

Do We Have The Leaven Of Hypocrisy In Our Lives

Luke 12:1 [King James] *“In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, **Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.**”*

Is this religious hypocrisy still rampant in many forms today in the Christian community?

The Pharisees were blind to this leaven of hypocrisy in their lives.

Luke 18:9-14 [NIV] *“To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. **For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**”*

Here we see the common attitude of a very religious person, as the Pharisees projected themselves to be.

Luke 12:2-3 [NIV] *“There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.”*

This hypocrisy is **not** hidden from our Creator God, and will be revealed to all on the Judgement Day of Jesus Christ.

The pores of leavening agents are found in the air all around us, any unprotected lump of dough will eventually become leavened.

Ephesians 2:2 [King James] *“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to **the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:**”*

Referring to Satan who is the spirit of disobedience working against the Creator God.

Revelation 12:9 [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, **who leads the whole world astray.** He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”*

Satan’s desire and work is to lead all humanity astray, and hypocrisy is a very powerful weapon that Satan uses.

Luke 12:4-5 [NIV] *“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: **Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell.** Yes, I tell you, fear him.”*

Satan is a spirit being who holds this power of physical death but only the Creator God can obliterate our life altogether.

The Greek word used here is “*gēēnna*” referring to the valley of Gehenna where there was a continual fire, burning up all the rejected waste material that came out of Jerusalem. In other scriptures this is

referring to the Lake of Fire, the final resting place of all who fail to attain a place in the Kingdom of God, the created family of God.

Hebrews 2:9-15 [NIV] *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.” And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again he says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me.” Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”*

Only the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, can free us from the power that Satan has over us.

1 Peter 5:6-9 [NIV] *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”*

Without God’s Word, the Christian Bible, and Jesus Christ the Word of God personified, we are helpless to resist the fateful attacks of Satan.

We could be likened to a person tied to a stake in lion country with their ears blocked and eyes blindfolded.

Satan the “roaring lion” is a spirit being whom we cannot see, hear or run from.

Luke 12:6-7 [NIV] *“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. **Don’t be afraid;** you are worth more than many sparrows.”*

Here we find encouragement mixed in with the warning.

Luke 12:8-9 [NIV] *“I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.”*

The Greek word translated “acknowledge” is “*hōmōlōgēō*” made up of two words meaning to “*speak the same thing.*”

The Greek word translated “disown” is “*arnēōmai*” the very opposite of acknowledgement for it means to contradict what Jesus Christ has said.

Both of these are spoken before the messengers [angels] of God.

Luke 12:10 [NIV] *“And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.”*

The Holy Spirit is through Whom God works in the lives of all humans, so such a person who blasphemes in this way, cuts themselves off from Jesus Christ our Saviour and Redeemer.

This article’s goal is to help us to extract all the leaven of hypocrisy out of our lives, and be freed from Satan’s grip over us.

Hypocritical people often consider themselves more merciful than God, we have an example of this in the church of God in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 5:1-8 [NIV] *“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father’s wife. And **you are proud! Shouldn’t you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?** Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. **Your boasting is not good.** Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast, as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.”*

Paul likens this pride in the Corinthian church to leaven.

By calling Jesus “*our Passover lamb*,” Paul maintained that Jesus fulfilled the salvation pictured by the sacrifice of the Passover lamb at the time of the exodus [see **Exodus 12:3-7, 12-13, 46**].

Paul is giving strong correction to the Corinth church because of their hypocrisy, and telling them to repent of this sin, to be sincerely sorry for their attitude.

2 Corinthians 7:8-10 [NIV] *“Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it, I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while, yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because **your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.**”*

The first, strongly corrective letter, really hurt those in the Corinthian church, but brought about true Godly repentance.

Joel 2:12-13 [NIV] *““Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” **Rend your heart and not your garments.** Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.”*

True repentance is something that involves our heart, the heart being the driving force of our lives.

False repentance is just an outward show.

To rend their garments was an outward hypocritical act that Pharisees performed to impress other people of their pious lifestyle.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 [NIV] *“And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that **God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.**”*

We receive this true repentance from God, it is **not** something we can “*work up*,” but through the influence of the Holy Spirit in our mind and human spirit.

God has invested something in each human being that is beyond price, the life blood of His Son Jesus Christ.

God expects a return on this investment.

Luke 19:12-13 [NIV] *“He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’”*

This is God making this investment in Jesus Christ.

Note the command to put this investment to work.

Read what happened to the lazy servant who did nothing with this investment.

Luke 19:20-23 [NIV] *“Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’ “His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’”*

This servant did **not** understand his responsibility towards his Master.

When we relate this investment to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the next statement made by the Master is horrific.

Luke 19:24 [NIV] *“Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’”*

This servant lost his **only** means of forgiveness, the blood of Jesus Christ.

Luke 19:25-26 [NIV] *“‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’ “He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.’”*

The servants who had produced the most were rewarded by extra blessings.

Luke 19:27 [NIV] *“But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be a king over them, bring them here and kill them in front of me.”*

The unproductive servant was considered by the Master to be an enemy, whose end would be eternal death.

Life has not been given to us to “play with.” There is a great purpose to all human life.

[Download our article ‘Life. Why Do Human Beings Exist?’ found under sub-heading ‘Life’]

We all have received our life from our Creator God.

Jesus Christ purchased our sin-filled life with His sacrificial blood, and restores our right to exist, thus becoming our Lord and Master.

[Download the article ‘The Life We Have Is NOT Our Own’ found under sub-heading ‘Life’]

2 Corinthians 7:10 [NIV] *“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”*

What we are discussing is a matter of eternal life or eternal death.

What are the signs we should be seeing in our life that is producing a profit for God from the investment He has made in our life?

Godly sorrow and godly repentance.

2 Corinthians 7:11 [King James] *“For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what **carefulness** it wrought in you, yea, what **clearing** of yourselves, yea, what **indignation**, yea, what **fear**, yea, what **vehement desire**, yea, what **zeal**, yea, what **revenge!** In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”*

1. Carefulness

This is the main quality that the Corinthian church lacked.

They were casual about their own sins and indifferent to the sin in the society in which they lived.

Matthew 26:41 [NIV] *“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”*

All too often we find we have drifted into a sinful situation, doing what we know we should **not** be doing.

2 Peter 1:4 [NIV] *“Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”*

Our purpose for life is to take on the very nature of God, that is based on godly love.

2 Peter 1:5-8 [King James] *“And beside this, **giving all diligence**, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

The Greek word translated “*diligence*” is the same as “*carefulness*” in **Corinthians 7:11**.

Such an attitude towards repentance will be producing the fruit in our lives that God is desiring and is also expecting.

[Read **Galatians 5:22-25**]

To have true and effective repentance we must be diligent, a casual or indifferent approach will get us nowhere except eternal death.

2. Clearing of ourselves

A major ingredient of godly repentance is a deep desire to **clear our reputation of a sinful past** by acts of love, compassion and good towards other human beings.

Proverbs 22:1 [NIV] *“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.”*

God puts great value on a good name.

1 Thessalonians 1:3, 7-8 [NIV] *“We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” ... “And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,”*

This church had a very good reputation that was a powerful witness to a wide region around them.

The city of Corinth was notorious as a centre for immorality and this atmosphere had influenced the members of the Christian church that met there.

The subjects being discussed in Paul's first recorded letter sound very contemporary, divisions in the church, church discipline, sexual standards and marriage issues.

All this led to a very poor reputation and poor witness to the community in which they lived.

3. Indignation

The Greek word translated "indignation" is "aganaktēsis" referring to great affliction, near to the point of anger.

We cannot eradicate anything from our lives unless we hate it.

If we view our attitude as "not too bad" we will **not** generate the concern needed to eradicate it.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2 [King James] *"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."*

"Commonly reported" yet all were accepting the situation.

Romans 12:9 [King James] *"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."*

"Abhor" Greek word "apōstugēō" from two basic words meaning off or away and odious.

That is holding something at arms length.

4. Fear of God

This fear is **not** a kind of terror, it is a positive fear.

The guiding principles of our lives should be faith, hope and love, all very positive and optimistic. But in the back of our minds there needs to be the right kind of fear that motivates us to action.

Hebrews 4:1 [King James] *"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."*

A right kind of fear.

The Greek word used can also mean to revere God, holding His great power, perfection and holiness in awe.

There are **no** words that can describe the glory of our Creator God.

5. Vehement Desire

An intense craving for change, it being the paramount goal in our lives.

Matthew 5:6 [NIV] *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."*

The hunger of a person on the point of starvation and the thirst of a person stranded in the middle of a baking desert.

1 Peter 2:2 [NIV] *“Like newborn babies, **crave pure spiritual milk**, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,”*

How do new born babies crave milk?

Their brain is connected to their stomach and there is very little else between. As soon as four hours are up they “*waaaaaah*” immediately and loudly until satisfied, no quietly waiting for mother to come.

Psalms 51:1-4 [King James] *“To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-she’-ba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies **blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.** For I acknowledge my transgressions: and **my sin is ever before me.** Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”*

A desperate cry from King David after his sins had been revealed to him.

6. Zeal

Revelation 3:19 [King James] *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: **be zealous therefore, and repent.**”*

“Zealous” The Greek word is “*zēlōtēs*” meaning an uncompromising partisan, bitterly antagonistic towards sin.

This is the very opposite to the lukewarm, casual indifference the Laodicean church had in general.

Revelation 3:15-17 [King James] *“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then **because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.** Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:”*

This was just like the church at Corinth.

Galatians 6:7-10 [NIV] *“**Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.** The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”*

To fulfil this command we have to have total commitment to God and His Word.

Beware of television!

The continual diet of violence and immorality can make us indifferent to world conditions and the suffering that it brings to all who follow the way of the world’s society.

7. Revenge

The Greek word translated “revenge” is “*ekdikēsis*” meaning to avenge.

This is talking about a deep desire to be vindicated of our sinful past.

Grabbing every opportunity to change what we are doing.

This is self-avenging in our godly sorrow for wrong doing.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 [NIV] *“But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.”*

If we use God’s Word, the Christian Bible, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we can then be sure we have eradicated all the leaven of hypocrisy out of our lives.

All of the above points involve personal action if we are to attain the position where we are freed from hypocritical sin in our lives.

We need to revise these seven points often to evaluate how free we are of the deadly sin of hypocrisy.