

The Art of Being Yourself: The Disparity Between the Self You See and the One You are Becoming

By Ken Wilson

June 30-July 01, 2007

The Art of Being Yourself

+ not settling for the lowest common denominator you

+ a quest, involving struggle

+ occurs in the dynamic tension between hope and disappointment

HYPOCRITE: The one thing no one wants to be

Matthew 23: 1-28

hypocrite: Gk. hupokrite; an actor, stage player; a dissembler, pretender, hypocrite

Jesus used the word for those who pretend to be paragons of religious piety while hiding a different reality within. A word that many people misapply.

WHAT HYPOCRISY IS NOT

Hypocrisy is not having a gap between your personal standards and values and actual performance. Already a word for that: weakness.

"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate to do...For I have the desire to do what is good but I cannot carry it out." (Ro. 7: 15,18)

When we disappoint ourselves, we need to dust ourselves off:

"As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust." (Ps. 103: 13-14)

Occupational hazard of standing between the dirt & the divine. We all stand between human frailty (dust) & human potential (divine image)

"My own soul let me more have pity on; let me be to my sad-self hereafter kind"
(Gerard Manley Hopkins)

"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts and he knows everything." (1 Jn. 3: 18-20)

Hypocrisy is not the awkwardness that comes with new to you attitudes/deeds/experiences.

First time you try something new it often feels stilted, artificial. You're self-conscious, that's all. You're not faking it. You're trying it.

WHAT HYPOCRISY IS

Context: occupational hazard of leaders

Hypocrisy is a form of spiritual blindness: "blind guides...blind pharisees!"

Denial: Only way to help someone caught in it is blunt talk about the havoc their destructive pattern is wreaking. Can't spare them the pain of the truth because pain is essential to limit further injury.

Worry about hypocrisy when people who love you are forced to speak bluntly about the havoc your destructive pattern is wreaking because your head is in the sand, pretending it isn't so.

"If we have died with him, we shall rise with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he will deny us; if we are faithless, his faithfulness remains, for he cannot deny himself." (2. Tim. 2: 11-13)

Tough words: *if we deny him, he will deny us.* Two ways to deny him:

- 1) renounce him [I want nothing to do with you God!]
- 2) deny reality [because he is the real God, it's connected to God denial]

Comforting words: *if we are faithless, his faithfulness remains, for he cannot deny himself.* So long as you are not in denial, let yourself be comforted, in the face of your faithlessness..

Two ways to beat the hypocrisy rap.

1. Live by the lowest expectations you can achieve without grace.
2. Walk in humility with your weaknesses before God and others.

"Not so with you...whoever exalts himself will be humbled; whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (Mt. 23: 8, 12)

ANTIDOTE TO HYPOCRISY: HUMILITY

- + Honest with yourself, God, and others about yourself
- + Humbly asking for help from God and others for dealing with weaknesses
- + Then in the face of what deeply disappoints you about you, leaning forward in hope and faith toward the true you in the mirror