

# STUDY GUIDE

## BIG QUESTIONS 04.29.2018

### [start with prayer]

Missions Prayer Focus this week:  
Dave Myers—Prison Ministry

### [set up]

Read the following pasted sections from online articles and answer these questions:

- What do you think after reading this?
- What do you feel (find a word describing an emotion)?
- Do you agree or disagree with these people's opinions?

*1. I recently joined a Christian fellowship group on Facebook to see more Jesus on my news feed. What I got instead couldn't be further from it. It started off with Illuminati conspiracy theories, continued with hatred against homosexuals, and ended with calling out "false prophets" except, it didn't end. It just wouldn't end! My news feed was flooded with nothing but hate, condemnation, and judgement. Yes, there is so much evil out there, but can I ask you respectfully: What good does it do to tell others about the wicked world we live in as if they didn't know already? Wouldn't it be better to tell them about how good our God is? How the blood of the Lamb defeated the enemy and that the end is already written? Why scare people, when we can encourage them?*

*2. Ahhh, Christianity in America. Or should I say, the single greatest cause of atheism today. You know who I'm talking about, right? The type of people who acknowledge Jesus with their words, and deny him through their lifestyle. The ones who preach the importance of traditional family values, all while holding a rally and offering standing ovations for a man who preyed on 14-year-old girls. The ones who look to excuse the despicable allegations directed at Roy Moore by literally quoting the bible, comparing his molestation to Joseph and Mary. I give you the most hypocritical religious group in America, Evangelical Christians.*

### [digging deeper]

Share a story where another Christian's hypocrisy really bothered or grieved you.

Share a story or situation where your own hypocrisy really bothered or grieved you (opportunity for vulnerability).

**Read Matthew 23:1-3.** Summarize the issue Jesus has and the instruction He gives.

Brainstorm how to fill in the blanks to the following statements (you can even list them out).

- You might be a hypocrite if \_\_\_\_\_
- You are not being a hypocrite if \_\_\_\_\_
- If you find yourself being hypocritical, then \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Luke 12:1-3.** What's the warning Jesus gives? Explain why you think He used the metaphor of leaven. How are verses 2 and 3 both a relief and a concern?

How do the following verses relate to hypocrisy (a warning to heed, an action to take, a mindset to avoid)?

Psalm 26:4 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 John 3:4-7 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 6:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 7:5 \_\_\_\_\_

Mark 7:6 \_\_\_\_\_

What's the difference between sinning and living in unrepentant sin? How does hypocrisy factor in?

How does Romans 7:15 both encourage and motivate us (consider who is speaking, what he says, how we can relate, actions we can take)?

What are some reasonable responses to skeptics as to why Christians are hypocritical? What are some unreasonable/ineffective responses?

It was said Sunday that, "God is good even when His children are not." It was also said that the true Christians live with a mindset of "Jesus has saved me from who I was but is still shaping me into who He wants me to be." How can these or similar statements be helpful when talking to people who struggle with believing in Christianity because they have to overcome the hurdle of hypocrisy?

As a Christian, what helps you overcome the struggle with hypocrisy/potential hypocrisy?

### **[living it out]**

Form smaller groups, ideally men with men and women with women. This is an opportunity to hide or to be transparent—be as transparent as you feel you can with this moment in your LifeGroup. *This is an opportunity not an obligation, invitation not obligation.*

Write a verse that comes to mind (or from this study) on a 3x5 card that can be a reminder for you to live with integrity for Jesus rather than hypocritically. You can also take this verse and put it on Post-it notes in visible places and/or as an alert that pops up in your calendar or phone daily. If you have a verse in mind, share it with your group. If you need a kick start, here a couple links that could help:

<https://www.openbible.info/topics/hypocrisy>

<https://www.openbible.info/topics/integrity>

### **[end with prayer]**

Have an extended prayer time in your smaller groups—prayers focused on confession and intercession with each other. What is an area of struggle in your life that is sending a message/putting up a hurdle of hypocrisy for which you really need prayer and accountability? What is an action step you need these brothers and sisters to pray for you to live out?

Is there a person (or people) that you need to go to and apologize to or ask forgiveness of because of this hypocrisy in your life? If so, who are they? When are you going to talk to them? Pray first and add this moment to the way your LifeGroup can pray for you.

**\*Optional exercise (this would need to be done in advance before LifeGroup and then results brought for discussion).** We look to Jesus as our example, not the Pharisees that Jesus condemned for hypocrisy. Sometimes we can be accidental Pharisees. Take this 20-question self-assessment to see if you are more like Jesus or the Pharisees in how you live out your faith in Christ. This will have obvious and practical ways we can make adjustments.

<http://www.johnburkeonline.com/survey/>