



By Dr. Richard Youngblood

Question: I hate to feel this way, but there are so many hypocrites in the churches that I'm not sure I want to be part of one. How can I get beyond this?

To deny there are hypocrites in the church is like trying to prove dogs don't have fleas. Even one of the twelve disciples of Jesus pretended to love him while betraying him into the hands of his enemies for thirty silver coins (Matthew 26:15). Acknowledging their presence, Jesus strongly denounced hypocrites saying: "You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness" (Matthew 23:27-28). In addition, the apostle Paul said he faced dangers from "false brothers" (2 Corinthians 11:26).

While the church is not supposed to tolerate continued ungodliness, Jesus taught that we should be careful not to uproot the good with the evil. He said, "While you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn" (Matthew 13:29-30). In our limited ability to judge rightly, we may make mistakes. We should wait patiently for the Lord and know that at the Day of Judgment he will separate the hypocrites casting them into eternal condemnation.

However, there remains the question of how we can know someone is a hypocrite. Even the best of us are weak and make mistakes. Sometimes those who are just new in faith and do not understand all about Christian living, are judged to be hypocrites. Note that a hypocrite is one who *intentionally* tries to deceive others into believing he is something he is not. Are you sure there are as many hypocrites as you imagine? Jesus also warned, "Judge not that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1-2). Please don't make the mistake of allowing a few hypocrites to block your view of many sincerely dedicated but imperfect Christians.

Hypocrisy is a stumbling block Satan puts in our way. Don't let him win! Keep your eyes on Jesus, and he will give you the victory. God bless you. [Send questions or comments or request for a copy to University Church of Christ, 801 N. 12th, Murray, KY 42071, phone 270-753-1881 or email richardy@murray-ky.net] 2011/04/16

