



WOW: Word Of the Week

Hypocrite
June 18, 2025

The Greeks had a word for it: hupokritos. Our English word hypocrite is really a transliteration (letter for letter) more than a translation.

A hypocrite was someone who played a part in a theater production. A hypocrite is someone who pretends. The original word is interesting – hupo means under or beneath. Krinos means to judge, to think or esteem. Literally, one could read, “to appear to be less, to pretend to be less.”

That idea is the exact opposite of what we usually think about today when we think about hypocrites. We think of those who are pretending to be more than they really are—more important, more successful, more.... What about those who pretend to be less than they really are?

Could you help? I would be happy to do that – tell about Jesus, teach a class at church, visit the sick, help with a project, but I cannot. That is not my talent. That is not my skill. I cannot do it.

For many years in ministry, I was what I call the “everything-minister:” preaching, youth, visitation, involvement, education. A part of my responsibility was to get teachers for all of the Bible classes—from the youngest children to the adult class or classes.

More than once I was told, I cannot do it. The response I developed was not original. “I know you cannot do it, but God can do anything, and God can do it through you if you will let him.”

The next time you hear the word hypocrite, remember both dynamics. Some hypocrites are puffed up, others are self-deflating. Some want to seem to be more than they are; others want to seem less than they are. Let us be honest with ourselves. Let us be ready always to live out God’s purpose for our lives, depending on him for what we cannot do.

Be honest with yourself. Be honest with God. God already knows. Psalm 139:23-24 – Look at me, God; you know what is in my heart. Look at my mind; you already know my thoughts (Easy English).