

THE BIG IDEA: Hypocrisy is hard to detect, but easy to correct.

The Take-Off

When we were last in our True Story journey through Luke, it was November of last year.

There is no way I can recap 36 weeks of previous teaching, so our website or podcast would be a great resource for you if you need to go back and catch up.

Actually, just grabbing our church app would allow you to find everything in one place.

But let me just take a minute and remind everyone how the book of Luke originally came to be:

- there was a Gentile named Theophilus and he was pretty wealthy
- he was also curious about whether or not the claims of Jesus were true, and as eyewitnesses to the stories he'd heard were starting to die off, he approached a physician - Luke - and offered to pay whatever it took for Dr. Luke to investigate the claims to see if they were true
- the gospel of Luke in your Bible is Luke's report back to Theophilus
- it was Luke's story about how something so unbelievable actually become undeniable - about how the Son of God and the Son of Man were both found in the one man, Jesus - and if Luke had delivered it today, he would have included the hashtag #truestory

As we went through the first half of the book, I learned some things: one, 24 chapters is a long book; two, as a church, we tend to do better with bite-sized pieces, and tackling such a long book can feel a little like ordering a steak and having them give you the whole cow.

Yes, the steak is in there, but dang if it isn't a lot of work to get it.

So, going forward, we're going to work really hard to group the book into sections that go together naturally and teach them as smaller mini-series within this mega series called True Story.

So this morning, while we're back in True Story, we're actually kicking off a 5 week miniseries based in chapter 12 called "guardrails" that helps us focus on areas that Jesus taught we'd need to guard against.

1. Hypocrisy pretends to have what it knows it doesn't

- a. It would help to have a good understanding of exactly what hypocrisy is before we move on
- b. [The cute/not so cute bunny I found]
- c. Hypocrisy isn't the inconsistencies in our lives, but the conspiracy to cover up the inconsistencies
- d. It's pretending to have what we know we don't, and Jesus used the Pharisees to point it out
 - **Matthew 23:3** / they didn't practice what they preached
 - **Matthew 23:23** / intentional inconsistencies in giving
 - **Matthew 23:27-28** / intentional inconsistencies in public and private righteousness
- e. Jesus was telling His disciples to guard against that hypocrisy, and it's important to note when He told them - as the crowds were growing (v. 1)
- f. There is something about a growing "fan base" that can tempt us to focus more on the public than the personal
- g. Jesus was saying, in essence, "You can see the crowds growing, but if you aren't careful about guarding your hearts, you'll miss the hypocrisy growing in you that you can so easily see in the Pharisees."
- h. Know this: hypocrisy starts small but has enormous power - Galatians 5:9 says "a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough"
- i. Because it's small, it can be hard to see it, but that's why guardrails are so important!
- j. Big Idea: **Hypocrisy is hard to detect, but easy to correct.**
- k. That's why guardrails are so important; bumping against them alerts us to the need for correction
- l. When you and I feel the pressure to pretend, that's a sign that there is some hypocrisy growing in us
- m. Repent quickly, and get back on track

2. Hypocrisy seeks value from men instead of seeing our value to God

- a. We have a pretty good grasp of what Jesus means when He talks about hypocrisy, and so Jesus continues and talks about another pressure - the pressure to perform
- b. Jesus warns His disciples to live in awe of God instead of in fear of man
- c. At the heart of this fear is a misunderstanding of how God values us

- d. When we know that we are more valuable to God than “even the sparrows” we’ll no longer seek value from men
- e. Hypocrisy seeks value from man instead of seeing our value to God, and that will ALWAYS create a fear of what others think of us more than a peace about what God says about us
- f. When we feel the pressure to perform for men who cannot determine our eternal destiny, we need to recognize that we’re bumping into another guardrail that is trying to stop us from going over the cliff of hypocrisy
- g. The correction we need to make is to return to a heart that is focused on pleasing God more than men / [Galatians 1:10](#)

3. Hypocrisy refuses to acknowledge the God we know

- a. Let’s just say that we’re a very tired driver who isn’t woken up by the first 2 guardrails: you’ve felt the pressure to pretend and the pressure to perform and you’ve still not made corrections.
- b. You’re about to hit one more guardrail, and it’s a big one: the pressure to pull back.
- c. I don’t mean pull back so you can recover. Jesus talks about a pressure to pull back from our faith.
- d. I remember as a youth pastor going to the schools to eat with students. I could tell IMMEDIATELY which ones wanted me there and which ones didn’t simply by how they introduced me to their friends.
- e. I was either a youth pastor or “some friend”
- f. The last guardrail for hypocrisy is a refusal to acknowledge God before men, and when you and I begin to feel the pressure to pull back in our witness, we need to pay attention, because Jesus says that He will pull back from us
- g. One final thought before we close: a lot is made about the unforgivable sin mentioned in verse 10
- h. Maybe you’ve heard it called the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit
- i. While no one knows for sure what it is, we can shed some light on it:
 - if we wonder whether or not we’ve committed this sin, we haven’t
 - if we pay attention to the guardrails we’ve talked about, we never will

The Landing

If you’ve ever invited someone to church and they gave you a reason for saying no, you already know how destructive hypocrisy can be

It is powerful enough to erode any witness we may have thought we had, and that’s why these guardrails are so important! If we don’t recognize the impending accident, we’ll drive our faith right over the edge!

Hypocrisy is hard to detect, but easy to correct, and so let’s take a moment and ask ourselves which of the guardrails we find ourselves bumping up against right now: the pressure to pretend, to perform, or to pull back?

Once we’ve detected the hypocrisy, 1 John 1:5-7 shows us how easy it is to correct it: if hypocrisy is the intentional conspiracy to hide inconsistencies in ourselves, then the correction comes from intentionally choosing to step into the light.

Verse 9 tells us that HE is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us. Thank you, Jesus!

As we close in prayer, thank the Lord for loving us enough to show us the little seed of hypocrisy before it grows into something much harder to deal with.

Let’s pray.