

# Romans (12:9)

## *Hallmarks of Hypocrisy*

Part 65 – March 12, 2006

### FROM GIFTS TO LOVE

Last week we finished up on the subject of spiritual gifts. Our “gifts” are simply those joyful and fruitful abilities that are motivated, directed, and blessed by God’s Spirit.



I told you a story I titled: Little Billy tries to carry three ice cream cones at the family reunion.

And we used this to determine our dominant gifts.

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. The Prophet wants to:      | Correct and Direct     |
| 2. The Server wants to:       | Support and Assist     |
| 3. The Teacher wants to:      | Analyze and Discover   |
| 4. The Encourager wants to:   | Persuade and Convince  |
| 5. The Contributor wants to:  | Provide and Supply     |
| 6. The Leader wants to:       | Achieve and Accomplish |
| 7. The Mercy person wants to: | Relieve and Lighten    |

Q: Remember how we ended by emphasizing attitude over aptitude?

Paul now shifts his focus from how we *serve* each other with unique gifts, to how we *treat* each other with universal love.

- Love must be the reason, the drive, and the desired result.

He made the same switch in 1 Corinthians when he segued from the well-known *gift* chapter (12) to the famous *love* chapter (13).

But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. – 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:1 NIV

So, when we ended Paul said that contributing must be *generous*, leadership must be *diligent*, and mercy must be *cheerful*.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. – Romans 12:9 NIV

## REMOVING OUR MASKS

Of all the things Paul could've said love should be – vast, intense, steady, stable, joyful, or bold – he chose: “sincere”. Other translations say: “Without hypocrisy”.

Back in verse three, Paul warned us:

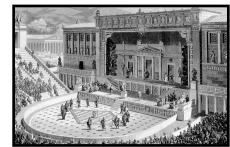
Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment ... - *Romans 12:3 NIV*

Q: Do you know why this is the exact opposite of hypocrisy?

A: Because the hypocrite is *highly concerned* about himself. “How will *I* appear?” “How can I create a good impression of *me*?”



This is the Theater of Dionysus, in Athens, Greece. It was in full swing when Paul wrote to the Romans. Here's a depiction of what it would've looked like. The Theater of Dionysus held an audience of 17,000!



The actors wore exaggerated masks so the spectators could easily identify their character. And the masks had a mini-megaphone built into the mouthpiece. We still use two of these masks to symbolize theater.

Each actor played several parts in each show. So, the masks made it possible to easily switch roles. The actors were known as hupokrites, aka hypocrites. In 12:9, Paul literally wrote: Love must be “un-hupokrites” (without masks, or acting, or playing a role).

There are four clear “hallmarks of hypocrisy”.

### 1. Building facades

Q: Do you ever pretend to be something on the outside that doesn't match what's really going on, on the inside?

Few things brought down Jesus' wrath like religious facades.

**[Jesus said]** Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you **hypocrites!** You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. - *Matthew 23:25*



This happens in those moments when we're more concerned about looking religious than becoming righteous. If we're really going to love each other the way we're designed, we must remove our religious masks and be real. God wants us to talk, and to work through misunderstandings, and to

appreciate the unique gifts of one another, so our love will be free from pretense and shallowness that can seem so safe.

How often does a child being disciplined say: "My bad; totally my fault; I apologize; very poor judgment on my part." They say: "He did it too/more/worse!"

## 2. Pointing fingers

Q: Have you noticed that drawing attention to the faults and flaws of others helps to keep the focus off of your own?

- This is a frequent tactic for arguing with a spouse!

**[Jesus said]** 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 6:42 NIV*



We must be candid about our failings.

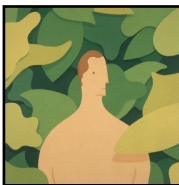
A sweet aroma of worship goes up, when we say: "I hate the sin that's overtaken me. Let's pray. Let's hold each other accountable." That takes guts! We don't even like to admit this stuff to ourselves!

## 3. Concealing sins

When Adam's and Eve's eyes were first opened, and they saw themselves as they truly were, they disguised themselves *and* camouflaged themselves!

They sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves ... and they hid. - *Genesis 3:7-8 NIV*

Q: Do you see why it's so scary to be "un-hypocrites"?



We must be willing to be exposed!

And if I expose who I really am, you may not like me ... and I'm all I've got! If I put myself on display, and you don't like it ... well, that's tough luck for me!

Hypocrisy is *driven* by the craving for other people's approval.

## 4. Craving praise

**[Jesus said]** When you pray, do not be like the **hypocrites**, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. - *Matthew 6:5 NIV*

They craved the reward of approval, and that's *all* they got!



We must find our fulfillment in Christ.

The command to love sincerely is a command to trust and to love and to discover our ultimate satisfaction in the approval of Christ, and not the praises of men.

Q: Do you see why Jesus is so passionately opposed to hypocrisy?

And that's why we must never settle for *playing* church. What I hope and pray happens in our small groups, and classes, and ministries, is that someone will get real; because it breaks the ice, and then the others get honest and authentic and genuine.

- And they'll know us by our love, because it is sincere!

## HATING AND CLINGING

And the more genuine and authentic our love for the Lord, the more we're going to *love* what He loves and *hate* what He hates.

Hate what is evil; cling to what is good (12:9b)

Paul doesn't say: "Choose against evil; and choose the good."

Choosing isn't enough; that just takes willpower. Paul wants us to "hate" and to "cling" – words of passion and intensity that signal sincere, bona fide, inner transformation.

- Love *hates* that which harms and *hangs onto* that which heals.

And that means letting go of lukewarm hypocrisy, with its mask-wearing, fault-finding, sin-concealing, approval-craving ways.

Don't make the mistake of saying: "What I hide only hurts me."

Anything we do that damages our display of Christ, robs *others* by tarnishing and diminishing what God made us to be for them. Anything we do that damages our delight in Christ, robs *God* of the intimate relationship he desires to have with us.

We can't build a church on "hypokrites". You can't build a marriage on it, or raise kids with it, or base friendships on it, or grow in grace and intimacy with God by it.

- Love must be sincere!