

The purpose of this publication is to spread the truth, to sow God's good seed, the Word of God, and to confront religious error for the good of men's souls. Editor: Allen Dvorak

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our conduct in the context of its influence on unbelievers. Consider the following:

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

-- Philippians 2:14-16; ESV

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of

disobedience.

-- Ephesians 5:3-6; ESV

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

-- 1 Peter 2:11-12; ESV

The unfairness of some criticism from unbelievers in no way excuses our sins. We need to be the light and salt that causes others to glorify God (Matthew 5:13-16).

"At least I'm no hypocrite!" I've heard that one a few times. It is easier to avoid the sin of hypocrisy if one doesn't make any claim for moral behavior! Unfortunately for the one who uses freedom from hypocrisy as an excuse for his sin, such a defense will not even merit the consolation prize at the final judgment. One does not have to be a hypocrite to end up consigned to hell!

Bible Challenge Question - Answer

Paul was about to be brought into the Antonia, the Roman fortress adjacent to the temple, when he addressed the Roman tribune in charge of the Roman soldiers rescuing him from the mob. The tribune seemed to be surprised that Paul spoke Greek, supposing that he was "the Egyptian...who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness" (Acts 21:37-38).



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Hypocritical Christians

By Allen Dvorak

Hypocrisy could be described as an "add-on" sin. One who is guilty of hypocrisy is already guilty of some other sin(s), but hypocrisy gets "added on" because of the pretentious moral claims made. The Christian who commits adultery against his wife is certainly guilty of the sin of infidelity, but he is also guilty of hypocrisy if he constructs a façade of righteousness for the purpose of hiding his adultery.

Strangely enough, it is also the "sneering sin." Some unbelievers absolutely take delight in pointing out "hypocrisy" in supposedly religious people. Let some person who once owned a Bible commit outrageous acts and, as soon as the behavior becomes known, the "hypocrite birds" begin to caw. Rather than mourn the sin, they seem to enjoy the opportunity to suggest that such wrongdoing is characteristic of all who are remotely connected to organized religion. The individual who has not darkened the door of a worship location for years is suddenly the "perfect example" of all who profess faith in

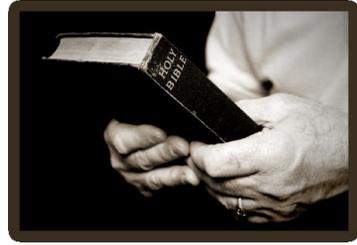
Jesus Christ. "See! These religious nuts are all a bunch of hypocrites!" The worse the behavior witnessed, the more obvious the "sneering" in written public forums becomes.

I understand perfectly that what I write next will probably make little impression on any unbeliever whose behavior is described in the previous paragraph, but it needs to be said anyway. It is not fair to paint **all** those who make the claim to be disciples of Jesus with the broad brush of hypocrisy, even if **some** are indeed guilty. Such generalizations are typically not true and this one is also an overstatement of the case. Suppose, however, that all unbelievers were characterized by the repulsive sins of some or even one of that group. Would unbelievers think that was fair? If **one** non-religious person engages in dogfighting, can we confidently say that **all** unbelievers are okay with cruelty to animals? Of course not! Yet, this is the very thing done with respect to those who claim

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A Tale of Two Men

By Allen Dvorak



The story of Apollos: Acts _____

Apollos was taught by _____ & _____ while at _____.

Description of Apollos:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Paul's description of Demas:

"in love _____"

References to Demas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Apollos lacked _____.

Demas lacked _____.

Parents must develop in their children:

1. _____
2. _____

For indeed the _____ was preached to us as well as to them; but the _____ which they heard did not _____ them, not being _____ with _____ in those who heard it.

-- Hebrews _____; NKJV

"Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference."

-- Mac Anderson

"It's a funny thing about life; if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it."

-- W. Somerset Maughn

to be believers. The next time that some skeptic of religion sneers at the misdeeds of a supposed Christian and insinuates that all religious people are cut from the same bolt of cloth, charge *him* with the same publicly known behavior or attitude of some notorious non-religious person...and let the sputtering and denials begin! Perhaps when it is acknowledged that he is not guilty of such behavior simply because of some other similarity with the guilty one, he will see the inconsistency of his generalization about Christians.

Please note again that it takes only the most tenuous connection to organized religion in the evildoer to bring out the "hypocrite birds." It is also true that the "hypocrite birds" usually don't have the slightest clue what a New Testament Christian looks like. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ involves more than simply the claim to be one. Much of what

is identified as "Christianity" is not even a 32nd cousin to the church established by the Lord and described in the Holy Scriptures. Individuals have removed from the Word of God what they don't like and twisted what remains to accommodate their own agendas. In the name of social relevance and "unity among disciples," many religious people have abandoned the clear teaching of Scripture regarding the divine moral standard and the nature and work of the local church. Encountering a three-legged dog and concluding that all dogs have only three legs makes as much sense as just looking at any person who claims to be a Christian and concluding that all who claim to be Christians are the same! Simply claiming to be a Christian doesn't make one a Christian. Don't hold your breath, however; prejudice is slow to respond to reason.

Having said all this, we need to remember that Jesus leveled the charge of hypocrisy against some of the Pharisees and scribes of His day (e.g., Matthew 15:7; 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29). The charge was justified by the behavior of the individuals.

Although the charge of hypocrisy against all Christians is made unfairly, those who claim to follow the Word of God must take the danger of hypocrisy seriously. The Scriptures repeatedly warn us about the importance of

Bible Challenge Question

Who did the Roman tribune mistake Paul for, when the apostle was rescued by the soldiers in the temple complex?

The answer to this question is on the back page.