

When a Pastor Lives a Double Life

by Eric Ludy

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a genuine life as a Christian leader, avoiding the pitfalls of hypocrisy and promoting biblical accountability.

Duration: 1:32:51

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Proverbs 28:13, Matthew 6:24, John 3:20, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 5:8, James 4:8, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Spiritual Integrity", "Christian Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for the body of Christ to yield to the Spirit of God, be stirred, convicted, and driven to the foot of the cross for purification. It calls for alignment with God's kingdom pattern, avoiding compromise with truth, and a plea for sin to be exposed and God's light to shine brightly. The message also delves into the dangers of living a double life, seeking validation from the world, and the importance of being serious about following Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Father, we as the body of Christ yield, so Spirit of God come upon us and work your work. I pray that we would be stirred, we would be convicted, that we would be driven to the foot of that cross. Lord Jesus, I pray that the body of Christ would be purified.

Lord, that we would not justify anything in our midst, that we would truly be purged. And that we that represent the leadership of the church of Jesus Christ would come into alignment with your kingdom pattern. And that we would not play patty cake with the truth and we would not mess with souls.

Lord Jesus, where there's sin, I pray that it would be exposed. And I pray that your light would shine unlike it's ever shone before in this generation. Come Lord Jesus, come Maranatha.

We need our God and we need him now. It's in the precious name of our great king we ask, amen. When a pastor lives a double life.

Well that's a title. What happens when a pastor lives a double life? And I want to replace the word pastor with what if a Christian leader lives a double life? What if a minister of the gospel lives a double life? How about this? What if a Christian lives a double life? Do you guys know the effects of that? You know the damaging, damning effects of hypocrisy. I don't know if we could see a short list of sins in heaven that have the greatest impact.

To dampen and to cripple the effects of the gospel of Jesus Christ in any generation. But Satan seems to know that list. And there's no greater achievement for the kingdom of darkness than to trip up a leader and then to have that leader hide his sin and to live in a habitual pattern of defeat and darkness under the banner and the moniker of Christian strength.

One of the reasons this is a weighty message for me is I am a leader. I am a pastor. And the amount of responsibility that I have, it's high.

And it's not an undue amount where I could say, I could plead and say it's unfair and it's unjust that any man should be expected to actually live out that which he preaches. No, the basic expectation we do have as humans is if someone speaks it, they better live it. It's a funny thing, and that's what you see.

All the non-Christians that have thrown out Christianity due to what? Hypocrisy. What's their reason? Hey, Christians, if you're genuine, you'll live it. You'll live it.

Now here's the challenge we face. Many of you have tried to live it. It's not that you're intending to be a hypocrite.

You honestly don't know how to be anything else because you esteem what God says, but you don't have the equipment of soul to live the way you're supposed to live. What do we do? So this is about the concept of the double life. The double life needs to be exercised.

It needs to be removed and purged out of the church of Jesus Christ. It's the equivalent of shooting ourselves in the foot and attempting to then run a marathon. When we attempt to witness to the lost and dying world around us and to tell them and let them know that there is victory in Jesus Christ, that there is hope in the gospel, and that we ourselves live under the damning effects of sin, we have no message.

We have no witness. There is no power in the church of Jesus Christ. Remember Jesus walks into the temple and he sees money changers tables.

What did he do? He grabbed a whip. Turned those money changers tables over and drove out the money changers. He was indignant.

And I tell you what, every single one of us knows the vulnerability of being the one with the double life. You know that you could live a life above reproach for your entire life and then if you have one down moment. Remember David, King David? The guy was the man.

What did he do? It says in the season when the kings went forth to battle. Every spring is when the kings would go forth to battle. And guess what? Israel went forth to battle.

David even sent out his men to battle. But for the first time, David stayed home. David, don't do that.

He stays home and decides to do a little looking. You know what? You don't stay home from the battle. When the season comes to go out to battle, you must go.

And he could say, and he could justify just like the rest of us, you know, I've been fighting so many battles. I need a reprieve. When the pastor begins to look for the reprieve, the enemy is waiting.

Are you ready for a reprieve? I'll give you a reprieve. The strongest men can fall. So I don't want you to just think that just because a strong man has fallen, he hasn't ever been strong and he's always lived the

hypocritical life.

However, I want us to realize that the weight of responsibility that we have when we bear the name of Jesus Christ is no small and insignificant thing. The reason this has been brought up this week is because it came to our understanding at Ellerslie this week that one of our heroes, Tom White from the Voice of the Martyrs, committed suicide. Committing suicide is shocking enough, but it was exposed and he was found out to have molested a 10-year-old girl.

And we don't know the truth of any of these things. It's all hearsay for us as the rest of the body, but we have to grapple with it. We have to grapple with the fact that one of the most significant ministries in our generation, the Voice of the Martyrs, Richard and Sabina Wurmbrand have had one of the greatest impacts upon Leslie and I. His testimony, his life.

And I highly admired Tom for his stance, for his vigorous determination to represent the weak around the world. And he lived it. He went into the hardest places and stood for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And the rest of us stand back and we look and we scratch our head and we say, yes, it could be a conspiracy. Someone may have killed him and someone may have written a letter and stuck it in his car in his handwriting. How do we handle this? When a pastor lives a double life.

He might have been living a singular life his entire time and then didn't go out to battle. And then we see a breakdown of his moral character and we see the finishing touches put on by the enemy. I tell you what.

This is our generation and this is our watch. And the wolves are surrounding the sheep pen. Do they have justified reason why they can mock the church of Jesus Christ? We might get mad that the world around us is mocking the church of Jesus Christ and we say, they don't know what they're mocking, but guess what? They have good reason right now.

And we are the ones serving it up to them on a platter. We are the ones. I don't want you thinking about Tom White as we're going through this message.

I want you to be the one that is being discussed. I want me to be the one being discussed. Remember it was a few years ago, but we had a moral breakdown in the church of epic proportions.

And that was with Ted Haggard, the pastor from New Life Church in Colorado Springs. The reason it was so significant, because we've seen many pastors fail in our generation. It's one of the saddest statements I could ever make.

But Ted Haggard was over all the other pastors in the evangelical world. He was the pastor of all the pastors of all the pastors. He was the chieftain.

And our chieftain, if you will, who stood for righteousness, purity, and the like, was living a double life. And there was one scene that I'll never forget is branded upon my memory, and that was a newscaster who stopped and flagged down Ted Haggard's car. And Ted Haggard at the time didn't know that there were accusations out there.

And they rolled down their window. His wife was sitting in the passenger seat, and that's where the newscaster was, on the passenger side. His two kids were in the back seat.

And that newscaster asked Pastor Haggard, Is it true that you have been in a gay relationship down in Denver, and that you are addicted to methamphetamines? Dear Lord Jesus, save me from ever being in such a moment to disgrace the name of Jesus Christ and to humiliate my family. There is no greater fear that I could ever have in my life than to be in such a situation. From the very beginning of my Christianity, in the days of Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Baker, this is how I started.

I started by seeing the hypocrisy around me, and I remember struggling as I was coming to Jesus. And here was one of my first declarations. I'll give my life to you, and I'll be radical, but I cannot end like that.

Please, Lord Jesus, is there a way that a man can go the distance and go it well? Is there a way? Is there a possibility that a man can stand strong for something and not be a fraud? Is it possible? Because how many of us have seen it? How many of us can testify that it's possible? We don't know. We're a generation wondering, question marks dancing around in our head. Is anyone telling the truth? Is anyone truly living it? And I feel it.

I feel a searchlight whenever these things happen, and who do I feel it on? Me. I feel like people are saying, there's another one. Anyone who stands strong, the stronger you stand, the more you're covering up.

I remember when I was in high school, the teacher of my English class, who wasn't the most stable person, he was a very argumentative and contentious man and very anti-Christian. So here I am in a public school, and I mean, it was about as awkward as it gets, and the man said something about 95% of the men in here, by the age of 20, will have had a homosexual experience. And I raised my voice to that.

And I said, that is ridiculous. And he said, and those that are most vocal about it are most vulnerable to prove it right. How do you say anything to that? Well, I got quiet.

And I was mad. And guess what? What's being said in Christianity today? Look at the leaders. Look at the ones that take the strongest stance for true purity.

Mark them. They're the frauds. Because everyone knows, and by the way, these are Christians speaking, everyone knows that true purity and a life that is lived to the glory of God in the sense that it does not have blemish on it as a regular, as a regular attribute to the soul is an impossibility.

I just read an article this morning saying the exact same thing. A Christian saying, we have too high of expectations upon our Christian leaders. We actually expect them to live this out.

We are hero-worshipping them. So we are setting them up for failure because no one can actually live that. Was Paul a fraud? The entire integrity of the gospel goes down the drain the moment you come to that conclusion.

Either it's possible or it's not. You choose your side. I've chosen my side.

And I know the lightning that comes with it. This is a serious issue in the church of Jesus Christ. And we're facing it afresh this week.

So let's go through this and let's allow God to purge and purify us. Let's not point our finger and wag our heads at someone outside this building. We're here this morning.

And God starts here. Judgment begins in the house of God. The offense of hypocrisy.

The commission that Paul gives is that we give no offense in anything. That the ministry be not blamed. And the word means discredited.

We give no offense in anything. There should be no offense that could possibly be brought to the church of Jesus Christ in and through our lives. That's a very strong statement, by the way.

That the ministry be not discredited. But in all things, commending ourselves as the ministers of God. To be a minister of God is a very, very, very serious matter.

Hypocrisy is akin to taking God's name in vain. Let's read this scripture in Exodus. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain. I know what most of us think that means. Taking his name in vain means cursing.

What does it mean? It means falsely representing his name. Bearing it. Carrying it and saying, I represent that name.

And doing it in a false manner. Where you say one thing with your lips and live another thing with your lives. It's called duplicity.

It's called hypocrisy. It's called taking the name of the Lord in vain. Every single one of us in here has done it at some level.

I know. We are very vulnerable to it. You know those moments when you come to church and you're supposed to have a smile on and someone asks you how you're doing, brother.

And out comes, doing great. Well, you just had one rough morning. And you're not doing so great.

And so in a sense, you have borne false witness. You have. Now it's, why are you doing it? Why are we bearing false witness? Why are we saying something that isn't true? We have good motives.

We want to protect the name of Jesus. Especially as a leader. Come on.

What good is it going to be to you if I say, yeah, I stumbled about seven times this past week, but I got back up. You're going to be like, what is wrong with this guy? What kind of triumph is that? And so this is what happens to a leader. A leader begins to stumble, scrapes his knee, and immediately covers it up.

And wears long pants that day. He doesn't want his scrape to be seen. Pretty soon, he gets into a habitual pattern of scraping that knee.

He never takes off those pants. Why? Well, for the sake of the ministry. For the sake of the glory of the king.

I understand it. I understand how shame works. I understand how hypocrisy is built.

It's not purposeful. Not like many of us are coming to Christianity going, I'm going to live that hypocritical version of Christianity. That sounds fun.

None of us intends to be a hypocrite. We don't esteem hypocrisy. We don't want it in the church.

And yet, we're oftentimes the greatest perpetrators. The tolerance of hypocrisy. You know that when you're a hypocrite, you put up with other hypocrites? You just start turning a blind eye.

I mean, come on. Have you ever been to a men's gathering where some of the key leaders and elders in a church are confessing to the fact that they're addicted to pornography? That they struggle with sexual addiction? That they're actually flirting with girls that aren't their wives? And what do the other men do? We're with you, brother. We're all there at some level.

Just try not to do the extreme things. Try not to do the extreme things. You root out sin at the most rudimentary level.

Self on the throne is your problem. You're about you. You're interested in your comforts.

You're interested in tending to your needs. That's your problem. Now we're beginning to see the outcropping and the fruits being born of that.

This is unacceptable in the church of Jesus Christ. You have provision from the cross of Jesus Christ to root out self and the flesh and the old man and the behavior of it so that you would let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that you would obey it in the lusts thereof. Quote, unquote, Paul the apostle.

It's a serious business in the church. We either believe the word of God or we don't. This morning I'm going to talk about believing the word of God.

And we're going to take our souls to task on this point. The tolerance of hypocrisy, the great breach of the modern church. It's a breach.

It's a hole in the wall. When pastors are living a hypocritical life, what happens? The enemy trucks in his goods in and through that breach. If a pastor is duplicitous, if a pastor is a double life, if a pastor is a hypocrite, then we have truckloads of the stuff coming in to the church.

I'll never forget, coming down into my basement, we had a little play area set up for Hudson. Hudson was about, hmm, maybe one at the time. Maybe, no, I think he might have been two.

He was standing, yeah, I think he'd probably be around two. I've had different sin struggles throughout my life. I've had the classic man struggles back in the day.

God has done an amazing work in my life. I'm a testimony of a lot of different things if we were to go through them. It's just incredible what the grace of God can do.

But there are certain things that can sort of be low-lying because they're not that big of a deal. No one really talks about them in the church. You know, we have classic ones like gluttony.

Who's going to talk about that? I mean, how ridiculous. Now, I'm not going to say I struggled with gluttony. Mine was irritation and frustration, but it wasn't with people.

And so as a result, I could justify it in a tremendous way. I mean, if it was against people, that's one thing, because that would be unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment that could stem from that. But I'm talking about things like bad signage on the roads, like bad directions when I'm trying to build something.

Stupid directions. Now, I'm not mad at an individual. I was mad at a thing.

So in my mind, come on, it's not that big of a deal. Les, I could walk in and go, what kind of attitude is that? This is terrible directions. And it was under the radar.

It's like I couldn't even see it. And so whatever that is, and whatever that's classified in our life, I remember coming down to the basement, and Hudson was standing there playing with his train set. And he was trying to fit something together, and it wasn't fitting together.

And he did something. He got frustrated, and he had his arms out like this and went, and I recognized something in it. You see, I don't typically do that on the outside, because I can cover it fairly well.

That's what maturity does for you. But I recognized it. That was the state of my soul at times, and I was allowing it into my home, and guess who it went straight to? It went straight to my son.

You see, if we don't close off the breach, it bleeds into the church. If a father opens his door, what does it go to? It goes to his wife, and it goes to his kids. We're responsible to guard the door.

And I tell you what, we're trucking hypocrisy in by the train load right now, and I say, let's close the door. A bad man is worse when he pretends to be a saint. Isn't that a great statement? I mean, it's a very sad statement, but talk about well put.

You see, a bad man is bad, but he's even worse when he pretends to be a saint. You know how many bad men we have in the church today? You see, they're under the banner of Christianity, but they've never been converted and regenerated and set free from their badness, so they literally can show forth the goodness of God. Gospel 101.

Life, I'm sorry, death unto life. Old man dead, old behavior buried. Newness of life, all things become new.

That means behavior. Not just you think a new thought or you go to someplace new on a Sunday morning. It means a change of life, of disposition, of attitude, countenance, dress.

Everything you do is shaped and it's new because there's a new man ruling within known as Jesus Christ. A bad man is worse when he pretends to be a saint. The acceptance of defeat.

So why in the world are we allowing the sin? It's an issue of avoiding scripture. We have begun to justify our defeat, which is our hypocrisy, under the banner of doctrinal reasoning. We have begun to build doctrines that match our experience rather than indict our experience against true doctrine.

You see, God says that we are to be free from sin. God says that we are to be triumphant in our behavior. That our thoughts are literally supposed to be pure thoughts.

We are supposed to think on these things. Not on those things. These things.

God never mocks us with his commands. To say, here's what you must do, and then he chuckles to himself and goes, yeah, good luck, try it. We cannot do it, it's a truth.

But he can. And he intends to in and through us. And that's how the gospel works.

The acceptance of defeat. So let's read it, okay? Any of you that have hung around in modern Christianity have most likely heard the old Romans 7 argument. It's not a bad argument, the problem is it lacks its context.

Romans 6, half of Romans 7, and Romans 8 are probably the most triumphant chapters in the Bible, arguably. I mean, they are triumph incarnate. And then you have this little bit in here.

Let's read it. This is Paul speaking. For what I would, and I'm going to put in want to do, just because it helps you understand what Paul is saying, because that is what he means.

For what I would want to do, that do I not. But what I hate, that I do. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing.

For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would want to do, I do not. But the evil which I would not want to do, that I do.

O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? And that's where everyone stops. And we take a quotation from Paul, and we're like, oh, no wonder. No wonder.

See, I'm wanting to live this life, but I can't. Paul couldn't. Have you ever studied the rest of the Bible? Paul, in Romans 6, is saying the exact opposite of this, and that's not an exaggeration.

Romans 8 is literally a complete contrast with this. He's talking to the Jews, those under the law, and he's relating to them, saying, we're in a body of death. We are not yet the body of Christ.

He's speaking from the position of the body of this death. The body of life, the body of Christ, is what we are being grafted into and becoming. We're being filled with the Spirit of God.

We are no longer ruled by the flesh. Everything about the context on this counters every conclusion in our modern day. Paul is saying, you understand what I mean, don't you, Jews? So you're esteeming the law, but then you look inside of yourself, and you have nothing to perform the law.

You don't have what it takes. Oh, no! Who can save us from this body of death? Now, look at what's trimmed off. Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

That's who. Jesus saves us from this body of death. That's his business.

That's what he did upon the cross. The fraternal twin. Fraternal twins, we have identical twins and fraternal twins.

Fraternal twins, by definition, two people born during the same birth, but bearing a different look, one from the other. I know that's not a very biological definition of it, but for our sake, that's all that's needed. Same birth, but they look different.

What we have in the Old Testament is we have fraternal twins, known as Jacob and Esau. Same womb, but they're different. I mean, Esau's the opposing twins.

So the boys grew, and Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. Esau was covered with hair. He was the hairy hunter.

Jacob was like the hairless guy who I always picture him knitting. I was like, come on, Jacob. What's the deal with you? And it's funny, just by natural observation, we esteem Esau.

Now, I've asked girls, I said, okay, would you rather have the hairy hunter or the plain man dwelling in tents? I asked the girls, which one would you rather marry? And the girls sort of struggled with that. It's like, how hairy? Okay, that didn't come across very well. How about the hunter or the plain man? That just isn't a good sales pitch for Jacob.

But it's the firstborn and the secondborn, and they share a womb. And the same thing that you struggle with, there are fraternal twins inside of you, flesh, spirit. The firstborn is of the earth, earthy.

It's the natural man. It's the flesh man. It's the one that cultivates the self-life.

It's the one that preserves your pleasures and your comforts and seeks that as its primary aim. It's the principle of sin. You are born in sin.

You are born, the first birth you have, which is why you must be born again into the secondborn. And the secondborn is not esteemed. We look at it and we mock it as the firstborn.

Like, oh, what a character. Come on, buddy. Plain man dwelling in tents? No hair on your body? Come on, get some hair.

I mean, it's just awkward. I don't want to be Jacob in this story. Esau despises the birthright.

Jacob esteems it. Jacob esteems what God has to bring to the table, and he will give up his life to get it. He grabs ahold of God and won't let go and says, you have it, I need it.

Jacob represents the secondborn. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now, for the flesh lusts, or is an enmity, or fights against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary, the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would.

There's something that you want to do. But as long as the flesh rules in your life, you can't do it, which is a direct parallel with what Paul is saying in Romans 7. There's two enmity, there's two at odds within you. And as long as the firstborn is ruling you, you can't perform that which you know you ought to be doing.

You can't. Which is why Jesus Christ came. He came to deal a death blow to the old man, known as the flesh.

So on that cross, your old man was crucified. Why? So that you could be born again into a new man, Jesus Christ. And your covenants with death was severed.

That's the first half of Romans 7. It's talking about how a covenant cannot be severed except with death. And you have a covenant with death. Which means the penalty for sin is shared by you.

Where's sin going? Where's all the powers of darkness going? They're going to hell. And guess what? You're grouped with them. Because you have a covenant with that kingdom.

You're bound to them and to their fate and to their destiny. But because of Christ's death, there has been a severing. And you have been set free from that covenant and made ripe and ready to enter into a covenant, a new covenant, in his blood.

And that's the life of the spirit. And by the way, it's not like, in any regard, the life in the flesh. So what happens when a man or a Christian leader has head knowledge? They know truth.

They know the Bible, but they've never allowed the old man to be removed and severed. They've never exited the covenant with death and entered into the covenant of life. Yet they have head knowledge about the whole thing.

How are they going to live? They're not going to be able to perform that which they're preaching. And thusly, we see the fraternal twin. We see Esau leading the church instead of Jacob.

The secondborn is not ruling. The secondborn, or the second man, Jesus, is not the one in control. By the way, first and second, I said this this past weekend, but Cain Abel, firstborn, persecutes the secondborn.

Ishmael Isaac, firstborn, flesh, persecutes the secondborn. Esau Jacob, firstborn, persecutes the secondborn. Saul David, firstborn, 21 assassination attempts on the secondborn, also known as the better man.

First covenant, second covenant. First covenant exposes the flesh and the weakness of it, which is what Romans 7 is all about. The second covenant supplies everything needed to perform.

Here's one of our key words for the day, duplicity. I know it's a big sounding word. You know the word duplicate? You can sort of see it packaged in there.

Duplic, to double something. Okay, so this is the concept of doubling your life. Duplicity, living a double life.

This is what duplicity means. I got this out of the 1828 Webster's Dictionary. Doubleness of heart or speech, the act or practice of exhibiting a different or contrary conduct, or uttering different or contrary sentiments at different times in relation to the same thing.

So you talk about God over here with these friends, and you say something different than when you're talking about God over here with these friends. Same topic, but you're saying something different as you're saying over here. It's the equivalent of saying one thing to a congregation, going home and living a completely other way.

It's a message that's coming out of your life that's contrary, it's contradictory. It's hypocritical. Or the act of dissembling one's real opinions for the purpose of concealing them and misleading persons in the conversation and inner course of life.

It's double dealing, dissimulation, deceit. It's hypocrisy. That's duplicity.

Okay? We don't want a double life. Let me just put it that way. Your yes is yes, your no is no, and it always is.

You are the same way in every moment of your life without exception. It doesn't matter if they're going to spit on your face because you're that way. It doesn't matter if you're rejected because you're that way.

You must be the same in every circumstance. I must be the same with you in front of you in an audience as I would be with you off stage when other people can't witness. In every moment of my life I must be consistent.

I know that sounds like a high standard. It's just the standard of the gospel. We bear the name of Jesus.

And Jesus in him is no shadow of turning. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And you're like, yeah, that's him who lives inside of you.

The one who is stationary and fixed and rock-like. Yes, I realize we are a work in process. And the body of Christ is gracious for the work in process.

And when you fail, what do you do? You immediately repent. You turn and you seek forgiveness. That's what we do.

We're humble. We recognize that we're not done. We're not finished.

But where are we headed? What do we expect of this life? Do we have any level or standard of excellence in the church of Jesus Christ anymore? If the firstborn rules. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die. So, long and short, there's your summation.

If the firstborn rules, you die. Your life will be corrupted. It will be a sham.

You cannot live after the flesh. But if you, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. Mortify is the concept of embalming.

Literally, removing life from something. It dies, and then you literally remove any sense or operation of life from it. It's to mortify it.

To give it no access. To give it no life. We are commissioned by the spirit of God to see that old man never come back.

His behavior, his thoughts, his attitudes. No. We do not allow them in this body.

We are single of focus. Single of eye. Single of speech.

Single in voice and action. Our opinions are always the same. We don't change our opinions.

Have you ever noticed how politicians, I don't know how many of you have noticed this maybe. But they'll go from one group to the next and say a completely different message to get the vote of that group. That is duplicity.

And some people will say, no, it's just good politics. It's duplicity. It's a sin.

And God will spew it out of his mouth. I don't care if they get elected. That's not how a godly man is elected.

So be it if they never vote for you. It's better to be right with God than to have the applause of this earth. Duplicity is not allowed.

Hypocrisies. That's the Greek word. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? It means, surprisingly, hypocrisy.

The acting of a stage player. A pretending to be something you are not. If you're not a victorious Christian, please don't act like one.

If you don't truly know Jesus Christ, then please don't tell us you do. It is better to be straight up honest in your walk than to try and con the Christian. What good is it doing, by the way? How is it helping your soul or anyone else's for you to play this act? Why we do it? We're duped into it.

We feel it's easier if we can remove friction from our life. And so when we're around Christians, let's act spiritual. Let's use the language they like.

Let's use the terms that they're attracted to. They'll buy it. And then when you're around your worldly friends, whip out the worldly stuff.

They'll buy it. You're a mess of confusion. You don't even know who you are.

You need to know where you stand in this battle. And you need to know who you are. The Pharisee.

The consummate hypocrite. Don't take my word for it. Let's listen to Jesus' word on the matter.

Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites. They're play actors.

They have no life. They're whitewashed sepulchers. For you may clean the outside of the cup and of the platter.

You're cleaning up the outside, spitting polish on the outside. But within, these scribes and Pharisees are full of extortion and excess. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees.

Hypocrites. For you are like unto whitewashed tombs. A whitewashed tomb.

It's a tomb. It looks really good on the outside. What's inside of a tomb? Dead.

Dead men's bones. Death. Decay.

That's what he's likening them to. That's hypocrisy. For you are like unto whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness.

Even so, you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. How could we ever allow this into our life? This is literally, if you want to talk about arch enemy number one to Jesus Christ, it's that. You know, he knows that the world behaves like the world.

The world just is the world. The world being the world doesn't put spit on God's face. It's when the church acts like the church, but inside is the world.

And is marked by darkness and decay and disease. God detests it. I mean, and I mean it, detests it.

And you could say, isn't God love? Sure he is. He loves you too much to allow that to remain. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

You have to beware of these Pharisees. They have leaven. Remember, a little leaven leavens the whole lump? These Pharisees are lugging something around, and it's a disease.

It's called hypocrisy. But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath, but let your yes be yes, and your no, no. Listen to this last line.

You notice how I made it big, and you could say, why did he make that big? Lest you fall into judgment. You know what the word judgment is? I don't know why they translate it judgment. Hypocrisies.

Lest you fall into this great and terrible trap that the Pharisees have fallen into, which is hypocrisies. Isn't that interesting? Again, I'm not exactly sure why. I mean, judgment fits.

It's still judgment. But judgment of God is a pawn, hypocrisies. But that's interesting.

Lest you fall into hypocrisies. Your yes must be yes. When you say yes over here, it means yes over here.

Your yes always means yes. You're bound by your word. When you say yes, you mean yes.

And when you say no, you mean no. Make sure that's true about your soul. The old man and the subtle art of duplicity.

Now, your old man might have, you know, has your name associated with it. My old man is called Old Eric, okay? He looks similar to me, you know, same hairdo, you know, same features. I'm a little older version with a little more gray hair.

But he's deviously similar. And he's tried to poke his head back in quite a few times since he officially met his end. Isn't it incredible how the old man seems to have life after death? I mean, how in the world does this guy come back? Which is why we must die daily, okay? If we don't die daily, I tell you what.

Resurrection is a very real thing for the powers of darkness, obviously, too. Because that old man is sort of like, oh, what? And he's back to business. You ever heard that statement? It's like an old Indian proverb.

I wish I could get it right, but it's something like this. That this Indian chief had, you know, one of these big, huge, marmaduke types of dogs over here and then a wolf over here. And they were both stout, strong, warrior-type, you know, beasts.

And someone came up to him and says, in a fight, which one wins? And the Indian chief in one of those wise types of tones says, the one I feed. Hmm. It's a well-put statement, isn't it? I don't know if the Indian chief was talking about flesh versus spirit.

However, it means a lot to us. The one we feed. You feed the flesh, the flesh will win in your life.

You feed the spirit, the spirit will trounce the flesh. The flesh has no opportunity. All right.

Unfortunately, I need to take you through a little bit of my life. Not very fun, but for your sakes, I think it might be helpful. We could call it Eric the duplicitous.

Eric has messed around with a little duplicity in his life. I'm not proud of it, but it's true. I've tasted the stuff.

I don't like it. I don't want it. Back in my life, but it's been there.

The ultimate athlete in the little exaggerations. All right. Now, my dad, when I was growing up, I always wanted to play sports for him.

I mean, I wanted his approval. And my dad had a certain training technique that he learned from his dad, which was you don't give too much of a compliment to your son. If he's doing well, you don't tell him he's doing well.

You tell him he's getting there. That was my dad's training method. So I was always getting there.

I remember having a game where I had a hat trick, scored three goals in a soccer game, and I came over to the side. I mean, I just wanted to hear my dad say it. You've arrived.

Instead, he said, you're getting there, getting there. And so as a result, I felt inferior. And I began a process in my life of exaggerating who I was.

Because who I was wasn't there. So when I was talking to my friends, I would always add something to my stats, if you will. So if I scored three goals in a game, I would upgrade to four.

Because three obviously wasn't there. And then for my weight, I know this is the opposite of what most of you would ever think of doing, but my weight, I added 10 pounds because I'm like the classic skinny guy. You know, I don't want to be that.

I need to be this. I literally would tell people a weight that was 10 pounds higher. When it came to my 40-yard dash time, I knocked off a couple tenths of a second.

When it came to my 400-meter run time, I knocked off about five seconds. No one will know, at least down in Texas, because I ran it in Colorado. I did this.

When it came to my bench press, added 10 pounds, pumped it up. You know, it's close enough where they'll believe it. Duplicity.

And you can say, that's harmless. Sure. Seemingly.

It's killing me. You see, I was living as a liar. And you can say, well, that's not really a lie.

That's an exaggeration. What's the difference between a lie and an exaggeration? Nothing. They're the same exact thing.

An exaggeration is a falsehood. You are manipulating facts to aggrandize yourself, to preserve yourself. So I remember I was in Texas, at a missionary school.

And I was in my dorm, in a bed. We had these like bunks. And they were like five bunks high.

You know, like your typical bunk is like two. It was like five. This is like efficiency of space.

And so I'm like in the third bunk. So I crawl up in there, and like the top of the plywood is like right here. So I had a soccer dream once, and I kicked the soccer ball.

And I, oh, oh. But I'm laying in my bed, and I'm praying. And I'm asking God to search me.

I said, God, if there is anything in me that needs to be rooted out, please go after it. He did. He made it very clear.

I mean, literally, I had those key things, I don't know, four or five things I just mentioned to you, immediately flash before my mind. Eric, that's a lie. Liars go to hell.

I mean, I had every justification, just like you would, in this situation. I said, come on. That's ridiculous.

I just asked God's bright, hot search light to search my soul, and he found something because he loves me. Oh, God, I'm so sorry. That wasn't true.

And I'm trying to do the old confession back to God thing, and, you know, just let's make it right. Everything's fine. The problem is I've lied to others.

Oh, no. And so here I am the next day. I mean, I'm trembling, you know, sitting in the front seat in the class, and we get to sort of a pause, and I raise my hand, and the leader goes, yes, Eric? I need to say something.

Oh, I don't know if any of you have ever gone through this, but oh, boy. I get to the front. I'm literally shaking, and I'm like the strong guy in the course.

Anyone that was here this weekend, it was all the weirdos in my class, and then I'm the one that's put together. Well, no more. Eric was undone.

And so I'm standing in front of them, and I'm like, um, and I literally felt like I was exposing myself at such an intimate level, and they were going to mock me and laugh at me because who I was was not sufficient, and I was just about to tell everyone who I really was. Donnie, I don't really weigh. I weigh.

He's looking at me like, I don't know. And I'm, like, trembling. I'm starting to cry, and I'm hardly able to speak.

Tim, I didn't really run the 400 meters. It was really. Mark, I didn't bench press.

It was really. I went through this. I was a broken man.

Here's what I was expecting. I was expecting to be mocked. You know what the church responds to truth? The church loves honesty.

It's a really strange thing. When you are literally willing to say, Jesus is the truth, and he is correcting this, which has been a lie. I tell you what, it's an amazing avenue into grace.

These men that I had confessed to and felt like an absolute idiot in front of all came up to the front and wrapped their arms around me and held me and prayed for me. And here's the words. Eric, we love you just the way you are.

I sobbed like a baby. How embarrassing was that, too? The whole thing was awkward, and guess what? The duplicity melted out of me. It wasn't the only area I had it, though.

That's the challenge. Eric, the ultimate partier. Okay, here's what's funny.

I didn't drink alcohol at all. I didn't smoke. I didn't cuss.

I was, like, one of those good moral kids, but not because I was just a good moral kid. I literally had some funny mindset upon this, because I was a fairly worldly guy, right? But it's, like, I'm not going to lose my sanity and get drunk. Every one of you looks like a fool.

That was, like, my reasoning. Okay, so I literally have this sort of funny morality in my life, which led me to make, yeah, you'd probably agree, better decisions, but it was out of a certain moral arrogance, almost. Okay, I wasn't the healthiest guy.

Let's just put it that way. So don't be too impressed by the fact that I didn't drink alcohol. But what would I do? In certain situations, I wanted to appear that I was drinking alcohol.

Isn't that bizarre? Why would I ever do that? Why would you do it? You know what I would do? I would get, like, either a glass of beer, you know, like one of those cups, plastic cups of beer, or a beer can, and I would stand there in a party and just hold it. Never would drink from it. Oh, every once in a while I might act like I was drinking, you know, sort of like one of these things.

Why would I do that? To show something to the audience I was attempting to play act before. I wanted them to think of me as one of those guys, one of those guys with an edge, one of those guys with some hipness in his pocket. You know, because if you're cool at all, you have to drink alcohol.

I don't know who came up with that rule. It was about as idiotic of a rule that ever was invented. I remember sitting there with Leslie.

We were married, and I remember seeing this party. We were in a restaurant, and there was a party over there. It was this raucous thing on a Friday night.

And these people are acting like absolute imbeciles, and they're just sort of standing around dancing to the music, looking stupid. I mean, who would ever want to spend their night doing that? That's what I thought. However, you go back a few years, there I am, Eric, the ultimate ladies' man.

Can't you tell? Hey. How you doing? Oh, this is embarrassing. The false air of prowess.

When I was in school, there was a certain image that you wanted to cast. And that is that if you're a guy, you're a guy that's been around the block. Okay? Yeah, you've seen some things.

You've done some things. Yeah, I know. Sure.

Absolutely. Been there. Well, I hadn't been there.

But I wanted everyone to think I had been there. And so there's ways that you talk. There's hints that you make in a conversation.

Sort of like, oh, yeah, yeah. Sort of like you're totally in resonance mode with what they're saying. It's duplicity.

You see, when I go to church and I'm talking to my youth pastor, do you think I'm talking like that? Oh, no. When I come home to my mom, do you think I'm talking like that? Oh, no. But when I was at school at the lockers, that's exactly what I was.

It's called duplicity. And it's a very, very dangerous disease in the soul. Eric, the ultimate tither.

Oh, boy, this one hurts. The empty-handed giver. Oh, this is a hard one to admit.

Have you ever been caught in one of those situations where you have nothing? Okay, I mean, you're stuck. And you even feel like people are going to look at you. Okay? Like people care.

And there are people that care. When I'm traveling around, this is a... People care. They care about how I'm worshiping.

They care about what I'm doing. I mean, it's very awkward at times. And then suddenly, someone sticks a tithing thing in front of you.

This is the key. You ball up your hand like this, and you stick it as low in there so they can't see when you release your hand. I've done that before.

Isn't that disgusting? Why was I doing it? Well, save face. I mean, I was caught off guard, okay? I didn't know they were going to pass the basket. I have nothing in my pocket.

I at least need to show what a good Christian would do. Didn't you guys see that? What was it? It was... Oh, what was that movie? It was one of the Sherwood pictures. No, it was the Flywheel, I think.

Flywheel, where the guy gets out an empty envelope and sticks it in. And when I saw that, I was like, ooh, that's just like my little... Oh, those things hurt. What is it? It's duplicity, okay? It's false, and it's a lie.

You are literally speaking something to someone. You wouldn't do it if no one was watching, if you didn't care about what anyone thought. But you are speaking something to your audience, and it is an outright lie.

Eric, the ultimate evangelist, the squeezed hand. Boy, these stories do not make me look good. I picked up a guy down in Denver that was... I used the term homeless last time I shared this story.

And then I said I took him to his home, which confused a few of my audience members. I think he was living with someone at the time, and he had to get down to Denver. And so I said, oh, I can take you.

And so I drove this guy, and I shared the gospel with him. It was like one of those great situations. And then on Sunday... Well, let me finish how... I brought the guy up to this apartment in inner city Denver, and I said, you know, can we pray? And I think what happened is I held his hand there, and I prayed for him, and it was just a good time, right? So there we are in church on Sunday.

It's testimony time. And so people are sharing stories, and Eric has a story to tell. You know, I picked up this guy.

I took him home. I shared the gospel with him. Oh, that'll encourage the church.

So I get up, and I'm sharing the story. And I get to the point at the very end where I pray for him, and, you know, the story's sort of bland, okay? I have to admit, it wasn't that exciting. I mean, it was neat and all, but Eric's a good storyteller.

And Eric needed a little punch at the end. So I added the squeezed hand at the end. And then I squeezed his hand.

He squeezed my hand back. Well, that was ridiculous. So I sit down, and immediately the guy's like, squeezed hand, huh? Well, you know, squeezed hand.

You want to track down everyone in this church and make that right, or do you want to make it right now? So the pastor's starting to go and move forward. So open up your Bibles to 1 Corinthians. And I'm like, excuse me? He's like, what? And I'm like out there.

Leslie, weren't you with me at the time? This is when we were in love. We were, like, falling in love, and this is, like, one of our first stories with me. Oh! Talk about bad impressions.

Excuse me? Yes, sir? I need to say something. I stand up. He's like, ah.

The guy didn't really squeeze my hand. That was a lie. I'm sorry.

Will you forgive me? They're all looking at me like, I guess. Thank you. Oh! You know what? It's just a lot easier not to be duplicitous, okay? The most terrible of lies is not that which is uttered, but that which is lived.

The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis. I have not read the Screwtape Letters since, oh, it's probably 23 years ago. And anyone who's been through the advanced program in here or is in the advanced program knows why.

Because in Bulgaria, I got up in front of a very large audience with a film camera that was, you know, 2 million people watching in Bulgaria. Some of the first Christians that they ever saw. And Eric got up and did something in regards to the Screwtape Letters that has forever branded me as the ultimate idiot, okay? You have to go to Ellerslie to hear the story, though.

That was a pretty good technique. I like it. You're going to say, I thought you said you didn't twist arms for people to come to Ellerslie.

The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis. This is letter 10 in the Screwtape Letters. Recognizing the traps of becoming a duplicitous Christian.

Now, if any of you haven't read the Screwtape Letters, it's actually a demon named Screwtape who's sort of Uncle Screwtape that is writing letters to an underling demon who's sort of a beginner demon and he's learning the trade of duping a human. It's a very fascinating book, okay? And so what I have here is an actual letter which I think fits well with this message. So I'm not just trying to promote the book at all.

I'm actually just saying, listen to this. Listen to how C.S. Lewis articulates it, and I think you'll find it very fascinating. My dear Wormwood, I was delighted to hear from Triptoise that your patient has made some very desirable new acquaintances and that you seem to have used this event in a really promising manner.

I gather that the middle-aged married couple who called at his office are just the sort of people we want him to know. Rich, smart, superficially intelligent, and brightly skeptical about everything in the world. I gather they are even vaguely pacifist, not on moral grounds, but from an ingrained habit of belittling anything that concerns the great mass of their fellow men, and from a dash of purely fashionable and literary communism.

This is excellent. And you seem to have made good use of all his social, sexual, and intellectual vanity. Tell me more.

Did he commit himself deeply? I don't mean in words. There is a subtle play of looks and tones and laughs by which a mortal can imply that he is of the same party as those to whom he is speaking. That is the kind of betrayal you should especially encourage.

Because the man does not fully realize it himself. And by the time he does, you will have made withdrawal difficult. Have you ever noticed that? Where you commit in a conversation, you nod along and you agree, or you laugh at a joke, and now you are beyond the point of retrieval.

So now you just continue to laugh and nod along, because it's very awkward. At a certain point in conversation, after you've laughed at their joke, nodded along and said, by the way, I'm convicted about participating in this conversation. I think it's wrong.

Come on, are you going to do that? That's what the enemy would tell you, too. You can't withdraw now. Dignity is at stake.

Uh-huh. And now you're finding yourself right in the trap of duplicity. No doubt, he must very soon realize that his own faith is in direct opposition to the assumptions on which all the conversation of his new friends is based.

I don't think that matters much, provided that you can persuade him to postpone any open acknowledgment of the fact. And this, with the aid of shame, pride, modesty, and vanity, will be easy to do. As long as the postponement lasts, he will be in a false position.

He will be silent when he ought to speak, and laugh when he ought to be silent. I don't know if you guys can feel this. Boy, this is like my whole upbringing.

He will assume at first only by his manner, but presently by his words. All sorts of cynical and skeptical attitudes, which are not really his. But if you play him well, they may become his.

All mortals tend to turn into the thing they are pretending to be. This is elementary. The real question is how to prepare for the enemy's counterattack.

The enemy, by the way, when he's right, is God. Okay, so you have to really get in the mind of this. The first thing is to delay as long as possible the moment at which he realizes this new pleasure as a temptation.

Since the enemy's servants have been preaching about the world as one of the great standard temptations for 2,000 years, this might seem difficult to do. But fortunately, they have said very little about it for the last few decades. In modern Christian writings, though I see much, indeed more than I like, about mammon, I see few of the old warnings about worldly vanities, the choice of friends, and the value of time.

All that your patient would probably classify as Puritanism. And may I remark in passing that the value we have given to that word is one of the really solid triumphs of the last hundred years. By it, we rescue annually thousands of humans from temperance, chastity, and sobriety of life.

Sooner or later, however, the real nature of his new friends must become clear to him. And then your tactics must depend on the patient's intelligence. If he is a big enough fool, you can get him to realize the character of his friends only while they are absent.

Their presence can be made to sweep away all criticism. If this succeeds, he can be induced to live, as I have known many humans live for quite long periods, two parallel lives. He will not only appear to be, but actually be a different man in each of the circles he frequents.

Failing this, there is a subtler and more entertaining method. He can be made to take a positive pleasure in the perception that the two sides of his life are inconsistent. This is a really strange statement.

He can find pleasure in the fact that both sides of his life are inconsistent. Who would find pleasure in that? Listen to this. This is done by exploiting his vanity.

He can be taught to enjoy kneeling beside the grocer on Sunday, just because he remembers that the grocer could not possibly understand the urbane and mocking world which he inhabited on Saturday evening. And contrary-wise, to enjoy the body and blasphemy over the coffee with these admirable friends, all the more because he is aware of a deeper spiritual world within him which they cannot understand. You see the idea.

The worldly friends touch him on one side, and the grocer on the other. And he is the complete, balanced, complex man who sees round all of them. Suddenly, this is the intellectual Christian.

He's above it all. He can be around one side and the other and actually sort of look down his nose and say, they don't fully understand me. You see, the Christian in all his purity doesn't understand that I can participate in the bodiness of the world and then come here.

It's spiritually complicated. This guy wouldn't understand. And then he can be around the world.

And he can sort of snicker to himself because he has a depth of spiritual understanding that they have no clue about. He's complex. Isn't that interesting? Thus, while being permanently treacherous to at least two sets of people, he will feel, instead of shame, a continual undercurrent of self-satisfaction.

Finally, if all else fails, you can persuade him, in defiance of conscience, to continue the new acquaintance on the ground that he is, in some unspecified way, doing these people good by the mere fact of drinking their cocktails and laughing at their jokes. And that to cease to do so would be priggish, intolerant, and of course, puritanical. We would never want to be that.

Meanwhile, you will, of course, take the obvious precaution of seeing that this new development induces him to spend more than he can afford and to neglect his work and his mother. Her jealousy and alarm and his increasing evasiveness or rudeness will be invaluable for the aggravation of the domestic tension. Your affectionate uncle.

Screw tape. Well, I don't know if you guys could understand that. C.S. Lewis has a tendency to use words that most people nowadays don't.

Let's talk about Judas. Now, typically, when we mention Judas, only bad thoughts occur. Well, it's for good reason.

Why? We could call Judas the duplicitous. Judas was the two-faced. Judas lived the double life.

Everything Judas represents is everything we want to see removed from the church of Jesus Christ. Because it's a betrayer of the Son of Man. This is Judas when he sees the pouring out of the spikenard.

Remember Mary of Bethany? What does he do? He says, why was this fragrant oil not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor? This he, Judas, said. Not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the money box and he used to take what was put in it. It's a show of compassion for the poor.

How many of us could do that when in actuality we want the money for ourselves? It's called duplicity. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him. Speaking of Jesus, killing Jesus.

For they feared the people. Listen to this closely. Then Satan entered Judas.

How in the world could Satan enter one of the disciples of Jesus Christ? That's impossible. Unless that disciple was already opened up to the treachery of the demonic side. He was already living duplicitous and he was taking from the money bag.

He had already made a highway in his soul for this moment. And he was used and leveraged by the dark side to literally come against his rabbi. Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.

So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains how he might betray him to them. And for with he, Judas, came to Jesus and said, Hail, Master, and kissed him. I don't know if you see how disgusting this is.

When a man who is literally seated, I believe even at the Last Supper, he was seated in the seat of friendship, so one of you might be able to correct me on that, but I think it was literally one of the seats of honor, the seat of friendship at the Last Supper. So the position even Jesus gave him, and the position he had was one of trust, closeness, and intimacy. And this very man goes and betrays him, betrays his whereabouts, and then when he's betraying him, he kisses him on the cheek.

He's feigning, faking, play-acting love. That's not real. Are we doing the same? Are we kissing the cheek of Jesus and meanwhile turning him over to the hands of sinners to be mocked? At the table with Jesus.

You know what Judas was preparing to do? The New Covenant. This is serious stuff. You know when Satan was even entering in, when this whole con job was taking place, he literally has a straight face.

He knows what he's doing. He'd already prepared it in his mind. And he's feigning, he's showing this false love at the table of Jesus.

Scheming to do that which would harm him while celebrating his sacrifice. How many of you, even while you are in the midst of spiritual matters, worshiping God, taking communion, I don't care what it is, praying, are you scheming something that would benefit your flesh? That you are actually meditating upon things that would aggrandize you. Is there a difference between that and what Judas did? What you're going to do and what you're scheming to do is to crucify your Christ afresh.

What you are scheming to do is to put spittle on the face of Jesus. And yet in a spiritual atmosphere at the table with Jesus you have the audacity to do it. Showing him an illusion of affection at the very moment that we are betraying him.

You kiss him on the cheek. Falsely painting an illusion of friendship and agreement with both Christ and with the world. Ananias and Sapphira.

The Double Dealing. Ananias and Sapphira is a tough story for us as Christians. Because oftentimes what it exposes is the fact that the presence of God is not as thick and as real in our midst today as it was then.

Because I tell you what, when you lie to the Holy Spirit back in the early church you fall back in. You fall down dead. The saints gather up your body, wrap you up, go bury you.

Whoa! Same God, same covenant. That's not old covenant. That's new covenant.

The same God that detests the lying to the Holy Spirit then is the same God that detests it now. Satan was the first that practiced falsehood under saintly show. What are Ananias and Sapphira doing? They want to look good to the church.

It's the equivalent of sticking your hand in the tithe basket and acting like you're dropping something in it. Now what's funny is they were dropping something in it. But it's like dropping in a dollar and sort of whispering out loud, boy it's tough to part with that ten dollars.

They were holding something back but under the show and the pretense that they were more generous than they actually were. You could say, why would anyone do that? It's a good question. We do it all the time, don't we? We want the world to think higher of us.

We want the church we know what the church esteems. Yet we're only willing to give a dollar. But we want them to think we're willing to give ten.

There's no difference between you and Ananias and Sapphira. And I tell you what, that's serious to our souls. That should make us tremble before the living God.

Acts 5. But a certain man named Ananias and Sapphira, his wife, sold the possession and kept back part of the price. His wife also being privy to it. In other words, they did this with full knowledge.

And brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? It was your land. God wasn't demanding it of you.

You could have held it back and it wouldn't have been an issue. But you lied to the Holy Spirit. Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and gave up the ghost. He died. And great fear came on all them that heard these things.

And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.

And she said, Yes, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then she fell down straightway at his feet and yielded up the ghost.

She died. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Yeah? Great fear would come upon us, wouldn't it? What would immediately happen to us? We would begin to allow God to search us. I don't want to die. I want to honor you.

Purify this. We begin to see it. When we begin to focus on things like this, I mean, I tell you what.

It's like ratcheting a bolt tighter in our soul. We have a little looseness that has come in, a little laxness, because we live in a lax generation. It's not that big of a deal.

You can stretch things a little. You know, it's a harmless thing. I'm still giving money.

Why does it matter? Well, if it matters to God, it matters. And for whatever reason, lying is a high treason activity in the kingdom of heaven. So much so that liars cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Lying to the Holy Spirit. Scheming to appear virtuous in and amongst the saints. We exhibit a false show of fervor, of humility, of affection, and even of reverence.

This is lying to the Holy Spirit. Not just lying to men. It's lying to the Holy Spirit.

And so when you have leadership that literally will worship God, will speak a grand gospel message, and then live in a deceit, that's not just lying to men. They're lying first and foremost to the Holy Spirit. Dear Lord Jesus, may we be purged of this.

The complex man. The duplicitous man of two sides. I don't know if you guys have ever seen someone like this.

Actually, I know quite a few people that fall into this category. But when they're around me, they know they're around Eric Loody. And so what they will give to Eric Loody is their best side.

Their sort of spiritual side. Their spiritual jargon. And then, when they leave my presence, and they go into the presence of their other buddies, there's even a contempt that can be made, and even a hostility that can be shown towards me, who they just had a pleasant conversation with.

I've seen this. And what's interesting about it, is oftentimes it's under the banner of this exact thing. It's an intellectual superiority.

It's like, you know what, Eric, I'm sure you mean well. You're a nice guy. But you're little-minded.

You're rather narrow in your perspective. And so it's chuckle chuckle tee hee. And then, you go to your other friends, and you even look down on them for their lack of understanding the fact that you can go back and forth in environments with such a wit and wisdom.

And you are now the complex man. Saint abroad, and devil at home. Listen to this little poem.

This is the self-assessment of the duplicitous Christian. The complex man. When with the worldly, I'm a picture of barbarity.

And then there's a chuckle and a laugh. When with the churchly, I'm a testimony of piety. When evaluating myself, I'm a marvel of complexity.

I tell you what, if we have any of that in here, it goes. The church of Jesus can stand that no longer. No play-acting around here.

We want the real thing. The man of duplicity's justifications. The elaborate means by which conviction stays out of the chamber of a man's awareness.

Some of us, even as we're going to this message, don't even realize we're being duplicitous. We can't even see it. I call that the chamber of awareness.

You don't even know it. You're just doing it. It's just what you do.

Well, dear God, save us. Somehow invade our chamber of awareness that we would see what we're doing. And I mean that all the way through, starting with me.

If there is any duplicity in my life, I want it to be rooted out. It's not purposeful. I'm not waking up in the morning going, I'd really like to be duplicitous.

I don't want to be. So it starts with me. But I want it to transcend through all of us.

This must get out of the church. Let's not talk about the church down the street. Let's talk here.

Right here, right now. Get it out of us, Lord Jesus. Paul couldn't match his behavior.

This is the justifications, by the way. Well, Paul couldn't match his behavior to his message. So why should I worry about the discrepancy in my own life? And I'll quote you Romans 7. One of the number one reasons why duplicity is justified is Romans 7, half of Romans 7. You have the entire Bible, and people literally in our modern day will take half of a book of the Bible, half of a chapter of a book of the Bible, and they will build their entire rationalization for why they can live in defeat.

And why they can live a life that literally is contrary to everything stated in the Bible. Everything, including the part that they're quoting. Conviction is, by the way, Paul lived a victorious life.

And I will stand on that. Okay? And we can go back and forth on that. You can bring up Paul's thorn and all sorts of things.

I've heard all the arguments, believe me. Everyone seems to have an itch to explain why they can live in defeat and not rise up to what Jesus Christ has commissioned us to. What was his shed blood for? It's for forgiveness.

It's for triumph. It's for regeneration. It's for a newness of life.

It's to reveal the manifold wisdom of God to the heavenlies through the church. How in the world is that going to work if we don't have power? If we don't have enabling grace? The cross gave us power. Well, how about this? Conviction is for those of weaker constitution.

I've matured out of that. That's like all those little baby Christians. Conviction is for those of weaker constitution.

Those that don't understand the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. Ever heard that one? I have freedom in Christ Jesus. That's why I'm not convicted by this.

You're convicted by that. You have a weak conscience. The Bible says we shouldn't do that.

Yeah, but I have freedom. You know what freedom in Christ Jesus is? It means freedom from the power of sin. It means freedom from the control and dominion of flesh over your life.

You're going to be a slave to something. Either a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness. You pick your master.

You are free to finally obey the living God. You're not free to just do whatever you want. You're free to obey.

You couldn't obey until now. Now you're free to do it. But don't use that freedom to return like a dog and to vomit to your flesh.

This is a classic justification of why we are allowing duplicity into the church of Jesus Christ today. If I appear the sop. I like that word.

It's a good old English word. If I appear the sop or the priggish, prudish, puritanical, starchy religionist, none of us wants to be that. I don't know about you.

If I were to say, how many of you would like to be the sop? The priggish, prudish, puritanical, starchy religionist? None of us is going to be that because that's not what true Christianity is, but that's what the world perceives. I don't want to be that. And so what do we do? We'll give our life radically to Jesus over here and then when we entertain the world, what will we do? Well, I don't want them to think I'm one of those type of Christians.

And so what do we do? We act like them. And then if we ever get a chance, we can say, yeah, and I go to church. You want to come to church with me? I mean, we have this really weak willed gospel presentation.

We act like them when we're around them to try and win them to something that they're not seeing in us. What are they going to think when they come to church and now you're acting all spiritual there? They're going to look at you and go, what a weirdo. He acts like me when he's with me, but then when he's here, he's acting all spiritual.

Or you can act like the world and the church just to show off for your buddy who's with you. What are you going to do? You're caught in a trap, aren't you? It doesn't work that way. You're the same person everywhere you go.

Whether your friend likes it or not, you're Jesus in front of them. It's a show of love to my worldly buddies to laugh at their jokes and to join them in their debauchery. After all, didn't Jesus do the same? I don't know if you guys have heard these things.

This is just classic Christianity in our day. Why in the world are they behaving this way? Why in the world is this youth group being led by some youth group leader meeting in hooters? Well, it's because that's where Jesus would be meeting. I take offense to that.

I take offense to that. You know that Jesus did enter this world, and he was around this junk, but he was never of the world. He did not participate in worldliness.

Jesus didn't become worldly. He maintained the perfection of holiness and righteousness the entire while he reached out to those in sin. I agree he reached out to the prostitute.

I agree that he participated with people that the pharisaical class would never touch. I agree he went to the lepers, and you weren't supposed to do certain things like this. He literally talked to the Samaritan woman.

That is against the rules. I agree. Jesus is quite a picture of God's love, God's Father's heart.

But he's not a picture of worldliness, and he's not any justification for one of us to live a duplicitous life. Jesus was the same everywhere he was, whether it was with the prostitute, whether that was with the Pharisee, same guy. He gave the same message.

Well, we could say it this way. He gave to them that which they needed, and so to the humble, he gave grace, and to the proud, well, he resisted them. But same God, same message, no character shift.

So why would a Christian do this? That's a good question. Why would we do this? Let's go through this quick list. Why would a man cheat on his taxes? Why would we cheat on our taxes? Is it because we know that no one will ever find out? Is it because we feel that the IRS doesn't deserve the money anyways? We have all our justifications.

Believe me, I've probably had them run through my head many times. They're out there. They're floating there.

Any way that we can hold back money to give the show of giving that which is due. Okay? I want you to realize there is no excuse in Christianity for living duplicitous even before the IRS. You're the same man and you live honestly.

Same woman. You live honestly in every situation. I know that's an interesting debatable point.

It's not a debatable point up here. You are honest in all your dealings. You tell the truth.

There are things that I've done in my past when I look back on certain financial things that I've done, I wouldn't do it the same now. Well, that's an avenue of excuse for me then. No.

I'm saying I'm convicted and there's a repentance. There's a change. And I can justify and say, we're talking that much of a stretch.

Come on. Hey, let's start living honestly. Even when the IRS examines our life, what are they going to see? Are they going to see the same man that they see in our tax return? Why would a man speed down the interstate? The students this weekend already know that I've been pulled over and gotten a ticket in my life.

In fact, if Leslie gets up here and starts talking, she'd tell you that I probably have gotten three or four. And she would also brag that she's never gotten any. You know, I believe that we should obey the speed limit.

I know that sounds strange. Sounds like such a pathetic little thing. But when no one's watching, because the reason we would obey the speed limit is because we know that there's a radar on us.

What about we live honestly when no radar is on us? We live the same when no radar is on us as when a radar is on us. Think about it. It's the same principle.

We're the same. We're not trying to give to the cop what he wants to see. Or show the society around us what they want to see, that we're a good driver.

We do it for Jesus. We live as the same in all circumstances. You can say, well, it's an unjust speed limit.

So be it. It's not a violation of conscience for you to keep it. There's a speed limit out here.

It's ridiculous. It's like 45. It should be 55, 65 at least.

You ever had that thought? And so it's like I'm going in between that somehow. I know the justifications. I've been there many times.

I just want you to know we live as Christians. You want to start removing duplicity from your life? Let's start in these small areas. And then God will begin to transcend that through the big ones.

I remember when God was dealing with me with absolute integrity. I was at a bank and going through the drive-thru window and they gave me change for something. And I got into my car.

I drove a few feet out of the way so someone could come in behind me. And I counted it. And I think it had given me either one or two extra pennies.

I was like really awkward. What am I going to do? I'm in a hurry. One or two extra pennies.

They're not going to care. What did I do? I brought it in. And you know how stupid I felt too? You gave me one or two, I don't remember what it was, one or two extra pennies.

They're like, thank you. They're looking at each other going, is this guy for real? What would happen if we as Christians were for real? What would happen if we did return the one or two pennies? I remember studying one of my invoices once that I'd received from, I think it was the Estes Park YMCA of the Rockies. We'd done an event up there.

And for whatever reason I was looking through this invoice and I realized I don't remember what it was, but something like they had undercharged me. Oh no. They undercharged me.

I was short on money to start with. What do you do? Can you live with yourself? You shouldn't be able to. They undercharge you.

Justly speaking, you owe them money. Oh. I remember calling up.

Hi. Here's my account. I really feel that according to this, you may have undercharged me.

And I'm just expecting them to say, oh, good, well here's an extra \$5,000 charge. You know what they did instead? I don't know if it was something like this, but we have never had anyone actually do that. Let me talk with the management on this.

They actually got back to me and said, you don't need to pay it. That's what they said to me. They got back and they're so impressed with the fact that I would go out of my way.

They said it was our mistake, and in any other situation we wouldn't have received it, so in this we want to honor you by not charging it to you. Yeah, but I still had to go through it, because it's very likely I was going to have to pay it. These are hard, I know.

But this is the proving ground of our soul. It's not in the obvious things, like are you going to deny Christ or die? That's a hard moment, but if you don't train on the small ones, do you think you're going to be ready for the bigger ones? These are hard, I know. Because it usually involves money.

It involves reputation. It involves getting somewhere slower. I remember, I don't know if I've ever told this story, this isn't a very good story, but I was in Seattle, and, well, it was actually Portland, I think, and I was

driving up to meet someone for dinner.

Do you remember this story, Les? The speeding story? The interstate numbers were at a certain number, like 3 or 4, and they said that they were at exit 12. And so I'm figuring, you know, in Colorado it's always a mile distance between mile markers, so I'm thinking, okay, it's about 10 minutes on the interstate, and so we'll leave with 15 minutes, we'll be there plenty of time. And I like to be on time.

It's one of the value things that I have going, is I just feel like I want to be on time if at all possible. If I can't, you know, hey, that's what happens, but I at least want to try. And so, but what I realized is I had to go across the border, and all the numbers shifted, and suddenly I was 50-some miles away.

No! These people are waiting for us. This guy was going to come down and meet us at the exit, so he was literally in like a park and ride, and he was going to meet us and then take us up some rambly road to help find his house. And so I'm picturing this guy waiting, and I'm just feeling the pressure, and so Eric's foot just starts getting heavy on the gas.

And I was just going fast, you know, and I'm thinking, you know what? For their sake. For their sake. So I call the guy up, and I'm like, yeah, I'm really running behind, and he says, well, and I said, I realized the mile marker, so I'm literally way behind.

I'm going to get there as fast as I can. And he says, please don't speed. And I go, well, I understand, but I'm going to get there as fast as I can.

He goes, please don't speed. I go, thanks for being sensitive to us, but I'm going to get there for your sake as fast as I can. He says, for my sake, please don't speed.

He didn't tell me any more than that, and I said, so in the parking lot, he said, yeah, I'll be the white car, and it'll say Dare on the side of it. I didn't think anything of it. Dare, what's that? And little did I know, he's a cop.

And he's one of the head cops of the entire area. He called all his buddies that were monitoring the interstate, and he says, there's a guy who's driving very fast. And he's coming right through your range.

Let him through. So I got there, I pull up to a cop car, and he has to tell me, you know, I told you not to speed. Hey, at least I was honest with him.

You can look at it that way. No duplicity. Why would a man look at pornography? Why would he ever do that? I love you, says to his wife.

And then he literally stabs her in the back the next day. Why would he do that? How could any of us participate in things that literally show a duplicity? It's a lie, and lies hurt the ones we love. Why would a man fake his Christian devotion? We have our reasons.

None of them are excusable before the bar of heaven. Hypocrisy is folly. It is much easier, safer, and pleasanter to be the thing which a man aims to appear than to keep up the appearance of what he is not.

It's easier to just be honest. It's harder to keep the sham. The enemy's not telling you that part.

When the sham starts to get a little out of control, it becomes very difficult. It is better to just be honest. It is better to be truthful, even if the truth is going to hurt, even if you have to pay the government an extra few

thousand.

It is better to be honest. The call to repentance. May we not point to others, but first point to ourselves the problem.

Then he said to them, Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation. While he was still speaking, behold a multitude. He who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss him.

But Jesus said to him, Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? When those around him saw what was going to happen, they said to him, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? This is an interesting parallel. Peter was sleeping when he should have been awake. It says, Lest you enter into temptation, stay awake.

And then in this situation, what does he do? He draws his sword and says, Shall we strike with the sword? You see hypocrisy out there. You see the Son of Man being betrayed with a kiss. And guess what? You're part of the problem.

We've been sleeping on the job. We're trying to draw our sword out now and give this huge growl and say, I can't believe the hypocrites out there. But guess what? Jesus had been asking us to stay awake and to watch with him.

And what have we been doing? We've been slumbering in the garden. Do we have any business talking right now? Let's get things right here. And then let's start dealing with Judas.

Okay, I'm not happy with Judas either. But I'm also not happy with us as a church. I think we have some serious culpability here in this room.

And we're serious-minded Christians. I say, let's get serious about Jesus Christ and let Jesus Christ be everything in our souls.

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