

# Hypocrisy

## discussion guide

which can be accessed at [www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series](http://www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series)

*This discussion guide is a bit different to normal. Dan didn't have time in the sermon to talk about the questions Christians need to answer in regard to hypocrisy – so most of this discussion guide is geared towards that, rather than the material he did have chance to cover in the sermon.*

Intro: What damage have you seen done, or hurt have you experienced, from hypocrisy in the church?

Read Matthew 23.1-33

Why do you think Jesus is so strongly condemnatory about hypocrisy?

*Christians aren't those who think they're perfect. They're those who know they're not perfect. Dan suggested various questions we can ask our unbelieving friends when they complain about the hypocrisy of Christians. But what can we do in our own lives to counter the charge of hypocrisy – in other words, what can we do to grow in holiness? Here's three questions for starters:*

1. Are you repenting?

*Read Luke 18.9-14. Jesus taught us to pray "Forgive us our sins." Paul taught that "godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret" (2 Cor 7.9-10). It can be easy to gloss over our failings and assume God will forgive us. Sometimes our saying 'sorry' to God can be lip-service rather than heart-felt. Are you really repenting? What practises would help you take repentance seriously – by yourself, and when in church?*

2. Are you honest about your failures?

*The apostle James tells us to "confess our sins to each other" (James 5.16). Jesus' promises of forgiveness give us a freedom to admit our faults – not just to God, but to others as well. It can make a powerful impact on unbelieving friends when we apologise for mistakes. Are you honest about your failures? To whom do you find it hardest to be honest about your failures – children / colleagues / friends / parents? What would help you be honest?*

3. Are you giving others permission to point out your faults?

*Wary of causing offence to others, it can be easy to ignore sin in our Christian brothers and sisters – rather than help them overcome it. James exhorts us to "turn a sinner from the error of their way" (James 5.19-20). But Jesus warns us against pointing out sin in others without first dealing with our own sin (Matthew 7.3-5). Proverbs assures us that "wounds from a friend can be trusted" (27.6). Are you giving others permission to point out your faults? If not, who could you trust to do that in a loving, supportive way? Could you be mutually accountable to each other? What ground rules might you need in an accountability partnership?*

What other things would you suggest to help us counter the charge of hypocrisy in our own lives?

Pray that we would grow in holiness, as individuals and as a church.