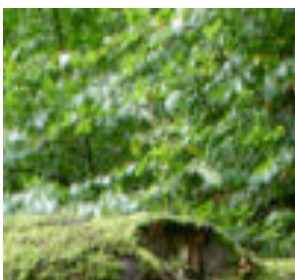


# Christ-Centered Change



## Coaching Services

- Coaching Sessions
- By Phone
- In Person (St. Louis)
- One on One
- Couples
- Groups



## New Beginnings Coaching

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## Hypocrites, Blind Guides, White-Washed Tombs

When you ask someone, "Why have you stopped going to church?" what do they say? The most common response I get is, "The people at church seem like hypocrites!"

I suspect many of you have heard this kind of reasoning as well. What are Christians doing that seems hypocritical? Are we inadvertently repelling some people who come to church looking for God?

I believe the issue is less about our failing to live up to the standards we preach, than it is about not acknowledging our imperfections. We are often so busy trying to 'look good' that we stop being real. Authentic Christianity involves confessing our sins to one another and admitting that we struggle with temptations daily. Truth be known, we are all hypocrites in some way. Even those who accuse others of hypocrisy, if they are honest, know that they too sometimes fail to live up to their own standards.

So, what do disenchanted Christianity-critics really mean when they call us 'hypocrites'? Do they feel we are pretending to be better than they are? Are they feeling uncomfortable or judged rather than accepted?

Jesus confronted the Pharisees calling them "white-washed tombs." By this he meant that they looked nice and clean on the outside, but did not own up to their sin on the inside. He called them blind guides because their outward religiosity was a dead-end that offered nothing of substance to those looking for answers.

Unlike the self-righteous Pharisees, if we have invited Jesus into our hearts, we are being changed from the inside out. But, if we pretend to have arrived at perfection, those seeking honest answers will smell a fake and run from us to find acceptance elsewhere.

If Christ's loving acceptance doesn't flow through us or feel genuine, we shouldn't be surprised when our neighbors choose not to participate in what appears to be a masquerade. Real Christianity needs to offer real solutions to real people who are dealing with real problems.

Let's take off our masks and admit that we all need plenty of grace. Then perhaps others will join us in real confession and repentance, as we worship our Lord in spirit and in truth.

*-Bill*