

# BEYOND CONFLICT

August 14 & 15: Phony People

## Series Overview

Some people are difficult to live with. They may cross your path every day at work, at school, at home or at church. They may be critical, phony, inconsistent or cruel. Each of us needs to learn how to respond to these people. We need to know when to confront, encourage and forgive, because we are supposed to live at peace with everyone.



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## Sermon Highlights *(Matthew 23:1-37)*

The word hypocrite, in our culture, is used to describe someone who wears a fake "spiritual mask." They pretend to have a relationship with God that they do not have and may not even desire. Everybody is turned off by a phony.

**1. A phony is inconsistent.**

*Matthew 23:3-4, 23*

**2. A phony is concerned with *image*.**

*Matthew 23:5, 27-28*

**3. A phony is proud of *status*.**

*Matthew 23:5-12*

**4. A phony prevents others from *coming to God*.**

*Matthew 23:13-15*

### Lessons we should learn:

- **Jesus is rebuking *religious* people.**

- **This is a final *warning*.**

*Matthew 23:37*

- **We must learn to confront *in love*.**

*Galatians 6:1, Colossians 3:16, 1 Peter 2:12*

### How do we hold each other accountable?

*Matthew 7:3-5, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 2 Corinthians 2:6-8*

### On hypocrisy...

- Many of us believe that wrongs aren't wrong if it's done by nice people like ourselves. –Author Unknown
- How seldom we weigh our neighbors in the same balance as ourselves. –Thomas à Kempis
- Live truth instead of professing it. –Elbert Hubbard
- *Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye," when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. –Luke 6:41-42*



## Take it home ... Practical Applications

- Take a step back and look at your own life. Are there areas where the actions are not matching up with the words? Take some time and decide what you need to do to live an authentic life of spiritual reality. Make an effort to keep it real this week.



## Take it to the source ... Bible Study

**Introductory question:** What past scandal of immorality or dishonesty has affected you the most? Why?

**Read *Matthew 23:1-4*, *Mark 12:38-40* and *Titus 1:15-16*.**

1. After reading all these verses, what would you say are some common traits of phony religious leaders?
2. Have you ever known somebody who claimed to know God but their actions denied Him? What kind of negative effect did that have on the people around them?
3. In our internet-driven, scandal-hungry society why is it so important that our character and actions speak louder than our words?
4. Have you ever been guilty of using the “don’t do what I do, do what I say” argument? What are some practical things you can do to guard against using this kind of “teaching”?

**Read *Matthew 23:5-12* and *Matthew 6: 1, 2, 5, 16*.**

1. What would you say was the driving motivation for the scribes and Pharisees?
2. What might this same motivation look like in our society and culture?
3. How does the Pharisees’ idea of greatness in verses 5-10 differ from Jesus’ idea of greatness in verses 11-12?
4. Would you say that your preconceived ideas of Christian living are more like the Pharisees or like Jesus? Why?
5. What are some practical ways that your small group can serve one another? What are some ways that you can humble yourself before others?

**Read *Galatians 6:1*, *Colossians 3:16*, *Matthew 7:3-5* and *2 Corinthians 2:6-8*.**

1. After reading all of these verses, what is our responsibility to help each other keep it real in our daily lives?
2. What do you think it takes to earn the right to confront someone in love? Why is it necessary to earn that right?
3. How do we keep a right balance between confrontation that points out blatant sin and showing love and grace that helps a person get back on their feet and moving forward in their spiritual development?
4. Is there a person you know that needs help in confronting their spiritual hypocrisy?
  - What do you need to do to earn the right to be a help to them?
  - What do you need to do in your own life before speaking to them?
  - How can you pray for them before speaking to them?
  - Are you willing to help that person over the long haul?



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*All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.*

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