

THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS MESSENGER

May 3, 2009

Hypocritical Or Imperfect?

More than a brother in Christ, he was a very dear friend. My heart was breaking as I tried to reason, plead, cajole, rebuke, and anything else I could think of to talk him out of abandoning the Lord. You see, he had decided that living as a faithful Christian was simply too difficult. He had decided that living as a faithful Christian forced him to miss out on too many enjoyable things in this world and that it was all just too unfair. Ultimately, he did forsake the Lord and, to the best of my knowledge, remains in that condition to this day.

However, just before I left his home for the last time (I would no longer be welcome there), he could not resist the urge to fire a parting shot. “Besides,” he said, “the church is full of hypocrites who pretend to be all holy and righteous when around other Christians. When you get them alone or with unbelievers, they’re nothing like that.”

This is a favorite statement for Christians who find themselves wanting to drift back into the world. Somehow seeking to justify their actions, they begin to point the finger at their brethren’s supposed hypocrisy. I have even heard faithful Christians from the pulpit bemoan the hypocrisy “prevalent” within the church today. Mr. Webster sets forth this as his first definition of a hypocrite: “*A person who pretends to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs, principles, etc., that he or she does not actually possess, esp. a person whose actions belie stated beliefs.*” Brethren, the church our Lord died to establish *is not* full of hypocrites and to say otherwise is untrue, plain and simple. What it *is* full of are imperfect people who are striving for perfection, but aren’t there yet. “**You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect**” (Matthew 5:45). The Christian must make his goal to grow up to be like the Father. If he refuses to make this his goal then he yields the right to be called one of God’s children. The effort must exist and the Father has promised to aid us. However, I would be lying to you if I were to claim that I have reached this goal and no longer have to worry about stumbling or missing the mark in my life. Never forget that John is writing to Christians when he said, “**If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us**” (1 John 1:8). A Christian is not a sinner in the sense that he or she lives a life characterized by sin. However, there will be times when a Christian breaks Christ’s law and sins (1 John 3:4). This makes us imperfect humans, *not* hypocrites!

Look, I imagine that hypocrites probably *do* exist within the church today. There probably are those who pretend to be righteous and holy who do not really possess those traits at all but are merely fooling their brethren. However, I am not so cynical, or *dishonest*, to claim that the church is full of such people. My brethren are like me. I don’t always live up to the standard that I claim, but I am *not* a hypocrite! I will deny this charge with every breath! I am *trying* to be pleasing to the Lord and I

know that the vast majority of my brethren are doing the same. I and my brethren are *imperfect*, not hypocritical.

Now, let us suppose for the sake of argument that this charge were true. What of it? How does another person's hypocrisy change *my* responsibility to God? If every Christian in this world were Christians in name only and putting forth absolutely no effort to really be what they claim to be, what does that have to do with *me*? Am I released from my obligation to God? Does their hypocrisy somehow excuse my own duty to God? Can any thinking person believe it? The truth of the matter is that this is a deceptive and dishonest charge born from a misguided, desperate, and unholy attempt to justify one's sinful actions. It is a pathetic charge and one that in no way touches upon the real issue, the sickness of my own soul and my unwillingness to obey the Lord.

Only one child of God ever achieved sinless perfection and that was Jesus Himself. Has every other child of God who has ever sinned been nothing more than a hypocrite? No. Shame on those who say that they were.

In Need of Prayers	General Information
<p>Jackie is hanging in there. Perhaps the last hospital stay has gotten her over the hump.</p> <p>Please remember Sister Kimberlin as she struggles with some health problems.</p> <p>Sharon Tirey has been diagnosed with breast cancer. They are trying to decide on the best course of action before beginning treatment.</p> <p>Adam Daniels' friend, Will Markem, continues to recover from his motorcycle accident.</p> <p>Edwin Brown continues to recover from his recent heart attack and is doing well.</p>	<p>If you have not filled out your member information sheet, please do so quickly. Only a few more weeks remain before they will be examined and the directory updated.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A Tragic Event</p> <p>Peter and Judy McPherson are Christians living in Canada. Peter preaches for a very small congregation in Ontario. A few days ago he found his daughter, a single mother of four, dead in her bed. The autopsy revealed that she died of sleep apnea. She had lived a very troubled life and was in the process of putting things back together. The McPherson's are absolutely devastated. Let's flood them with cards. We don't have to know our fellow Christians personally to weep with them. Note their address below.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Peter and Judy McPherson 323 Lindan Ave. Peterborough, Ontario K9L 1KL Canada</p> <p>My new cell number is 859-492-9406 and Jackie's is 859-396-6152.</p>

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