

# WHAT WOULD JESUS UNDO?

## WHAT WOULD JESUS UNDO, PART 3: HYPOCRISY

Finish this sentence—"I don't want to go to church, because the church is filled with \_\_\_\_\_!" What did you say? *Hypocrites*. That's right. I believe that hypocrisy, more than any other issue, has kept more people out of church and from connecting with God. To far too many people, being a Christian and being a hypocrite are one in the same thing. What would Jesus undo? He would undo hypocrisy.

**BIG IDEA: You have nothing to fear when you have nothing to hide.**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who are some of the least hypocritical people you know? What stands out about them?
2. Describe how you feel or what you think about when you hear the word "hypocrisy."
3. Read the following quote by Brennan Manning. Do you agree or disagree? Why does hypocrisy make the Christian belief unbelievable?

*The single greatest cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door and deny Him with their lifestyle. This is what the unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.*  
—Brennan Manning

4. Chris said, "Hypocrisy is not the disparity between what we do and what we wish we did. Hypocrisy is the gap between what we show and who we are." Why does God despise the show? What does the show communicate to others watching? To God? To yourself?
5. *With the Bible or Bible App, Read Matthew 23.* This chapter is nicknamed "The 7 Woes," because Jesus is railing against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> "The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. <sup>3</sup> So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach. <sup>4</sup> They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. <sup>5</sup> "Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear robes with extra long tassels. <sup>6</sup> And they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the seats of honor in the synagogues. <sup>7</sup> They love to receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces, and to be called 'Rabbi.' <sup>8</sup> "Don't let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters. <sup>9</sup> And don't address anyone here on earth as 'Father,' for only God in heaven is your Father. <sup>10</sup> And don't let anyone call you 'Teacher,' for you have only one teacher, the Messiah. <sup>11</sup> The greatest among you must be a servant. <sup>12</sup> **But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.** <sup>13</sup> "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces. You won't go in yourselves, and you don't let others enter either. <sup>14</sup> What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! You shamelessly cheat widows out of their property and then pretend to be pious by making long prayers in public. Because of this, you will be severely punished. <sup>15</sup> "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you cross land and sea to make one convert, and then you turn that person into twice the child of hell you yourselves are! <sup>16</sup> "Blind guides! What sorrow

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awaits you! For you say that it means nothing to swear ‘by God’s Temple,’ but that it is binding to swear ‘by the gold in the Temple.’<sup>17</sup> Blind fools! Which is more important—the gold or the Temple that makes the gold sacred?<sup>18</sup> And you say that to swear ‘by the altar’ is not binding, but to swear ‘by the gifts on the altar’ is binding.<sup>19</sup> How blind! For which is more important—the gift on the altar or the altar that makes the gift sacred?<sup>20</sup> When you swear ‘by the altar,’ you are swearing by it and by everything on it.<sup>21</sup> And when you swear ‘by the Temple,’ you are swearing by it and by God, who lives in it.<sup>22</sup> And when you swear ‘by heaven,’ you are swearing by the throne of God and by God, who sits on the throne.<sup>23</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.<sup>24</sup> Blind guides! You strain your water so you won’t accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel!<sup>25</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence!<sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too.<sup>27</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity.<sup>28</sup> Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.<sup>29</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you build tombs for the prophets your ancestors killed, and you decorate the monuments of the godly people your ancestors destroyed.<sup>30</sup> Then you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would never have joined them in killing the prophets.’<sup>31</sup> “But in saying that, you testify against yourselves that you are indeed the descendants of those who murdered the prophets.<sup>32</sup> Go ahead and finish what your ancestors started.<sup>33</sup> Snakes! Sons of vipers! How will you escape the judgment of hell?<sup>34</sup> “Therefore, I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers of religious law. But you will kill some by crucifixion, and you will flog others with whips in your synagogues, chasing them from city to city.<sup>35</sup> As a result, you will be held responsible for the murder of all godly people of all time—from the murder of righteous Abel to the murder of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you killed in the Temple between the sanctuary and the altar.<sup>36</sup> I tell you the truth, this judgment will fall on this very generation.<sup>37</sup> “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God’s messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn’t let me.<sup>38</sup> And now, look, your house is abandoned and desolate.<sup>39</sup> For I tell you this, you will never see me again until you say, ‘Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

6. Jesus sees the main sin of the Pharisees as hypocrisy. How are the disciples to avoid falling into the same evil?
7. Compare the path of greatness followed by the Pharisees with that taught by Jesus (verses 5-12). What do these 2 views of greatness teach us about the 2 views of the kingdom?
8. Make a list of the 7 charges Jesus makes against the Pharisees and the teachers of the religious law (verses 13-32). How do they relate to what Jesus said in verses 2-7? Do you find anything in common to all 7 charges? How do each of these affect the common people?
9. After reading Matthew 23, do you find it surprising that the Pharisees want to kill Jesus?
10. *With the Bible or Bible App, Read Proverbs 28:13.* Why do you think confession leads to mercy?

*People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.*  
Proverbs 28:13 (NLT)

11. Describe what “masks” you wore growing up. How did you show yourself as someone you weren’t?
12. In what area of your life do you struggle to show your honest self?

## MOVING FORWARD

Tell your group about a mask you’ve been wearing. Then, ask them to help you watch for it—and keep it off. Do inventory this week as you interact with people. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you other masks you put on.