

Being a hypocrite is one of the worst things in the world

A hypocrite is a person who is one thing outwardly but another thing inwardly; he appears to others as something other than what he truly is. The Bible has a great deal to say about hypocrisy, and what it says is basically this: ***being a hypocrite is one of the worst things in the world.*** We need to be as careful as we can be to avoid this fault.

Actually there are two kinds of hypocrites. One is the person who is wicked in his heart but wishes to appear righteous in the eyes of other people. According to Jesus, this was the problem many of the Pharisees had. But another kind of hypocrite is the person who has a basically good heart, but he does not live outwardly the way his conscience tells him he ought to. He knows what is right and wants to do it, but he consistently fails to do so. It is a bad thing to be either kind of hypocrite, and neither one of them can be a very happy person.

Jesus indicated that happiness comes from consistently doing what we know is His will: “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (Jn. 13:17). And James wrote that “the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing” (Jas. 1:25).

One caution is in order, however. Our primary motive for doing right should not be our own happiness. That would be a self-centered reason for our righteousness. Instead, we are to obey our conscience simply because it's the right thing to do, whether it feels good or not. Whatever good feelings come from obedience are a secondary benefit, although those feelings are quite wonderful.

We need to strive for greater congruency in our lives, the state in which our walk is aligned with our talk. If we are not living what we say we believe, two things are likely to happen: (1) we will be ashamed of our lives, and (2) we will be unsuccessful in having a good influence on other people. This week, let's work on getting our heart and our actions lined up and synchronized. Let's see if we can't bring some harmony and joy into our lives by being the sort of people we really want to be. When we truly are what we profess to be, our reputation will take care of itself.

Monday: Genesis 3:1-24

Key Idea: Sin takes away our happiness.

Questions for Family Growth: Before they committed sin by disobeying God, were Adam and Eve perfectly happy in the Garden of Eden? Was the devil telling the truth when he said that sin would bring better things to them than God had provided?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 14:5.

Tuesday: Luke 22:54-62

Key Idea: It makes us miserable to go against our conscience.

Questions for Family Growth: On the night of Jesus' betrayal, what did Peter do that he knew he ought not to do? After he did this the third time, how do you think he felt when Jesus turned and looked at him? What does **v.62** say?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 14:6-8.**

Wednesday: 1 Timothy 4:1,2

Key Idea: If we keep disobeying our conscience, we will damage it.

Questions for Family Growth: What would it mean to have our conscience "seared with a hot iron" (NKJV)? If we seem to have trouble obeying our conscience, what are some things we can do that will help us overcome this problem?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 14:9.**

Thursday: Romans 14:13-23

Key Idea: We ought to follow our conscience in everything we do.

Questions for Family Growth: What should we do if we question whether something is right but others say we should go ahead and do it anyway? What if we know what we should do but we don't put it into action? What does **Jas. 4:17** say?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 14:10.**

Friday: James 1:19-27

Key Idea: It makes us happy to do what we know we ought to do.

Questions for Family Growth: Is it ever enough just to know in our hearts what is the right thing to do? What is said in **v.25** about the one who is a "doer who acts"? What did Jesus say in **Jn. 13:17** about those who do His will?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 14:11.**

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