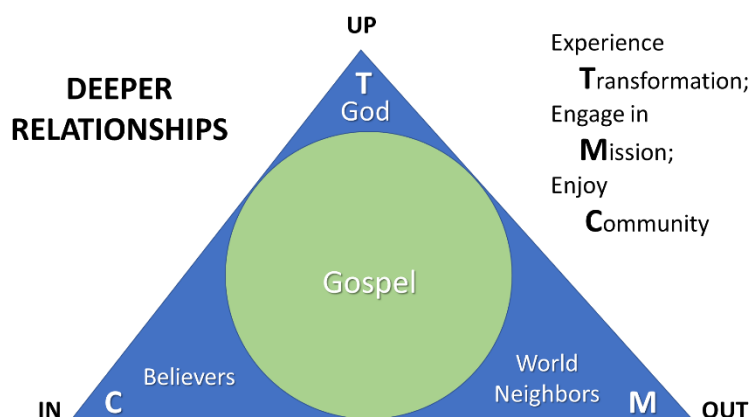


For the past 16 years I have been meeting monthly in a pastor’s prayer breakfast. It always an encouraging time together. We share Scripture and share encouraging stories with one another. But occasionally we also share some horror stories in the ministry. Last month Chad Wagner at Lighthouse Baptist Church told a story about a guy in his church. There’s a man in his church named Bill Whittier. I’m sure some of you know Bill. Bill had been attending for several years and seemed like a great guy. Bill became a member at Lighthouse and starting leading the men’s Bible study on Thursday mornings. He did such a good job that Chad was considering him for one of their deacons. But not long before he became a deacon, Bill had a moral failure. You can imagine how messy the whole thing has been and how hard it is for Bill’s wife Joy, and their four children. Imagine how devastating that must have been for them?

Does that story bother you at all? It should because it sounds a lot like gossip and none of it is even true. Even if that were true, I would have no business sharing it with you. That’s just wrong.

This is the sixth and final message in our discipleship series and the topic is Shepherding the Body. If you recall from our Discipleship brochure, we have already covered Abiding in Christ and Rescuing the Perishing.



Last Sunday, Ray Olson hared his triangle diagram with us—the UP, IN and OUT. I don’t know how many of you noticed that we are talking about the exact same things. The UP is our Abiding in Christ. The OUT is Rescue the Perishing and the IN is Shepherding the Body. Ray’s three parts perfectly match our three parts. So this category of shepherding is not just how pastors

and elders shepherd the church body but how we shepherd one another. All of the “one anothers” in the New Testament are a part of this category. We did not have room to list all of them so we just used the most common one anothers.

RESCUE

What We Do

- Evangelism-God's Part (conversion)
- Our part (proclamation)
- Redemptive relationships
- Compassion ministries
- Across the street/Across the globe
- Seed analogy
- "Missions exists because worship doesn't!"

SHEPHERD

What We Do

- Love one another
- Instruct one another
- Serve one another
- Carry each other's burdens
- Forgive one another
- Admonish/encourage one another
- Confess your sins to one another
- Pray for one another
- Offer hospitality to one another
- Honor one another above yourselves
- Be kind & compassionate toward one another

THE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS
A lifelong, continual process of growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

MULTIPLY **CONNECT**
EQUIP **GROW**

CONNECT: Becoming connected to Jesus Christ, to a local church, and to fellow believers.

GROW: Growing in your knowledge of God and his Word resulting in continual personal transformation.

EQUIP: Preparing to serve God in a wide range of areas and helping others to connect and grow.

MULTIPLY: Training and releasing maturing, servant leaders so that all ministry is multiplied.

THE DISCIPLESHIP GOAL
Making more disciples and making better disciples by nurturing all believers toward the stage of multiplication

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OAKS
of
RIGHTEOUSNESS

DISCOVERING
THE PURPOSE
THE PROCESS
AND THE POWER
of
MAKING DISCIPLES

In other words, Shepherding the body is all about how we treat one another in the body of Christ. Do we love one another? Do we carry one another's burdens? Do we forgive one another? Do we admonish and encourage one another? Or do we gossip (that's why I started with the gossip illustration), slander and devour one another? It's either the first list or the second? Who will we be?

Another way of saying it to ask, what does love look like in the local church? We throw that word love around quite a bit. For a Christian, it's one of our favorite words. But words have meaning and we better be sure we know what this love is supposed to look like. And for that, let's turn to Romans 12.

9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." 20 To the contrary, "if your enemy is

hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1. Let love be without hypocrisy.

Let me explain why I used the word hypocrisy here. The ESV has, *Let love be genuine*. In this verse, the NASB has the best translation—Let love be without hypocrisy. I think it is the best



translation because this is exactly what the original language says. Hypokritos is the Greek word for hypocrite. A hypocrite was a stage actor who all wore hand crafted masks with exaggerated features. Due to the fragile materials that were used, none of the actual masks have survived. However, from the sculpture of a poet, we get a good idea of what they looked like. In larger cities, they would perform in these enormous theaters that could seat twenty or thirty thousand people. Due to the large distance between the actors and the audience, the actors required these oversized, exaggerated masks. That is the meaning of a hypocrite—someone who wears a mask, or in this case, several different masks.



But Romans 12:9 says let love be without hypocrisy. In Greek there are only two words in the sentence—*agape anhypocritos*. Love without hypocrisy or love without a mask. That's quite a word picture, is it not? To love without a mask. This is why we need to have discussions like this



about the simple word love. We might think we are loving another person but we may have masks over our love and not even be fully aware of it.

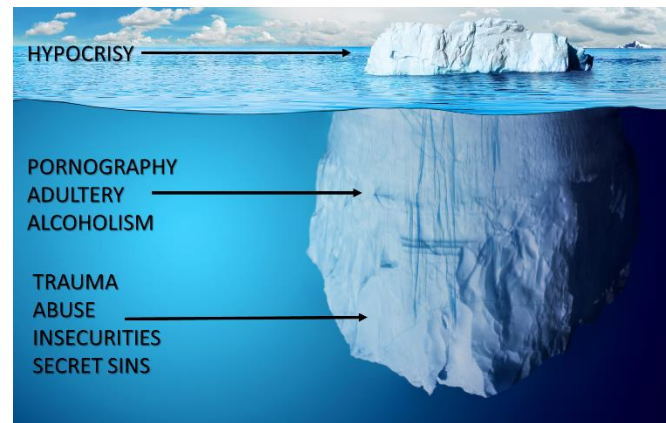
I realize the word hypocrite is a strong word. People use it all of the time as a weapon against one another. This t-shirt is a good example of how hypocrisy is weaponized. Animal rights supporters attempt to leverage the word against anyone who would eat anything other than plants. The word hypocrisy is used to gain the upper hand on your opponent. We must be careful to not fall into this trap.

On the other hand, there is real hypocrisy all around us. And right now you are sitting in the seat of a hypocrite. Did you know that? We all wear masks of some kind or another at times. When we come to church we generally put on a good face to show to others. Part of that is just the reality of large groups of people. If I don't know you very well, I am not likely to share my innermost struggles with you. So I hold back just a bit. That's a type of mask. Some of that is well within the normal range of typical interactions with others.

But there is a more serious kind of mask that can wear which hides our inner selves most of the time. If we attempt to love others with that kind of mask, it is not love. At its core, hypocrisy is a lie. It is literally putting on a false face to hide your true self. Why would someone create a mask that was so different from the real person? That's a difficult question that varies from person to person and situation to situation. I think we tend to impose mostly negative motivations on hypocrisy. If you had to choose, do you think most hypocrisy comes from malicious motives or from fear and hurts? In other words, why do people wear masks? Do they wear masks because they intentionally want to hurt others or because they want to hide the fear and hurt they already carry with them? If they do it maliciously, we might tend to get angry at them. But if they wear masks in order to protect themselves, we may have more compassion for them.

But regardless of the motive, hypocrisy is sin. Thirty years ago I learned a term that has been very helpful to me: sinful coping mechanism. Hypocrisy is a second tier sin. No one is hypocritical just to be hypocritical. People are hypocritical because they are covering up something else. This is what I mean by a second tier sin. Hypocrisy comes about because of something else underneath it.

The iceberg illustration might be helpful. If sin is like a massive iceberg, then hypocrisy is the part that's sticking out of the water, the part that we can see. Of course that assumes that we can see it. We are so good at wearing our masks that we and others are not even aware that we are covering up our true selves. But as I said, hypocrisy takes hold of you because you are covering up something else in your life. It could be pornography, adultery, alcoholism or any myriad of others sins. You have a great fear of being discovered so you wear a mask.



You might recall the sad story of Ted Haggard. Ted was the pastor of a megachurch in Colorado Springs and president of the National Association of Evangelicals. His church was a huge supporter of Biblical marriage and a crusader against the gay marriage movement. Then it was discovered that he had been a closet homosexual and drug abuser for most of his life. The cry of hypocrite rang out from every corner of the media. And he was a hypocrite. It was wrong to lie and to have worn so many masks, but he was terribly afraid of being discovered.

Think of two opposite pressures on you at once. On the one side is fear and hurt are pressing down on you. You don't want to be discovered. You can't let people know you have this sin problem, whatever it is. On the other side is the pressure not to lie. You know hypocrisy and lying are wrong. You've been taught that since you were a small child. What happens is the pressure to hide your deeper sins is greater than the pressure not to be a hypocrite. If you wear masks or hurt others because you yourself have been hurt, that is a sinful coping mechanism. Hypocrisy is the sinful way you have developed to cope with other sins. Hypocrisy is itself a sin—a sinful coping mechanism to deal with even deeper sins.

Sometimes we can go deeper yet. We may commit these middle sins due to even deeper sins. Many believers have experienced trauma and abuse. All of us at times have insecurities of one kind or another. Let's take a guy named Greg. We don't have any Gregs in church so I'll use that name for this example. Greg is a worship leader in his local church. Everyone likes and respects Greg because he seems like a decent guy and he's a really good worship leader. But what no one knows is that Greg is verbally abusive to his wife and children. The family is very good at keeping it hidden. But Greg's father was also verbally abusive to Greg and his siblings. Chances are pretty good that Greg learned this behavior from his dad and has passed it onto his family. Greg has buried the pain of his childhood by repeating the sins of his father. But this entire time Greg has skillfully built this mask that he wears. It is so well constructed and he has been wearing it for so long that no one, except Greg's immediate family, realizes that it is a mask. Greg's mask is his sinful coping mechanism that he has developed to cover up his true self. But it goes deeper, doesn't it? Greg's verbal abuse toward his family is a sinful coping mechanism that he developed to cope with the rejection he felt from his own father.

At this point you might be thinking, “Maurer, this sounds like a bunch of psycho-babble to me. What’s all this stuff about deeper level sins and sinful coping mechanisms? Why don’t you just call sin, sin and be done with it?” Let me assure you. I am the last person to want to get caught up in human psychology. Let me be clear about two things. First, in this example, Greg’s high level hypocrisy is a sin. Greg’s verbal abuse toward his family is sin. The verbal abuse Greg experienced from his father was sin. The Ten Commandments speak of the sins of the father being passed down to the third and fourth generation. Just because the sins are passed down does not make them any less sin. So the last thing I would want to do is to excuse them or explain them away.

Second, what I am trying to do is describe how messy sin can be. Generally speaking, sin is not so simple as naming it and confessing it. Sin is messy and often is tangled with other sins. Listen to one of Jesus’ descriptions.

10 And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: 11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.” 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

These sins come from within a person. They are part of our sin nature and the experiences and decisions we make over many years can either help us move away from our basic nature or toward it.

Now let’s get back to Greg’s story. Eventually, Greg’s wife grows tired of the verbal abuse in her home and tells her pastor about it. What’s going to happen at that point? Who knows, right? But the first reaction will likely be disbelief. The pastor will have this overwhelming sense of incongruence. He will experience what is called cognitive dissonance. If you are not a musician, let me show you what dissonance sounds like. [Listen to this 30 second clip](#). The first part is so nice, just a simple tune plunked out on the piano. But the second half is musical dissonance. When we hear it we think, “Make it stop!” We don’t have to be a trained musician to know that it is “wrong.”

This is what cognitive dissonance is like. When we see the hypocrisy finally revealed it’s an awful lot like listening to that dissonant piano. We instinctively know that the two piano keys do not belong together. In the same way we know that the two pictures—in this case of Greg—do not belong together. On the one hand we have the nice guy and worship leader Greg but on the other hand we have the verbally abusive to his family Greg. What do we do with these two competing versions of Greg? In real-time we experience it like we do the dissonant piano. It doesn’t make any sense and we just want it to stop. It’s painful but it’s also much worse than the musical dissonance.

I’ve seen this happen dozens of times. The largest Christian university on the world is Liberty University. They have a combined on-campus and online student body of 90,000 students. It’s

absolutely enormous. A few years ago it was discovered that the president of Liberty had been telling a pack of lies for at least ten years. He was a powerful speaker and everywhere he went he told stories of his life growing up in a Muslim family in Ohio. He weaved truth and lies throughout his stories just enough to make them sound believable. But once you lined up the documented truth next to his long list of lies, it was obvious what he had been doing. He eventually resigned his position as president.

But everyone who knew him and this story experienced an incredible amount of cognitive dissonance. How could the president of the largest Christian university in the world have been guilty of such lies? How could he have been wearing such a well-constructed mask for so long that he fooled absolutely everyone he met and which ultimately allowed him to rise to his lofty position as president? This was huge.

And the fallout was just as huge. This man had loyal supporters that refused to rightly consider the evidence. I know of one prominent writer who risked his reputation to stand by the former president. Do you see what happens in cases like this? The cognitive dissonance is so loud that you can only resolve it in one of two ways. The noise of the dissonant note must be resolved one way or another (walk over to piano??) You can't continue to hear that dissonance for long, so one is forced to either believe the former president or not believe him. Either direction will resolve the dissonance but both are not equally correct paths to take.

You see, we are reacting to the hypocrisy but the hypocrisy is not really the issue, is it? It's still sin. You might call it a sinful coping mechanism but it is largely the part of the iceberg that's visible from the top of the water. The captain of a ship knows that when an iceberg is spotted he needs to give his ship a wide berth because the real problem lies below the surface. So it is with people like Greg, with hypocrisy. It is sin built upon more sin and until the deeper sin is dealt with, the hypocrisy will never go away. We are commanded to love without a mask but it's not so simple as just pulling off the mask.

Let me address what is likely the elephant in the room. Some of you might be thinking, "Are you talking about the Kappels?" I chose this passage several weeks ago before any of the current situation happened. So I did not choose this passage or this theme because of the Kappels. But at the same time, we can't pretend that something huge has not happened to our church body. We are all reeling from this and looking for answers.

Let me be clear that in using these severe examples like Ted Haggard I am in no way saying that the Kappels are on the same level as Haggard. Not even close. I am just trying to illustrate the messiness of sin and the way we can feel about it, the way it hits us.

There is certainly application here to the Kappels, but not just in a finger pointing kind of way but rather in a path toward understanding. If the sin had been an affair, it would be right for me to talk about our purity and holiness and how to avoid sins in this area. In the same way, we should take a hard look at what happened so that we can understand it better and especially so that we can avoid the same mistakes.

We all wear masks at times. You see, hypocrisy is so much more than just saying one thing and doing another. That's the most obvious kind of hypocrisy but wearing a mask is also hypocrisy. God says that we should love without a mask and next week I'll talk about how to do that—how to take off our masks, but first we must see them for what they are in ourselves.

Rich Maurer
February 19, 2017