

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ❖ What's the worse example of hypocrisy you've seen? Have you ever been hypocritical? How would you define hypocrisy?
- ❖ As you read Jesus' words in Matthew 23:1-5, what does Jesus appear to be most critical of in the religious leaders he rebuked? What does this reveal about what carries the most weight in God's eyes about our character? From the words of Jesus to the Pharisees, rank the following according to how you see their importance to God:
 - a. What we say; b. What we know; c. What we do.
- ❖ What do you feel is the biggest **cause** of hypocrisy? What's the best **cure** for hypocrisy? What's the best **prevention** against it?
- ❖ Which of the scriptures from this message especially catch your attention? Do some of them touch close to home in your life? How would you pass some of these message ideas on to a teen-ager?
- ❖ Go over the list of comparisons that Pastor Steve made in point 1 about image bearing/managing. Which of these especially challenge you?
- ❖ Are there any ways that you've responded to God's call for you to practice simplicity in your lifestyle? What has been the easiest part of it for you? The hardest part? How are you hoping the truths covered in this series will change your outlook or personal habits?

Bible Versions used: KJV-King James; NKJV-New King James; NIV-New International; NCV-New Century; TLB-Living Bible; NLT-New Living Translation; Msg-The Message; GW-God's Word; TEV-Today's English; CEV-Contemporary English; NAS - New American Standard; NJB-New Jerusalem Bible; HCSB-Holman Christian Standard; Phi-Phillips Translation; Amp-Amplified Bible; NRSV-New Revised Standard

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"Choosing Character Over Image"

Matthew 23:1-5, 27-28 (NIV) Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see...you hypocrites! 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."

The addiction to approval:

* It's often _____.

Proverbs 29:25 (TEV) It is dangerous to be concerned with what others think of you, but if you trust the Lord, you are safe.

* It looks _____.

2 Corinthians 10:18 (CEV) The only approval that counts is the Lord's approval.

John 5:44 (Phi) "How on earth can you believe while you are forever looking for each other's approval and not for the glory that comes from the one God?"

Avoiding style over substance

1. Cultivate _____.

2 Corinthians 5:12 (NIV) ...Those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.

* Image _____ vs. Image _____.

Additional message notes

2. Embrace _____.

Proverbs 28:13 (TEV) You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you.

James 5:16 (TLB) Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

3. Practice _____.

Proverbs 11:3 (NIV) The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

4. Strive for _____.

Luke 12:15 (NIV) "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Jeremiah 9:23-24 (NIV) This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD..."

5. Develop _____.

1 Corinthians 10:24 (NCV) Do not look out only for yourselves. Look out for the good of others also.