glory to Christ; a hypocritical or impure life invites slander upon the name of Christ.

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First, Look in the Mirror - A man prayed complainingly to Almighty God about a neighbor, saying, "O Lord, take away this wicked person." And God said, "Which?" AMG Illustrations

Christian Living - Henry Drummond, that great Scottish professor, told how the Infidel Club was started in Glasgow. Some men were standing at the corner of a street when a very prosperous looking man went past. One of the men said, "That is the founder of the

Infidel Club in Glasgow." "What do you mean by that?" said another of the men. "Why, that man is an elder of the church." "Elder or no elder," replied the man, "he is the founder of Glasgow's Infidel Club." Then he told how the man's inconsistent life had been bearing for years a false witness to Christ. So false, in fact, that it had undermined the faith of several young men who joined together to form the Infidel Club. AMG Illustrations

Christian Soldier on Furlough - Once a professing Christian sold a bale of poor hay to a certain colonel who rebuked him, and the church member whined, "I am a soldier too." "You!" exclaimed the colonel in disgust. "What kind of soldier are you?" "I am a soldier of the cross," said the skinflint with a detestable flourish of the hand. "That may be," said the colonel, "but you've been on a furlough ever since I knew you." AMG Illustrations

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## HYPOCRISY

Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? Job 20:4,5

A pastor told an amusing but pointed story about an unsaved man who was on his way to attend a costume ball one Sunday evening. He was wearing a red suit with a tail and a skintight mask with horns. He looked like Satan; that is, he conformed to the false but widely accepted picture of the devil. As he hurried along, he was caught in a sudden rainstorm, so he sought shelter in a church where the service was just ending. When he ran into the building, he shocked the members, who thought he was the real thing. A flash of lightning and a clap of thunder added to the illusion. The congregation panicked and rushed for the rear exits. The intruder thought the church had been struck and was on fire, so he raced after them. Everyone got out except one elderly lady. Turning in fear, she stretched out her hands and pleaded for mercy, "Oh, devil, please don't hurt me. I know I've been a member of this church for 30 years, but I've really been on your side all the time!"

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Citizen or Archbishop? - Let us not be like that archbishop who one day was overhead swearing. A peasant who stood by seemed to wonder greatly at his conduct. "I swear," said the archbishop, "not as an archbishop, but as a citizen." "But sir," said the peasant, "when the citizen goes to perdition, what will become of the archbishop?" How will God judge us when we appear before His throne? Will it be for what we said in church while praying or preaching, or what we said to our fellow human beings? AMG Illustrations

The Condemning Evidence - There was a very well-thought-of deacon who was a zealous advocate of the cause of temperance. One day he employed a carpenter to make some alterations in his living room. As the worker was tearing things down, he came upon a very nicely concealed closet. He was shocked when he saw a jug and tumblers in the hidden closet. The carpenter, with wonder-stricken countenance, ran to the proprietor with the announcement of the discovery. As soon as the deacon heard of it, he said, "H'm! Well, I declare, that is curious. Sure enough, it must be that Captain Brown left those things here when he occupied the premises thirty years ago." "Ah, perhaps he did," answered the carpenter; "but say, deacon, that ice in the pitcher must have been well frozen to have remained solid all this time." AMG Illustrations

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Acts 5:1-11 Don't Break Community

By Haddon W. Robinson

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. —Romans 12:9

The story of Ananias and Sapphira is a depressing chord that disrupts an upbeat account of the young church in action. Thousands of converts had trusted Christ. They were worshipping together and cared deeply for one another.

One member, Barnabas, sold some valuable acreage and gave all the proceeds to meet some pressing church needs. Ananias took his lead from Barnabas and decided that he too would make an impressive gift. But he was only seeking attention. He and his wife pretended to give everything, but they gave only a portion.

They got noticed—they both dropped dead in front of everybody! Taking the offering was never the same after that. Luke tells us that "great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things" (Acts 5:11).

Ananias and Sapphira lied to God by trying to deceive the congregation, which disrupted the sense of church community. To live in community demands that we live with integrity. That's why God took such drastic action.

When we join a church, we become part of other people's lives. Our love for them should be without hypocrisy. That glorifies God and benefits everybody. We are to take our involvement in church as seriously as God does.

We join our hearts and hands together,  
Faithful to the Lord's command;  
We hold each other to God's standards—

All that truth and love demand. —DJD

To keep harmony in the church, keep in tune with Christ. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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#### Acts 5:1-11 Closing The Gaps

By Marvin Williams

Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God. —Acts 5:4

After the final episode of the 2002 TV program Survivor: Africa, a wrap-up special focused on the final contestants. The show's host Jeff Probst said that the victor won "mostly by sticking with his principles." The champion later explained that he wanted to win while retaining "dignity and self-respect." He elaborated that you don't have to lie, cheat, or do underhanded things to win. You can be competitive, yet still be truthful and nice. In short, he permitted no discrepancy between image and reality.

In the book of Acts we read about Ananias and Sapphira, who did have a gap between what they wanted to be known for and who they really were (5:1-11). Satan filled their hearts with a deceptive plan. They sold a piece of property and brought just a portion of the money to the apostles, while pretending they were giving all the proceeds. They wanted to be recognized as a generous couple, but they were not what they appeared to be. This gap caused them to lie to the Holy Spirit and to the faith community. They paid a terrible price—death. Their example stands as a stark warning to us all.

What discrepancies have we permitted in our lives? We must confess them and close the gaps.

Lord, by Your Spirit grant that we

May live with such integrity

That when we simply give our word

No one will doubt what has been heard. —D. De Haan

Integrity means never having to look over your shoulder. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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#### Acts 5:1-11 Nobody Can Keep A Secret From God

By Vernon C. Grounds

Cleanse me from secret faults. —Psalm 19:12

Washington, D.C., is full of secrets. Some say as many as 3 billion! But not all of them are legitimate secrets that safeguard national security. Many are documents concerning hazardous medical experiments made years ago on human subjects without their knowledge or consent. Others are contracts and bills that civilian manufacturers, often guilty of excessive overcharges, labeled "confidential." But now, under a new policy inaugurated by the Department of Energy, "a pyramid-like tomb of classified documents" is being systematically exposed to public scrutiny. As a result, many people and companies are being sued.

Life, like Washington, is full of secrets. Most secrets are trivial and unimportant. Some, however, are evil and tragic, as illustrated in today's Bible reading. What about secret sins? We may be able to hide them successfully from people, yet on God's timetable a day is scheduled when He who "knows the secrets of the heart" (Ps. 44:21) "will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing" (Eccl. 12:14).

Bring those secrets out in the open. Confess your sins now and claim the complete cleansing that is promised through the Savior's sacrifice (1 Jn. 1:9).

You cannot hide your sin from God,

He knows what's in your heart;

Confession is the quickest way

To make a brand-new start. —Sper

Our secret sins are open scandal to God.

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#### Acts 5:1-11 Restoring Integrity

By Dennis J. De Haan

You have not lied to men but to God. —Acts 5:4

One sunny day, four high school boys couldn't resist the temptation to skip classes. The next morning they explained to a teacher that they had missed her class because their car had a flat tire. To their relief, she smiled and said, "Well, you missed a quiz

yesterday, so take your seats and get out a pencil and paper.” She waited as they sat down and got ready for the quiz. Then she said, “First question: Which tire was flat?”

No one can get away with lying. In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira thought they were lying only to Peter and the other believers. But the apostle said to them, “You have not lied to men but to God.”

Truth is an attribute of God. When we lie, we offend Him. And sooner or later He will uncover every falsehood—if not in this life, then at the judgment (Rom. 14:10-12).

We live in a highly competitive world, and sometimes we may be strongly tempted to shade the truth to get ahead. But the short-term gains from lying are worth little compared with the long-term benefits of telling the truth.

If you have deceived someone, confess it to that person and to the Lord. It may be humbling, but it is the first step to restore integrity in your life.

The road that leads to misery  
Is caused by a tongue that wags;  
Beware of lying lips, my friend,  
And a mouth that boasts and brags. —Shade

To avoid lying, do nothing that needs to be covered up.

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Acts 5:1-11 Complete Honesty

By Albert Lee

Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God. —Acts 5:4

Ask the friends and families of six people buried in a collapsed subway tunnel about complete honesty. Their loved ones' rescue was delayed for hours when the contractor didn't report the disaster to the authorities immediately. Instead, the company sealed the site and confiscated cell phones. It wasn't an outright lie, but it was a cover-up. This dishonest act showed disregard for life.

In the book of Acts, God gave us a sobering example of how He views dishonesty (4:32–5:11). Some believers had sold their land and shared all the proceeds with the church. Ananias and Sapphira decided to do likewise. But the couple kept some money back despite declaring that they had given the whole amount. Expecting commendation, they were struck dead instead.

Was their punishment too harsh? After all, their “slight” lie wasn't life-threatening. “Whoever falsely boasts of giving is like clouds and wind without rain,” warns Proverbs 25:14. The apostle Peter asked Ananias, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?” (Acts 5:3), adding, “You have not lied to men, but to God” (v.4).

If we are completely honest with ourselves, can we say that we are completely honest before God

Lord, by Your Spirit grant that we  
In word and deed may honest be;  
All falsehood we would cast aside—  
From You, O Lord, we cannot hide. —D. De Haan

There are no degrees of honesty.

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Acts 5:1-11 Which Tire Was It?

By Dennis J. De Haan

You have not lied to men but to God. —Acts 5:4

One sunny day, four high school boys couldn't resist the temptation to skip classes. The next morning they explained to their teacher that they had missed her class because their car had a flat tire. To their relief, she smiled and said, “Well, you missed a quiz yesterday.” But then she added, “Take your seats and get out a pencil and paper. The first question is: Which tire was flat?”

No one gets away with lying. In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira thought they were lying only to Peter and the other believers. But the apostle said to them, “You have not lied to men but to God” (v.4).

Truth is one of the attributes of God. So when we tell a lie, we offend Him. And sooner or later He will uncover every falsehood—if not in this life, then at the final judgment, when we each give an account of ourselves to God (Romans 14:10-12).

We live in a highly competitive world, and sometimes we may be strongly tempted to shade the truth to get ahead. But the short-term gains from lying are worth little compared with the long-term benefits of telling the truth.

If you have deceived someone, confess it to that person and to the Lord. It may be humbling, but it's the first step to restoring integrity in your life.

The road that leads to misery  
Is caused by a tongue that wags;  
Beware of lying lips, my friend,  
And a mouth that boasts and brags. —Shade

If you always tell the truth, you will never be trapped in a lie.

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Acts 5:1-11 How Honest Are You?

By Anne Cetas

Those who deal truthfully are [God's] delight. —Proverbs 12:22

Woman's Day magazine surveyed more than 2,000 people to check out their honesty level. When asked, "How honest are you?" 48 percent said very honest, 50 percent said somewhat honest, and the other 2 percent said not very honest.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents confessed that they had taken office supplies from their job for personal use. And 40 percent admitted that they would cheat on their taxes if they knew they wouldn't get caught.

Ananias and Sapphira must have thought they could get away with lying (Acts 5:1-11). But they quickly found out differently when Peter confronted them and told them that they had lied to the Holy Spirit. Immediately they were struck dead (vv.5,10).

The Lord's desire was to keep His new church pure so He could use the believers in the lives of others. As Bible teacher G. Campbell Morgan says, "The church pure is the church powerful. . . . The only power [able to make] a church pure is that of the indwelling Spirit of God." The purity of the church led to their testimony spreading, and "believers were increasingly added to the Lord" (v.14).

Let's be the kind of people who "deal truthfully" (Prov. 12:22) so we can be used by the Lord.

Lord, by Your Spirit grant that we  
In word and deed may honest be;  
All falsehood we would cast aside,  
From You, O Lord, we cannot hide. —D. De Haan

There are no degrees of honesty. [\(Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved\)](#)

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Deceit - A woman, enlarging on her husband's inconsistencies, said, "At a theologically liberal meeting he's a liberal and at a conservative meeting he's a conservative." Someone asked, "What is he at home?" She replied with emphasis, "He's a real demon!" AMG Illustrations

In The Inferno, Part I of Dante's Divine Comedy ("comedy" here indicates a narrative with a happy ending), Dante and his guide, the Latin poet Virgil, descend into hell. In each of the nine circles of hell, they see sinners being punished for sins they committed during their lives on earth. For example, the second circle contains lustful people, the fifth circle wrathful people, and the eighth circle fraudulent people such as flatterers and hypocrites. It is a dark journey filled with horrifying scenes and spiritual warnings for Dante and his readers.

Hypocritical Excuse - The man who says he is kept away from religion by hypocrites is not influenced by them anywhere else. Business is full of them, but if he sees a chance at making money he does not stop for that. Society is crowded with them, and yet he never thinks of becoming a hermit. Married life is full of them, but that does not make him remain a bachelor. Hell is full of them, and yet he does not do a thing to keep himself from going there. He wants to have you think that he is trying to avoid the society of hypocrites, and yet he takes not a single step toward heaven, the only place where no hypocrites can go! AMG Illustrations

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**DON'T BE A FAKE** - Every day, thousands of people travel from Hong Kong to Shenzhen, China, and head straight for Lo Wu Commercial City, a giant shopping mall that sells imitations of luxury items. In a New York Times article, Mark Landler says, "With five floors and 500,000 square feet of retail space, Lo Wu may be the world's capital of counterfeit goods."

People eagerly pay \$58 for a bogus Rolex watch. They buy imitation Gucci shoes, Fendi clothing, and Chanel wallets for a fraction

of the prices charged for the real thing. Scuffles often break out as shoppers struggle for the most popular goods.

What a commentary on man's tendency to value outward appearance more than reality! We pay big money to have the right label and "look," even if the merchandise is not authentic.

This tendency can also be seen in spiritual matters. In Matthew 6, Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their hypocrisy. They did good deeds (Mt 6:2), prayed (Mt 6:5), and fasted (Mt 6:16) to create an appearance of being devoted to God. They seemed genuine, but their hearts were far from Him.

The solution to hypocrisy is found in the prayer Jesus taught His disciples (Mt 6:9-13). As we pray it sincerely, we will stop faking it and get real with God.— by David C. McCasland

Oh, how we fear to drop our masks!  
We know so well what lies within;  
Yet Christ could use our lives to bless  
If we would first be cleansed from sin.  
—Fasick

**The harder you work at what you should be, the less you'll try to hide what you are.**

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Will Durant, one of last century's most able historians, had planned to serve in ministry. His faith foundered, however, when he discovered authors anathema to his Christian faith, like Darwin and Huxley. Later, when writing *The Story of Civilization*, he rejected the divinity of Christ, found in Him hypocrisy, and attributed to Him "no new moral ideas." Durant had wandered far from his childhood faith.

Strange People - People who talk about prayer but never pray. People who say tithing is right but never tithe. People who want to belong to the church but never attend. People who say the Bible is God's Word to man but never read it. AMG Illustrations

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Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cling to that which is good. Romans 12:9

Some time ago a young sailor called his parents after his release from the military service. He said he was bringing his buddy home to stay with him. "You see, Mom," he said, "my friend is pretty badly broken up. He was severely wounded and has only one leg, one arm, and one eye." After a little reflection, the mother said grudgingly, "Of course, Son, I guess he can stay with us a little while." Her voice, however, carried the message that they would not like to be burdened very long with such a severely handicapped fellow. Two days later they received a telegram from the admiral's office, saying their son had plunged to his death from a hotel window. When his body arrived for burial, his parents saw that he had only one arm, one leg, and one eye! The memory of her last conversation with him will linger with that mother as long as she lives. She often cries out, "Why didn't I speak more carefully, more lovingly? If only I could take back those thoughtless words 'he can stay with us a little while.' But it is too late now!"

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Thus Saith Our Lord - Ye call Me Master and obey Me not, Ye call Me Light and see Me not, Ye call Me Way and walk Me not, Ye call Me Life and desire Me not, Ye call Me wise and follow Me not, Ye call Me fair and love Me not, Ye call Me rich and ask Me not, Ye call Me eternal and seek Me not, Ye call Me gracious and trust Me not, Ye call Me noble and serve Me not, Ye call Me just and fear Me not, If I condemn you, blame Me not. AMG Illustrations

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### **Like a Hypocrite**

**READ: Ephesians 2:1-10**

God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love . . . made us alive together with Christ. -EPHESIANS 2:4-5

Ray Stedman told about a young man who had stopped attending the church Ray was pastoring. The young man said that when he was at work he would sometimes lose his temper and treat coworkers poorly. Then, when Sunday rolled around, he didn't want to go to church because he felt like a hypocrite. Stedman told his young friend, "A hypocrite is someone who acts like something he isn't. When you come to church, you are acting like a Christian. You are not a hypocrite at church." Suddenly, the young man realized where he was being a hypocrite. He recognized that the answer was not in avoiding church but in changing the way he was at work. The term hypocrite is from a Greek word that means "play-actor." It means we pretend to be something we aren't. Sometimes we forget our true identity as believers in Jesus. We forget that we are accountable to God. When we do that, we live the way we "once walked" (Ephesians 2:2) and thus are hypocrites. Let's not let our old ways make us act like someone we're not. Instead, through



God's grace, let's live in a way that shows we are "alive together with Christ" (v. 5). That's a sure cure for hypocrisy.—DB

Consistency! How much we need  
To walk a measured pace,  
To live the life of which we speak,  
Until we see Christ's face. —Anonymous

It is the inconsistent Christian who helps the devil the most.

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**Front Yard Christians** - A small boy had a little wagon that was a new possession and the delight of his heart, but when he brought it out to the front walk one morning he was told that he must play with it at the back of the house. "This is Sunday," added the father by way of explanation. The boy obeyed, but he questioned wonderingly as he trudged away, "Isn't it Sunday in the backyard, too?" AMG Illustrations

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### **The Hypocrite Unmasked**

O hypocrite, thou thinkest that thou shalt excel because the minister has been duped and gives thee credit for a deep experience; because the deacons have been entrapped and think thee to be eminently godly; because the church members receive thee to their houses, and think thee a dear child of God, too! Poor soul! mayhap thou mayest go to thy grave with the delusion in thy brain that all is right with thee; but remember, though like a sheep thou art laid in thy grave, death will find thee out. He will say to thee: "Off with thy mask, man! away with all thy robes! Up with that whitewashed sepulchre! Take off that green turf; let the worms be seen. Out with the body; let us see the reeking corruption!"

What wilt thou say when thine abominably corrupt and filthy heart shall be opened before the sun, and when men and angels shall hear thy lies and hypocrisies laid bare before them? Wilt thou play the hypocrite then? Soul, come and sing God's praises in the day of judgment with false lip! Tell Him now, while a widow's house is in your throat, tell Him that you love Him! Come, now, thou that devourest the fatherless, thou that robbest, thou that dost uncleanness; tell Him now that thou didst make thy boast in the Lord; tell Him that thou didst preach His word; tell Him that thou didst walk in His streets; tell Him thou didst make it known that thou wert one of the excellent of the earth!

What, man! is thy babbling tongue silent for once? What is the matter with thee? Thou wast never slow to talk of thy godliness. Speak out, and say: "I took the sacramental cup; I was a professor."

Oh, how changed! The whitewashed sepulchre has become white in another sense; he is white with horror. See now! the talkative has become dumb; the boaster is silent; the formalist's garb is rent to rags, the moth has devoured their beauty. Their gold has become tarnished, and their silver cankered. Ah! it must be so with every man who has thus belied God and his own conscience. - Spurgeon

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Lk 12:1 - Hypocrisy, however, of a kind that was calculated to spread, like leaven. If you know that a man is a hypocrite, you do not feel inclined to imitate him; but the Pharisees were such well-made hypocrites, — such excellent counterfeits, — that many people were tempted to imitate them. Our Lord teaches us, however, that it is no use being a hypocrite, —Spurgeon

How is it that hypocrites always think other people hypocrites?

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### **Hypocrisy**

In the pursuit of pastoral duty, I stood a little while ago in a cheesemonger's shop, and being in a fidgety humour, and having a stick in my hand, I did what most Englishmen are sure to do—I was not content with seeing, but must needs touch as well. My stick came gently upon a fine cheese in the window, and to my surprise a most metallic sound emanated from it. The sound was rather hollow, or one might have surmised that all the taste holes had been filled up with sovereigns, and thus the cheese had been greatly enriched, and the merchant had been his own banker. There was, however, a sort of crockery jingle in the sound, like the ring of a huge bread or milk pan, such as our country friends use so abundantly, and I came to the very correct conclusion that I had found a very well-got-up hypocrite in the shop window.

From that time, when I pass by, I mentally whisper, "Pottery"; and the shams may even be exchanged for realities, but I shall be long in believing it. In my mind the large stock has dissolved into potsherds, and the fine show in the window only suggests the potter's vessel.

The homely illustration is simply introduced because we find people of this sort in our churches, looking extremely like what they should be, yet having no substance in them, so that if accidentally one happens to tap them somewhere or other with sudden temptation or stern duty, the baked earth gives forth its own ring, and the pretender is esteemed no longer. - Spurgeon

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## Spurgeon - Comments on Hypocrisy in Job 27

Job 27:7-8. Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his so.

That is a very solemn, searching question; if a man does try to play fast and loose with God, if he be a hypocrite, and if he should gain by his hypocrisy all that he tries to gain, namely, repute among men, "what is his hope when God taketh away his soul?" Then, his hope is turned to horror, for he has to stand before him who cannot be deceived, but who reads him through and through, and casts him away because he has dared to insult his Maker by attempting to deceive omniscience. Oh, may you and I never play the hypocrite's part! There cannot be a more foolish thing; and there cannot be a more wicked thing.

Job 27:9. Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?

That is one of the tests of the hypocrite: "Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?" Will the hypocrite cry to God at all? Will he not give up even his profession of religion when he loses his prosperity? And if he does cry, will God hear the double-tongued man?

Job 27:10. Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?

These questions, while they condemn those who are hypocrites, are comforting to many a sincere heart. Dear friend, do you delight yourself in God? Do you really admire him, love him, and seek to glorify him? Then you are no hypocrite, for no hypocrite ever found delight in religion, and especially no hypocrite ever found delight in God himself. "Will he always call upon God?" No, there are certain times when he will cease to pray. Pleasure enchants him, and he will not pray; or perhaps he is so discouraged and despairing that he cannot pray. There are times when the hypocrite gives up praying, but the Christian cannot give it up; it is his vital breath, he must pray. No sorrow is so deep as to take him off it; no joy is so fascinating as to seduce him from prayer; but as for the hypocrite, "Will he always call upon God?" No, you may rest assured that he will not.

Job 27:11. I will teach you by the hand of God:

Or, better, as the margin runs, "I will teach you being in the hand of God." Being himself chastened, and experiencing the teaching of God, Job says to his friends, "I will teach you."

Job 27:11-14. That which is with the Almighty will I not conceal. Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it; why then are ye thus altogether vain? This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty. If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword: and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

If God does not visit the hypocrite with punishment in his own person, it will certainly fall upon the next generation.

Job 27:15-18. Those that remain of him shall be buried in death: and his widows shall not weep. Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver. He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth that the keeper maketh.

"He buildeth his house as a moth," which makes its home in the cloth, but the servant's brush knocks it all out, and destroys the moth's children, too. "And as a booth that the keeper maketh." The hypocrite's house is no better than that little shanty which the keeper of a vineyard puts up with a few boughs or mats, to sit under it from the heat of the sun. God saved us from being such poor builders as this! May we build a house that is founded on the rock!

Job 27:19. The rich man shalt lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he is not.

He has grown rich by oppression, he has become great in the land by his hypocrisy; but he speedily goes down to the grave. God looks at him, and he is gone.

Job 27:20. Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night.

This is a parallel passage to that word of our Lord, "But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was

great.”

Job 27:21. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a storm hurleth him out of his place.

These are your great ones, your proud ones, your strong men that fear nothing, and would insure their own lives to a certainty for the next twenty years; see how they go. Shadows are not more evanescent, a poor moth is not more easily crushed.

Job 27:22. For God shall cast upon him, and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand.

The man would escape from God if he could. It was Job's glory, as we read just now, that he was in God's hand; but the hypocrite would fain flee out of God's hand, yet that is altogether impossible.

Job 27:23. Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place.

Such ignominy shall be poured upon the hypocrite at last that all mankind shall endorse the sentence of God which condemns him; and shame and everlasting contempt shall be his portion. The Lord save all of us from such an awful doom, for Christ's sake! Amen