

HYPOCRISY

1 Peter 3:15 ... “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.”

For Christ followers, there are a few things that are especially important to God, because they reflect why he created us. First, is our willingness to share Christ with others. We were created to worship God and to introduce others to him. Second, is the way we live our lives. This is just as important because it impacts the first purpose.

Christians are not the only people who have particular beliefs. There are many other religions and the followers of each subscribe to their own beliefs. Even atheists, who claim there are no gods, have beliefs because they believe there are no gods. Peter understood this fact and spoke of it in today's verse when he tells us to be ready to defend our faith. Just as importantly, he goes on to say “having a good conscience.” What does this mean? It simply means that when you speak of God and Jesus to the unsaved, you should be speaking about that which you also live.

If you tell someone God is love, but you are a bitter, resentful, or unkind person, you are a hypocrite. If you witness to a neighbor, telling her there is joy in being a follower of Christ, but your neighbor hears you yelling at your husband, throwing things in anger, and cursing your kids, you are a hypocrite. If you pray for a friend to be healed of sickness, but then blame God later for your own sickness, you are a hypocrite.

We cannot make people believe what we believe. But, if we live out our faith and demonstrate what we believe, others may become interested and ask us, which gives us an opportunity to share Christ with them. Your first contact with an unsaved person may be indirect; they may be watching you from a distance; sizing you up; wondering what makes you who you are. If what they see appeals to them because they see a righteous child of God living a peaceful, hopeful life under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they may ask you about it. But if people see an angry, dishonest, or bitter person, or a person with morals and behaviors that God forbids, they will brand you a hypocrite. Many people go to hell because they considered Christianity to be hypocritical just through the acts of one Christian. Do not be a hypocrite; you may send more people to hell than you lead to heaven.

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