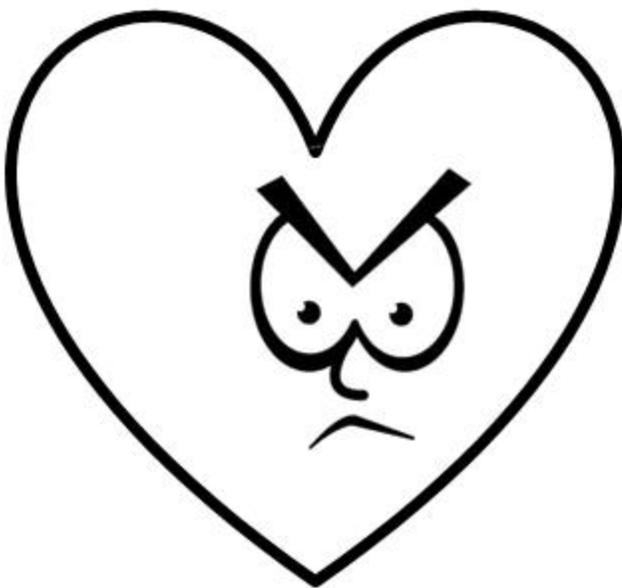


# Outside:

- Perfection
- Performance
- In control



# Inside:

- Pride
- Selfishness
- Greed
- Jealousy
- Hate
- Fear

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Matthew 15:8



### *Bible Study:*



Read Matthew 15:1-20, and Matthew 23. These sections of scripture summarize the source of the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders of the day. Consider how hypocrisy was not just a problem back then. It is a problem that will always be a temptation and a struggle for everyone. In this lesson, we use a tiger mask as an illustration of trying to convince others that we are something that we know we are not.

### *The gospel in the story:*



Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." To be poor in spirit is to recognize your utter **spiritual bankruptcy** before God. It is to understand you have absolutely nothing of worth to offer God. Being poor in spirit is admitting that, because of your sin, you are completely destitute spiritually and can do nothing to deliver yourself from your dire situation. Jesus is saying that, no matter your status in life, you must recognize your spiritual poverty before you can come to God in faith to receive the salvation He offers. The bad news in regard to the religious leaders of Jesus' day is that they did not acknowledge their spiritual poverty. In fact they ACTED as if they were spiritually rich! The good news is, that Jesus offers the gift of Salvation to ANYONE who humbly repents of their sin and confesses their faith in the resurrected Christ Jesus regardless of their past!

### *Application:*

#### *Head:* **What did we learn?**

Q: To whom did Jesus show compassion? A: To the people who were lost and needed Him.

Q: What does it mean to be spiritually lost? A: To put your faith in self rather than God.

Q: What does the word 'righteous' mean? A: To be perfect in God's eyes.

Q: Why did the Pharisees think they were righteous? A: Because they acted as though they had followed ALL of God's laws.

Q: What does the word 'hypocrite' mean? A: To pretend, to be fake, to put on false appearances.

#### *Heart:* **Memory verse**

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Matthew 15:8

#### *Hands:* **How does this affect the way I live?**

The goal for all Christians is to live out an AUTHENTIC FAITH IN JESUS. The ONLY WAY to do that is by pursuing a relationship with Him through prayer and Scripture, and by allowing the Holy Spirit to be in control of our hearts (Ephesians 5:17-18). As we let the Holy Spirit be the compass of our hearts, we know and follow God's ways, so that how we live is an expression of the Love we have from the Father.

ALL CHRISTIANS run the risk of becoming hypocritical. The only hope against that tendency is to FULLY rely on Christ Jesus!