

What About All the Hypocrites at Church?

*If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.
(1 John 1:8)*

This quote is attributed to Mahatma Gandhi: *I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.* And that's why a lot of people stay away from Christianity. (Or so they say.) But here's the fallacy of using the hypocrisy of Christians as a reason to reject Jesus: **The truthfulness of Christianity has little to do with the behavior of Christians.** Christians may disappoint (and too often do); but either the resurrection of Jesus is true, or it isn't. And if it's true, then Jesus is worth following not matter how many hypocrites are at church. So, what about all the hypocrites at church? *To reconcile the hypocrisy of Christians with the truth of Jesus, I will. . .*

1. Get clear about the Christian _____.

- 1) The best Christians struggle with their "_____."

For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing" (Romans 7:18,19)

Read 2 Corinthians 11:29.

Read Galatians 5:17, ERV.

- 2) The best Christians battle with their "_____."

I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:27, NLT)

Read Romans 8:13, ERV.

2. Get clear about the _____ response.

- 1) I will be led astray, if I act like the _____ that I am.
 - I will stay stuck if I _____. (Like Adam and Eve)

11 "Who told you that you were naked?" the Lord God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it." 13 Then the Lord God asked the woman, "What have you done?" (Genesis 3:11-13, NLT)

- I will stay stuck if I practice _____. (Like King Saul)

"It's true that the army spared the best of the sheep, goats, and cattle," Saul admitted. "But they are going to sacrifice them to the Lord your God. We have destroyed everything else." (1 Samuel 15:15, NLT)

- I will stay stuck if I practice _____. (Like King David)

*When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long.
(Psalm 32:3, NLT)*

- 2) I will get back on track, if I act like the _____ that I am.

So Peter was a hypocrite. (Galatians 2:13, ERV)

3. Get clear about the hypocritical "_____."

- Hypocrites come in a variety of _____.

- 1) I must not be a _____ hypocrite.

Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica (2 Timothy 4:10, NLT; cf. Colossians 4:14)

Read 1 John 2:15-17, NLT.

- 2) I must not be a _____ hypocrite.

But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. 2 He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest. (Acts 5:1,2)

"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money." (Matthew 6:24, NLT)

- 3) I must not be a _____ hypocrite.

18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given when the apostles laid their hands on people, he offered them money to buy this power. 19 "Let me have this power, too," he exclaimed, "so that when I lay my hands on people, they will receive the Holy Spirit!" (Acts 8:18,19, NLT; cf. 8:9)

- 4) I must not be a _____ hypocrite.

I wrote a letter to the congregation. But Diotrefes, who loves to be in charge, won't accept us. (2 John 1:9, NOG)

If there were just one hypocrite in the church that would be one too many. But even if there were one billion hypocrites in the worldwide church, that would still not be enough to invalidate the truth of the gospel. One or a multitude of Christians do not overturn the truth that Jesus rose from the dead. And that truth makes all the difference. So, make up your mind about Jesus. Decide to follow him. And as a follower of Christ, refuse to be one of those hypocrites at church.