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SERMON STARTER

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WEEK 4

HYPOCRITICAL AND GET SAVED!

The following suggestions are given to help you begin your preparation. Of course, your own personal stories, illustrations, and application to your context are vital.

Bottom Line of Message: Christians make the most impact when they are genuine and genuinely care about others.

INTRODUCTION

- Open with an illustration about hypocrisy: either when someone else or yourself didn't practice what they/you preached.
- Alternative: open with an illustration of when someone wasn't interested in your friendship, they only cared about their agenda (like a "friend" trying to get you to participate in their pyramid scheme.)
- We all hate it when people aren't genuine, when they don't practice what they preach or when they are only concerned with their own agenda at our expense. It's an issue of integrity.
- There's something inside of us that longs for people to have integrity in how they live and how they relate to us. That's the image of God in all of us, not just believers. And that's why so many non-Christians are so frustrated with Christians who are hypocrites or who only care about one thing: trying to convert them (refer to research on p. 28).

BIBLICAL TEXT: 1 PETER 2:11-12

- Jesus had plenty to say about hypocrites. He instructed us to consider the plank in our own eyes before we point out the speck in others (Mt 7:1-5). He even reserved his harshest condemnation for those religious people he considered hypocrites (Mt 23). What would Jesus say about religious people today?
- We all know that there is nothing winsome about hypocrisy. But what about efforts to convert people? The harder we try, it seems, the less people want to listen to us. And if we're only concerned about converting someone, are we really concerned about that person as a person?
- These are not new issues. They were important in the early church as well and Peter gives us instructions about how we are to make the most impact in culture and in the lives of those around us.
- 1 Peter 2:11: we are living as "foreigners" in our culture and therefore we must be careful to make our own spiritual lives a priority. Don't concern yourself with the sins of others (we talked about being judgmental last time); be more concerned with your own selfish desires—taking the plank out of your own eye.
- 1 Peter 2:12: we will make the biggest impact on others through our good works toward others. This doesn't devalue evangelism—there is a time and a place to, as Peter says a few verses later, "to give the reason for the hope we have." But our words should be an outflow of our deeds.
- As St. Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the gospel at all times; if necessary, use words."

CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

- How important are relationships to us? We must begin by building meaningful relationships with others.
- Are we genuine in our relationships? We must demonstrate transparency, admit our flaws, and not judge the flaws in others.
- Do we genuinely care about others in our relationships? Or do we just care about getting people saved? Naturally, if we care about others, we care about their eternal destiny. But we also care about what is going on in their lives today and how we can serve and help them. By loving others where they are, we allow and trust God to work through our actions to impact their lives. But our words will ring hollow if they are not preceded by loving actions.