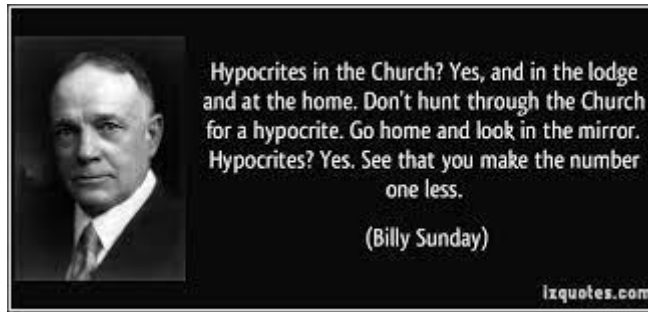


## HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH



**TEXT:** Romans 2:1-3

**THESIS:** To show that God's Law, not man's, will be our ultimate judge.

**INTRO.:** A. The Jews looked down *their* noses at the Gentile "dogs" who practiced the sin of idolatry Paul had spoken of in ch.1, and didn't deem them worthy of God's grace or goodness. The Gentile pagan moralizers looked down *their* noses at those who practiced the sin of homosexuality Paul had spoken against in ch.1, and didn't deem them worthy of God's love or goodness. The Greek philosophers looked down *their* noses at the superstitious idolatry of the less cultured pagans who thronged the temples, and didn't deem others worthy of God's blessings. The tragedy is that while they applauded virtue, they all practiced vice – of one kind or another – so that they were all without excuse before God. While proclaiming lofty ideals these moralizers were often guilty of immorality and inconsistency. In other words they were hypocrites.

B. This passage serves as a warning to all **"HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH"** to beware a double standard for others which they themselves do not practice consistently. While we rant against idolatry, do we place things above the Lord? While we preach against homosexuality, do we practice mental adultery? While we rail against cheating and lying and stealing, do we cheat God out of His tithe? Do we lie to Him about our commitments? Do we steal the time or talents that belong to Him? Are we the **"HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH"** the unsaved complain about?!

### I. HYPOCRITICAL JUDGMENTS: v.1

**ILLUS.:** A hypocrite is "one who plays a part" i.e., he lives one thing outwardly or in public, but another privately.

A. Pronouncing Judgment On Others: **"...thou judgest another"**

1. The hypocrite is always indignant over other's sins.
2. But He is indulgent towards his own sin

**ILLUS.:** King David had seduced another man's wife & then had him killed, yet he continued to judge Israel after he married the widow Bathsheba. It appeared that his sin had been successfully covered. Then one day Nathan the prophet appeared before the King with a story of a poor man who owned only a cherished ewe lamb. But a rich neighbor stole the lamb & used it for a feast in his home for a guest. David's judgment was: *"As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."* Nathan's conscience-smiting reply was: **"Thou art the man!"**

B. Problems Judging Others: **"...doest the same things"**

1. The hypocrite feels that other men's sins are worse than his own.
2. He compares himself to the drunkard, the harlot, & the hoodlum, and prides himself on his own church membership, morality and respectability.
3. This comparison is very flattering to himself; the mistake he makes is measuring himself alongside the wrong standard!

### II. HYPOCRISY JUDGED: v.2

A. Judgment By An Inflexible Standard: **"...the judgment of God"**

1. The Word of God must be the standard.
  - a. First, there is God's moral Law in the 10 commandments.

**ILLUS.:** The 10 Commandments are the most widely recognized standard of morality in the Western world. Our civil law once based on it. When we pass laws against murder or manslaughter even by breaking the speed laws, we are affirming the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment. Marital, family and property laws are undergirded by the other commandments. Even laws regarding perjury stem from the commandment not to bear false witness.

Have you always honored your parents? Have you never been angry enough to murder? Have you never had an adulterous thought? Have you ever shaded the figures on your income tax or kept the change when given more than you were owed or never returned something you borrowed, even though you remembered it? Have you never lied or misrepresented the truth? Then don't be hypocritical in judging others, for you will be judged by that same inflexible standard.

b. Then there is the golden rule.

**ILLUS.:** Have you always treated others as you want to be treated?!

B. Judgment By The Standard Of Truth: **"...according to truth"**

1. If a person has enough knowledge to judge others, he is thus self-condemned, for he has enough to judge his own true condition.
2. There is something in all of us that delights in comparing ourselves by ourselves, instead of comparing ourselves to our Savior or to what the Scriptures set as the standard of truth for us.

**QUOTE:** "There is some kind of a still little voice in everybody that constantly convinces (us) that in the end it's going to be O.K." That little voice speaks from a person's *fallen nature*, which constantly seeks to justify itself...not the Holy Spirit.

### **III. HYPOCRITES JUDGED: v.3**

A. False Premise: **"...thinkest thou...?"**

1. The secret hope of the hypocrite is that God will somehow judge him by a standard lower than perfect truth & righteousness.
2. The hypocrite knows the wickedness of his own heart, but hopes vainly that God will judge him in the same superficial way most others do.
3. He plays a kind of religious charade, wanting to be judged by his appearance rather than by his true character.

B. Final Predicament: **"...the judgment of God"**

1. Here is a chilling thought – **"the judgment of God"!**
2. There is no chance for hypocrisy with Him; He sees through to the core of who and what we are.

**ILLUS.:** We can pretend to be a good Christian at church, but He sees us at home & at work. We can fool our family & friends, but He knows who and what we are when they are not around to impress. We can pretend that we are faithful S.S. teachers, but He sees how we live the other 6 days of the week. We can con our bus kids, but God sees the true motives behind our service. We can be great deacons in a meeting or at church, but He sees our hypocrisy when we mistreat our employees or wife. The very criteria we use to judge others will be one of the factors God will use to judge us!!!!

**STORY:** The perfect illus. of a hypocrite is found in this story of an man in India who was walking down a jungle path. He saw the tail of a tiger sticking out from the brush. Impulsively he threw down his scythe, ran forward and seized the tiger by the tail. With an angry snarl the tiger tried to free his tail, but the more he roared, the harder the farmer held on.

Just when he felt he couldn't hold on much longer and Indian "holy man" came down the path. The farmer cried out "Help – pick up my scythe and kill this tiger, I can't hold on much longer." The holy man said: "That I cannot do. I am forbidden by my religion to kill any living thing." The farmer pleaded, "if it's against your religion to kill this beast, at least come & hold its tail while I kill him." The holy man said "I suppose I could do that. There can't be any harm in holding the tiger's tail." They changed places & the holy man said: "Hurry, before he gets loose." Leisurely the farmer brushed himself off & with great deliberation he picked up his scythe. Then bowing to the holy man, the farmer prepared to leave. "Where are you going?" asked the holy man. "I thought you were going to kill this tiger." The farmer replied "Dear holy man, you are an excellent teacher. You have completely converted me to your noble religion. I can't kill this tiger, because it is against our holy religion. You will have to hold on until some unconverted person comes along to kill the tiger. Perhaps you can convert him too." And with this parting shot the farmer left!

**CONCL.:** We must beware how we judge others, because our hypocrisy will be judged by that same standard – and beyond. Beware being **"HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH!"** Our Savior saved His strongest denunciations for the *hypocrites* of His day! In Matthew chapter 6 Jesus uses the word "hypocrite(s)" over one dozen times to describe those who profess to be one thing, but in reality are the opposite. WHAT ABOUT YOU?! Are you a hypocrite in your worship, actions, personal dealings, with friends and family or at work or with your co-workers?!