

My life radically changed when I was confronted about my biggest problem: hypocrisy. One of the biggest complaints that I hear about Christians is that many who profess to know Jesus are hypocrites, and *I was one of them*. I lived different lives in front of different people, and as this problem developed there were people who got hurt and my soul languished under the draining effort of keeping up a multi-faced facade.

I claimed that Jesus was my “Lord” but was most focused on myself and what I wanted – that is, until God put a stop to it. I was alerted through a phone call from a friend of mine.

I will never forget what she – the woman who would later become my wife, now of over six years – said to me that night. She said, “For a guy who looks like he has it all together, you have a lot of ends in your life.” In a word, I was *busted* – not just by God.

While she was talking to me in my ear, I know that God was speaking to my heart. I had embraced a kind of duplicity that was draining my soul, and it was time for that to stop.

That night I was overcome with physical and emotional distress. Physically, there was a pain in my stomach like I had never experienced and it kept me awake most of the night. Emotionally, I was exhausted from duplicity, embarrassed at having been exposed, and broken before God for having taken Him lightly and not realizing that all was well. I did not hear an audible voice that night while hanging up the phone, but I know without any question that God was speaking to me, “Ross, are you going to follow Me, or not? Make up your mind now.”

There would be no more room for sometimes following Christ. Sometimes I am not – I could no longer simply do whatever I pleased. I had been infiltrated into the church that Jude wrote to, I had been deceived that perverted the gospel (Jude 4). God’s will for His church is to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself his own possession who are zealous for good works.”

2 Peter 1:10) This is the grace of God to us – and it was a grace that I was not taking, to my own peril.

My life changed that night. I repented, and cried out through the night asking for His forgiveness, and I made – by the grace of Christ – the commitment to render my life to Him.

I experienced God’s grace in His forgiveness. The Lord awakened me to my need to stop running around and following my passions, but to make Him my single passion and allow Him to live my life His own. I am a work in progress – but a progress is being worked!

## **Making the Connection**

If you are battling with some kind of double-life let me share with you this personal testimony: I have come to know in Christ a freedom that that I could not experience anywhere else. He gave Himself to be enamored with. I am finding Him to be so awe-inspiring and captivating, that gradually my interest in my own image is being replaced and abated with wonder about who He is and His promises to me. Instead of discovering a kind of strength from Him to look at the interests of others instead of my own. And I find it very wonderful to know that with Him in my life I have a singular passion and purpose that I have not known anywhere else. This does not mean that I don’t still struggle with struggles, but I’m encouraged that there is some fight in my life. God works in me producing the likeness of Christ. What a truly and utterly amazing work God can do in the lives of those who trust in Him, even a person like me!

## **Taking Action**

May I share how something like this can happen to you? My biggest hang up was myself – I was caught up in doing what I wanted to do, and I was compelled to do – and it hurt me and others very deeply. I may not know what you are dealing with, but I know that we all have struggles and issues. Yet Jesus says, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28 ESV) My labor and burden was a façade that I could not keep no matter how I tried. Maybe your burden is something in your past, or some addiction, or compulsion. But let me tell you this: if He can take a hypocrite like me and renew my life, is it not possible that He can do great things for you? What He has done in me is a testimony to His great work that extends through the cross of Christ to those who will come and lay themselves upon Jesus. I bid you come and find rest, grace,

- Ross I.

**Scripture Reading: Jude 1-25;**

**Memorization: Jude 21**

*The purpose of GBC Connection is to encourage further reflection and study to facilitate a connection between our Sunday teaching and your daily lives – the triumphs, tragedies, and struggles that each of us face every month.*

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