

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

January 2010

Hypocrisy in High Places



...Clay Crosse was one of the leading Christian singers of the 1990s. His song, from which the book *[I Surrender All]* gets its title, catapulted him into big-league Christian entertainment. His subsequent confession to his wife that he had become addicted to pornography led to a time of deep personal self-examination, godly sorrow, and repentance.

Crosse writes, “I lived this double life for nearly two years with hardly a pang of conviction. ...I could sit in church and hear sermons against sin without ever thinking I might need to make a change in my life. ...Not once did I stop and think about how I was poisoning my soul” (p. 42). The poison was administered through deception; Crosse admits that, even though he knew his ac-

tions were wrong, he justified himself through the success he was enjoying and assured himself that God was speaking to him in his achievements. “I thought He was telling me how pleased He was with me and how much He wanted to bless me” (p.49). Crosse was to discover, however, that God spoke more to him through the pain of losing his voice, which led to confession of his sin both to God and his wife, and a fruitful ministry toward those who battle with the same demons Crosse faced. ...

How can we safeguard ourselves against collapse?

How can we profit from this? We are all within an inch of succumbing to the same delusion that it is possible to be one thing in one context and something else in another. The real danger lies in the deception that whispers that we are safe behind the mask of hypocrisy. Paul counsels, “Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

The problem is not the standing but the thinking that we can never fall. How can we safeguard ourselves against collapse?

First, by examining ourselves. Part of the function of Genesis 38, with its tawdry tale of Judah’s immorality, is to contrast with Joseph’s integrity in the household of Potiphar in Genesis 39. The brother who remains at home slips easily into double-standards; the brother who is in Egypt remains faithful to God even when sin comes with enticement and opportunity. When his masters’s wife tries to seduce him, Joseph refuses with the question: “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9). He pays a heavy price for his integrity, of course, but he would rather languish in an Egyptian prison with a clear conscience than walk abroad in Canaan with a guilty one.

How do we measure by these exacting standards?

(continued on reverse side)

[Taken from *Tabletalk* October 2009, Ligonier Ministries]

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Hypocrisy in High Places (cont. from page 1)



Do we remember that to God, before whose face we are called to live, “the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you” (Ps. 139:12)? Let us repent of our readiness to live one kind of life before men while we are something entirely different before God!

Second, by guarding our hearts. “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23). King Uzziah was one of the great kings of Judah, and “as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper” (2 Chron. 26:5). Yet his prosperity eased his conscience when his heart swelled with pride, and he took it on himself to burn incense to the Lord, which was the prerogative of the priests alone. When he would not take the counsel of others, the king, for all his good influence and political legacy, died alone, as a leper, because “the

LORD had struck him” (v. 20). He had discovered too late that it is far easier to govern a kingdom than to govern a heart. Yet unless we attend to the issues of our heart - to our relationship with God, our prayer life, our study of Christ in His Word, mortifying the flesh, growing in grace - we too will fall into the trap of disguising the rottenness of our souls by the busyness of our lives.

Christ remains the measure of men, and His life of perfect integrity, as He lived before God for men and before men for God, remains our pattern and example.

Third, by walking in the steps of Christ. He remains the measure of men, and His life of perfect integrity, as He lived before God for men and before men for God, remains our pattern and example. Peter enjoins us to follow in Jesus’ footsteps: “He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:22-23). Hypocrisy ruins lives, damages reputations, unsettles consciences, and compromises principles. The person whose mind is settled on the Lord knows something the hypocrite never can: the blessing of perfect peace (Isa. 26:3). That is something precious, something worth guarding jealously.

[Written by Iain D. Campbell, “Hypocrisy in High Places”, *Tabletalk* October 2009 from Ligonier Ministries & R.C. Sproul]

The following is contact information for PureLife Ministries, a highly regarding source of biblical help and counseling for those struggling with the sin of pornography, and offering support and counsel for spouses, as well.



Pure Life Ministries
14 School St.
Dry Ridge, KY 41035
By Phone:
888.PURELIFE
- order / information
859.824.4444
- administrative offices

Hypocrisy in High Places (cont. from page 1)



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