

## Pretentious Morality

### I. Introduction:

A. We should all know that God is not convinced of a show one might put on to appear righteous (**I Samuel 16:7, Proverbs 15:11, Proverbs 16:2, Jeremiah 17:10, Hebrews 4:13, and I John 3:20**).

1. God desires us to live a faith unfeigned [sincere] (**I Timothy 1:5**).
2. He has desired sincerity since long ago (**Joshua 24:14**).

B. Faithful Christians are aware that there can be actors among us (**Jude 1:3-4**).

1. We know it may not always be visible (**I Timothy 5:24-25**).
2. Pretenders are not a new problem amongst disciples of our Lord (**Matthew 10:1-4**).

### II. Body: *“Outwardly Appear Righteous Unto Men”* (**Matthew 23:25-28**).

A. The exact person I have in mind in this lesson is the person who thinks they are above others - they have that “holier than thou” attitude (**Isaiah 65:1-7**).

1. These types exalt themselves while stepping on others (**Luke 18:9-14**).
2. These types try to look religious, though they don't live it (**Luke 20:45-47**).
3. They will often boast of how much more they do than others. Though saints are created in Christ to do good works, the grace of God is supposed to keep us from being boastful (**Ephesians 2:1-10**).
4. There are many ways the pretended tries to stand above the rest. We will consider and expose a few of those ways.

B. The pretender is more moral than you in their speech. They will misuse Scriptures such as **Ephesians 4:29** and **Colossians 3:8** to condemn certain forms of communication as wrong in attempt to be more moral than you. Consider some examples and then the Scriptures that clearly show the statements wrong.

1. “Oh, I don't use potty talk. That's not godly.” Really, (**I Kings 14:7-11, Malachi 2:1-3, and Philippians 3:8**)?
2. “Oh, I would never exaggerate. That is lying.” Really, (**Job 19:6, Psalms 119:136, Matthew 5:29-30, and Matthew 23:24**)?
3. “I don't talk about things that belong in the bedroom. That shows you have a perverted mind.” Really, (**Proverbs 5:18-19, Song of Solomon 7:1-8, Song of Solomon 8:8-10, Ezekiel 23:17-20, I Corinthians 7:1-5, and Hebrews 13:4**)?
4. “I would never keep a secret. Secrets show you have sinful things you are hiding.” Really, (**Deuteronomy 29:29, Proverbs 11:13, and Romans 16:25-26**)?
5. “Oh, I would never insult someone by calling them a name. That is not behavior that is pleasing to God.” Really, (**Proverbs 12:1, Matthew 23:17, Matthew 23:23, Luke 11:39-40, Luke 13:31-32, and Acts 13:8-11**)?

6. We have to use God's word, rightly divided (**II Timothy 2:15**), to determine what corrupt communication is or is not. Not the words of the self-righteous or even our own estimations (**Proverbs 14:12**)!

C. What about those who just think it is unloving to be offensive? They think rebukes should not occur. Think about those who would use Scriptures such as **Matthew 5:21-22** and/or **I John 4:21** to say it is wrong to "call names" or be sharp with an erring so-called "Christian". If that were true Jesus and other inspired men would be sinners.

1. Peter laid down all to follow Jesus (**Luke 5:1-11**), but what did Jesus call him when he erred (**Matthew 16:21-23**)?

2. A man obeyed the Gospel, was in babe in Christ, and yet was chastised in what manner (**Acts 8:4-24**)?

3. What did Paul call the erring in Galatia (**Galatians 3:1-3**)?

4. What was said in **II Timothy 3:15-4:5** and **Titus 1:10-14**?

D. What about those who profess to be staunch defenders of the faith? They love to argue about the Scriptures. They use Scriptures such as **Philippians 1:17** and **Jude 1:3-4** as justification for being full of strife and acting contentiously. What does that mean of the instructions that teach otherwise?

1. Strife (**Proverbs 16:28**, **Proverbs 26:21**, **Proverbs 29:22**, **Romans 13:13-14**, **Philippians 2:3**, **II Timothy 2:14-23**, and **James 3:16**).

2. Being contentious (**Proverbs 17:14**, **Proverbs 18:6**, and **Titus 3:9-11**).

3. The genuine Christian will defend the truth (**Acts 18:28**), but not as a useless endeavor (**Matthew 7:6**) or desire to appear as a champion.

E. Consider virtue-signaling ["publicly express opinions or sentiments intended to demonstrate one's good character or social conscience or the moral correctness of one's position on a particular issue" (New Oxford American Dictionary)] (**Matthew 23:1-5**).

1. Those that seek to justify themselves in the sight of men (**Luke 16:15**).

2. Those who would perform "religious acts" in attempt to stand out (**Matthew 6:1-7**).

3. Those who like to talk about the Scriptures, but do not live them (**Luke 11:28** and **Romans 2:13**).

4. What good is it to say something that signals moral goodness, but do nothing to actually carry out a good deed (**James 2:14-17**)?

5. What about those boasting of their "good works" (**Proverbs 27:2**).

III. Conclusion: The person that seems religious is working hard to look a part and that work is in vain (**James 1:21-27**). Don't seek to say or do things that make you look holy. Just be holy (**I Peter 1:13-16**). Let your good works glorify God, not your own glory (**Matthew 5:14-16** and **I Corinthians 10:31**).