

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

In this 5-week miniseries in our True Story study of Luke's gospel, we're taking a deeper look at 5 things in Luke 12 that Jesus said we should guard against. This week, we're taking a closer look at hypocrisy: what it is and why we need to guard ourselves against it. Hypocrisy is hard to detect, but if we don't, it is quick to destroy.

1. **Hypocrisy pretends to have what it knows it doesn't:** Jesus pointed out the Pharisees as examples of hypocrisy because what they were doing externally wasn't lining up with who they really were internally. When we claim something that we know we don't have, we're guilty of hypocrisy, and the guardrail we bump into is the pressure to pretend. Feeling that is the warning sign that we need to allow God to examine our hearts and weed out the small seeds of hypocrisy that are beginning to grow.
2. **Hypocrisy seeks value from men instead of seeing our value to God:** Why would anyone pretend to be something that they're not? Simple, Jesus said. They are valuing what man thinks about them over the value that God has already placed on them. Whenever we start to value what man think about us more than what God says about us, we'll feel the bump of another guardrail: the pressure to perform. God already values us, and so there's no need to put on a show for Him. If we're feeling the need to please others, we're running the risk of hypocrisy.
3. **Hypocrisy refuses to acknowledge God before others:** Let's tread carefully here, okay? This doesn't mean that we aren't going to be a little nervous about sharing our faith – most people are! But this level of hypocrisy tries to keep God in "His place" so that He doesn't spill over into other areas of our lives. It's the pressure to pull back from the passion that He gives us; the pressure to go partially in instead of all in. When we start hiding our love for Jesus, it's a clear guardrail that demands immediate correction.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Why do you think that people react so intensely about hypocrisy? Have you ever invited someone to church and had them say no because "the church is full of hypocrites?" Do you think that reflects a correct view of hypocrisy? Why or why not?
- Which pressure do you struggle with the most: the pressure to pretend, to perform, or to pull back?
- The scribes and Pharisees were caught in a rigid system of legalism to justify themselves before God. In what ways do our Christian religious cultures foster the same kind of self-justification and hypocrisy?
- How do you feel knowing that everything done in secret will one day be revealed?
- How can being afraid of what others think about us encourage hypocrisy? How does receiving a healthy identity from God change that fear?
- When have you taken a risk and stood for Jesus in a public way? What happened? What did you learn?
- Is there a part of your life (work, school, home) where you have lived hypocritically? As we finish in prayer, confess that to the Lord and receive His forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:9), and make a plan to seek the forgiveness of those who have seen your hypocrisy (James 5:16).