

From Pastor Ed: The 21 Day Wesley Challenge

This is day 16! Hang in there you are building a regular daily habit that will deepen your connection to God and develop your character as a child of God!

Day Sixteen Question Sixteen

Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?

Philippians 2:5-8, 2 Timothy 1:6-9

This is a hard question to ask yourself, but Wesley prompted it for a very good reason. Faking it—pretending to be better than we are—actually keeps us from knowing who we are and how we are doing. You don't need to create an impression that you are better than you are. God's grace says that you, as you are, with all your cracks and flaws and blemishes, are amazing.

- Who do you have in your life who knows the real you? Seek one or more trustworthy people who can know you honestly and caringly, and give you honest feedback and guidance. Also remember that you need to do all you can to know the "real you" yourself. Write a letter to yourself identifying three areas of your life you would like to see grow. Seal it and save it (or e-mail at futureme.org).
- Are there particular environments where you feel as though you have to fake it? What are the factors that make you feel that you have to hide some part of the real you in those settings or relationships? Identify two or three steps you could take to be more real with people, either in seeking different settings or in challenging some of your own inner fears.

Prayer: God, help me to see myself as I truly am. Keep me from creating false versions of myself, and let me surround myself with people who I can be real with. Amen.

Day 16 devotional 16:

HYPOCRISY EXAMINED: GOD SEES YOUR HEART (Thanks to livingfree.org)

Today's Scripture

"He said to them, 'You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but **God knows your hearts.**'" Luke 16:15 NIV

Thoughts for Today

What is a hypocrite? According to Merriam-Webster, a hypocrite is a person who puts on a false appearance of virtue or religion, a person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings. In other words, a hypocrite pretends to be something he (or she) isn't.

The Bible teaches that a hypocrite is one who pretends to be pious without really being so--one who talks the talk without walking the walk. Jesus confronted hypocrites vigorously in His earthly ministry. It was the anger generated by these confrontations of truth with self-deception that fueled the religious leaders' desire to kill Him.

A hypocrite knows what is right but makes elaborate excuses for himself when he does wrong. He weaves a web of self-deception that eventually traps his thinking and keeps him from seeing the truth about himself.

Consider this ...

We all tend to condemn other people's actions and attitudes we know are wrong. At the same time, we are prone to excuse the same or worse behaviors in ourselves. We put on a good front and try to hide our real attitudes and feelings. We try to convince others--and even ourselves--that we are OK.

We might be able to fool others. We might even delude ourselves for a while. But **God knows our hearts**. He is not impressed by our outward displays of "being religious" or following the rules. He considers what we are inside. He said this to the Pharisees: "You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy--full of greed and wickedness!" Luke 11:39 NLT

Are you putting up a good front but harboring sin in your life? Maybe the sin is something you are doing—a hidden addiction, judging others, engaging in gossip, always complaining, or some other wrong behavior. Maybe it's hidden inside--bitterness, envy, unforgiveness.

Remember that whatever it is--God knows. God loves you and wants to help you overcome. You can start on the path to ending the sinful behavior by admitting your guilt to yourself--and to God. As you confess your sin and become willing to turn from it, God will forgive and God will give you the strength to overcome.

Prayer

Loving God, I know I've been living a lie. I also know that you see the real me--**you see my heart**. Please forgive my sin and give me the strength to overcome. Help me to be honest with You, with myself, and with others. In Jesus' name ...