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No person or group has ever worn the badge of hypocrisy with greater pride than the Pharisees and Sadducees of the New Testament times. They managed to “corner the market” on this despicable inconsistency. They worked overtime to keep their pet sin alive. Most people couldn’t stand to see them coming, much less to grace their presence. They were both tolerated and despised.

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Admittedly, there are some hypocrites today in every walk of life, inconsistent chameleons who adorn themselves with the robe of hypocrisy whenever the need arises. They are even more conspicuous when found in high places. They use hypocrisy as a spare tire. This makes them two-faced.

Most of us were introduced to Oliver Cromwell, either in high school or college, and we remember when he sat for his official portrait that he instructed the artist to paint him just as he saw him. He instructed the artist to paint him “warts and all.” Since that time, “warts and all” has been used around the world to show all of a person’s defects as well as his good points.

God painted the Pharisees and Sadducees “warts and all.” It is apparent they had more “warts” than good points. The Book of James speaks of looking into the perfect law of liberty, the mirror of the soul, and seeing ourselves as God sees us. What does God see? Does He see warts? Does he see hypocrisy? For sure, He sees “warts and all.”

What about hypocrisy in high places? “Monkey does as monkey sees” may have an element of truth in it. In all probability, one of the most devastating influences of our time is the hypocrisy coming from those in high places. There are elected officials on all levels who bear the scars of hypocrisy on their character.

What is far more destructive are those in leadership roles in the church whose lives are plagued with inconsistency. The young in Christ, coupled with the children and teenagers, are quick to grasp any hypocrisy portrayed by the behavior of their leaders. Too many are strict about attending all the services of the church, but too lax in daily Christian living. The hypocrite is a

## **Badge of Hypocrisy**

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pretender. But what the church needs to see is the real thing. The presence of just one hypocrite in the church can become the source of great trouble. The church needs to see genuine leadership, not a pretend leadership.

Hypocrisy, no matter where it is found, is a cancer that desperately needs to be removed. Otherwise, our children and teenagers get the impression that a little hypocrisy is acceptable.