

Now, we address the question, ‘Are having lower and easier to achieve values superior to having higher and more difficult to achieve values?’ – I have heard mixed responses to this. However, even at this time of social-moral decline in our nation, most acknowledge that having higher and more difficult to achieve values is nobler. It usually takes more courage, requires more virtue and a lot more effort to achieve and usually envisions superior outcomes. Due to the inherent difficulty, it is only reasonable to anticipate the inevitable increase in failures to live up to such loftier standards consistently. – Despite the inherent increased risk of failure as standards are elevated, Christians are assured of eventual success (i.e. the perfecting of the saints) upon the resurrection, if not within this lifetime (Eph. 5:27; 2 Pe. 3:14; Rv. 7:14).

Next, ‘Do Christians’ failure to always achieve the high ideals they profess necessarily make them hypocritical?’ To answer this, the question must be better developed. If the person condemns others for having any moral failures, then in such a case, it would constitute hypocrisy for that person. Yet, condemning people for being imperfect or sinning is NOT the Christian message. Condemning sin or a sinful lifestyle is an attack on sin, not on the sinner (Ro. 8:3). The orthodox Christian message is to condemn sin (whether within themselves or within others) and to confess their own sins, repent, and continue growing and changing, and to call and welcome all others to join them in this way of life (Ac. 2:40). That is evenhanded and *unbigoted*. It would be peculiar for Christians only to condemn sin when it resides within themselves - *that* would be bigotry. However, if any persons, Christians or otherwise, hold to a lifestyle which they condemn, then it is to that measure and to that degree they practice hypocrisy and are hypocritical.

A similar yet different question, ‘Does a rare or occasional act of hypocrisy, where such is uncharacteristic of one’s lifestyle, necessarily make one a hypocrite?’ Even though a *flaw does reduce the quality* of the whole, it does not necessarily mean that the part *is characteristic* of the whole, and thus does not mean it is *descriptive* of the whole, whether we are referring to a person, place or thing.

Do we term a baseball league’s players having the highest batting averages, each with less than three strikeouts per season, as “wiffers” because of a rare strikeout? No. - They are recognized as very successful batters, not as lousy hitters. When describing character, should we describe the whole person by what is more uncharacteristic or by what is characteristic? Such failures may describe the person only in part, but it would be unreasonable to assert this as a fair overall characterization of the person.

This topic is more complex than space allows discussing more fully. Yet, it is clear that it is invalid to treat rare character failures as if such constituted a lifestyle of hypocrisy, or to term someone “a hypocrite”, when such is more misrepresentative of the person’s overall character than it is representative. Yet, antagonists often conveniently blur such distinctions, as reason is often compromised by bigotry.