

## Avoiding Hypocrisy

According to the New Testament, hypocrisy is a behavior condemned by the Savior. He seemed to have very little tolerance for those that strove to *appear* righteous, but when given the chance enjoyed indulging in sin.

As a new missionary in the Caracas, Venezuela Mission I think I felt in a much smaller scale the uneasiness that hypocrisy breeds. About 4 months into my mission I noticed that on the days when the Mission President was expected to be in town or when Zone Conference was scheduled, all of the missionaries seemed to look a lot better. Everyone's shirts were ironed and their shoes were polished. Because many of the missionaries worked in dusty, dirty areas, this cleanliness was not necessarily the norm. In fact, I heard rumors that some of the missionaries were not aware that there were even irons in their apartments.

I remember getting ready for Zone Conference one morning and noticing this phenomenon. All of a sudden the multiple inches of dirt were scraped off of the shoes and the white, ironed shirts were pulled out of the back of the closets. I remember feeling a desire to separate myself from this perceived hypocrisy and for a minute I didn't want to shine my shoes or iron my shirts. This seems strange, but to me it was a way to separate myself from what felt like pretending we were concerned with our appearance, when in reality we only were when the president was around.

After thinking about it a couple of minutes I realized that my goals would not be accomplished through rebellion. The best way to overcome this feeling would be to strive to look as sharp as I could everyday, and not only when the president was expected. I recognize that this is a petty example, but it helped me in my mission and taught me an important lesson. I learned that appearing good is not bad, if your intention is really to be good and not merely to look good.