

# My dad taught me a lesson

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BIG SANDY, Texas—One day when I was all of about 12 I had an interesting conversation with my dad. You need to understand that my father was a quiet man of few words. He basically left the raising of us two girls to Mom.

My dad blurted out, "If I ever catch either one of you being a hypocrite, I will disown you."

End of conversation.

I stood there trying to figure out what a hypocrite was. Was I one? What about my sister? What caused the declaration in the first place?

## **Mom enlightened us**

Mom was good enough to fill us girls in.

My dad's dad was a hypocrite. He had eight children and they all despised him. I did not even know my grandfather existed until he died when I was 7 years old. It was my mother, not my dad, who told me. My grandfather was never discussed in our family. It was that bad.

Years later, when I started studying the Bible, I found out that my heavenly Father had the same opinion about hypocrisy as my father had. Both were going to disown me if I became one.

## **Trying to do right**

Sometimes a person can pick up deceptive habits even when he is trying to do what is right.

A child may start out seeking to please his parents. Later on he may want his parents to think he is good without his actually being good.

A young person may begin by being proper around his friends. Later on he may make compromises to maintain acceptance.

And isn't it natural for those wishing to marry to act a certain way around someone because they wish to please? There can be real problems if the people build their relationship upon a facade. However, everything can go well in the relationship if both people are honest with each other.

## **Too much honesty**

There is another side to the coin. It seems that today's culture encourages a person to do whatever feels good to him. Some people believe that any kind of behavior is acceptable. So why hide it?

I don't think God approves of this kind of behavior any more than being a hypocrite.

The answer is that with God's help we need a complete change of heart. It is important to understand what God wants and why He wants it. We need a reprogramming of our personal computer (our brain), if you please.

## **Personal example**

Allow me to share with you how I ask God to help me to be honest and yet not be a hypocrite.

Those who know me well know that I am a loner who loves projects. What people may not know is that I am not naturally happy when the phone rings.

Therefore, when I pick up the phone, this is what goes through my mind: God also loves projects. His project is people, people and more people. If I choose to be like Him, then my first priority needs to be people.

I don't have to pretend that I am happy when a person calls in the middle of my project. I can truthfully tell people that I am busy, but I can also tell them much more. I can tell them how genuinely glad I am that they called. I seek to give them my complete attention.

## **Not disowned**

I don't think I have to worry about being disowned by either my earthly father or my heavenly Father. Thanks to both of them for helping me understand about not being a hypocrite. I seek to be honest and kind.

And I am thankful that I have many friends who are honest and kind with me.