

GOD CONDEMNS HYPOCRITES

Unbelievers and worldly people are often quick to point out the hypocrisy that is found among the religious. They are correct in their observation that there are men of faith who are hypocrites. The gospel of Christ addresses the importance of having a proper impact upon the unbelieving world. The Lord Himself prayed for oneness among those who would believe in Him through His word so that the world may believe, too (John 17:21). The spiritual leadership in churches of Christ are to have “*a good testimony among those who are outside*” (1 Timothy 3:7). All Christians should be concerned about exemplifying “*honorable conduct*” (1 Peter 2:12). They are commanded to love without hypocrisy (Romans 12:9).

Correctly judging that a Christian is being a hypocrite when he is not walking in the light does not justify one’s own ungodliness. Most people are able to see the sins in other people’s lives, but that does not remove nor remit the sin in their own lives. Jesus asked, “*Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? . . . Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.*” (Matthew 7:3, 5) Identifying hypocrisy in a believer does not change the truth of Christ that saves and judges.

When a Christian professes fellowship with God but is walking in darkness, he is living a lie (1 John 1:6). He is not practicing the truth. He is not righteous if he is not practicing righteousness (3:7). Righteousness does not have fellowship with lawlessness; light does not have communion with darkness (2 Corinthians 6:14). God is light; God is righteous. He does not have fellowship with darkness, nor with anyone who practices darkness. Any person who does not abide in the teaching of Christ is not right with God (2 John 9).

The Lord Jesus condemned Jewish scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy. “*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. . . . Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*” (Matthew 23:25, 28) The apostle Paul rebuked Christians for playing the hypocrite (cf. Galatians 2:13-14). Hypocrisy is a sin. Like malice and envy, it is a work of the flesh that must be put away (1 Peter 2:1). All those who practice works of the flesh “will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:21). Therefore, God condemns hypocrisy. Unless a hypocrite repents, he will likewise perish.