

The *Hurt*, The *Healing*, The *Healthy*, and The *Hypocrite*

Are there hypocrites in the church? “Yes”- in virtually all of them, if by “church” local congregations are intended; but “no” if by “church” the universal body of Christ is meant. And at least at times, I may be one of those hypocrites- no one is immune from hypocritical thoughts, words, or actions (cf. [1Corinthians 10:12](#)). Why is this?

The membership of **local congregations** is determined by men, and is therefore subject to mistakes. A person may be *included* in a local fellowship who is unworthy of that association. Such was the case in [1Corinthians 5](#). Then too, a person may be *excluded* from a local fellowship that God accepts and approves. There is a biblical example of such in [3John 9-10](#).

But by contrast, **universal church** (all the saved of all time) membership is determined and governed by God, and He makes no such mistakes. **God sees all, knows all, and has perfect knowledge of all. Therefore, no one is *included* who should be excluded, and none is *excluded* who should be included.** Obviously, local churches should strive to have their list match God’s as much as possible, **but often fail in this regard- sometimes miserably.**

However, there are other considerations that must be part of our understanding in these matters. Essentially, **four spiritual classifications of people exist in *local church fellowships*:**

1. The ***Hurt*** are people who have been injured by Satan and sin. They’ve had their spiritual lives battered and bruised by the consequences of ungodliness, [Galatians 6:7-8](#). Jesus described them as being *sick*, [Matthew 9:12](#); and further stated that they were the very ones He was sent to help.
2. The ***Healing*** are those who have been *hurt* by sin, but after coming to the *Great Physician*, are getting better. Since everyone of an accountable age has sinned ([Romans 3:23](#)), and have thus become *hurt*, healing is essential. If it does not occur, spiritual death is inevitable, [1Cor.11:30](#). But as with our physical maladies, healing is often a slow and painful process, [Rom.8:13](#). *Spiritual* rehabilitation can also be a difficult process with many “ups” and “downs” included, [Rom.7:15-24](#).
3. The ***Healthy***, in this context at least, are not those who have never been *hurt* by sin ([Jas.3:2](#); [Rom.3:10ff](#)), but those who have gone through the *healing* process sufficiently to become *healthy* and *whole* again, [Matt.9:22](#). The word translated as “*made well*” is the Greek word, *sozo* (***sode-zo***), which in other places is rendered “*save*” cf. [Matt.1:21](#); [Mark 16:16](#). These “*from weakness were* (are, PCS) *made strong*” through faith in Jesus Christ, [Hebrews 11:34](#).
4. The ***Hypocrite*** falls into one of two sub-classes:
 - a. those who say/pretend, they have no sin, [1John 1:8](#); and,
 - b. those who are themselves guilty of the very thing (or worse) they condemn in others, [Matthew 7:1-5](#). The Greek term *hupokrinomai*, from which the term *hypocrite* is derived, means “to impersonate” or “play a part...to pretend.”

From these definitions, some distinctions should become clear:

- Thus, the **hypocrite** is **not** the **hurt** member of a local church who becomes *hurt* by falling back into sin like the man of [Galatians 6:1](#). The **healthy** are supposed to help, [Gal.6:1b-5](#); [Heb.12:12-13](#).
- **Nor** is the **hypocrite** the **healing** church member who is involved in spiritual rehabilitation from sin and is experiencing “ups” and “downs” in that process, like Paul described in [Romans 7:15-25](#). The **healthy** are supposed to hearten and heal them, [Heb.10:24-25](#); [1Thess.5:14-15](#).
- The **hypocrite is** the church member who **self-righteously pretends to have no sins**, like the Pharisee of [Luke 18:11-12](#); or the church member who **condemns others for things of which he is guilty himself**, as in [Romans 2:17-24](#). The **hypocrite**, the **healthy** should **remove**, [1Cor.5:13](#); [2Thess.3:6,14-15](#), if he persists in sin after [Matt.18:15-17](#) and [Gal.2:11-14](#) are applied.

Now that we hopefully have the distinctions between these four classifications clearly fixed in our minds, let's make some applications:

- The local church **is** the place for those **hurt** by Satan and sin. It should be a safe *haven* of protection for them.
- The local church **is** the place for those **healing** through the process of spiritual rehabilitation.
- And the local church **is** the place for the **healthy** to assist the **hurt** and the **healing** back to health, cf. [Acts 20:35](#); [Romans 15:1ff](#); [1Thessalonians 5:14](#); *et al.*
- But, the local church **is not** the place for **hypocrites!** They, like Simon in [Acts 8:21](#), “*have no part of portion in this matter, for your (their, PCS) heart is not right before God.*” And they, like the adulterer in [1Corinthians 5:13](#), the faithful should “*Remove...from among yourselves*” (unless they respond as did Simon in [Acts 8:24](#)) “*that his spirit may be preserved in the day of the Lord Jesus,*” [1Cor.5:5b](#).

So why doesn't this always happen? Why are there hypocrites in virtually every local church? Remember where we began. Local church memberships are determined by fallible men, not an all-seeing and all-knowing God. Then too, hypocrites are, by definition, *pretenders*. Their pretense/show of Christianity is often good enough to fool other men, but certainly does not fool God!

The presence of hypocrites in local churches is an unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable by-product of the membership being determined by imperfect men. But, do not miss this: Please do not mistake the **hurt**, the **healing**, or the humble **healthy** for the **hypocrites**- there are vast differences between them that must be recognized, acknowledged, and dealt with appropriately based on the distinctions!

Now, unless you're denying your failures, or self-righteously condemning others for things you practice yourself, the local church **is** the place for you. Trust me, you'll fit right in with the others who are *hurt*, *healing*, or humbly *healthy* and trying to help others become the same!