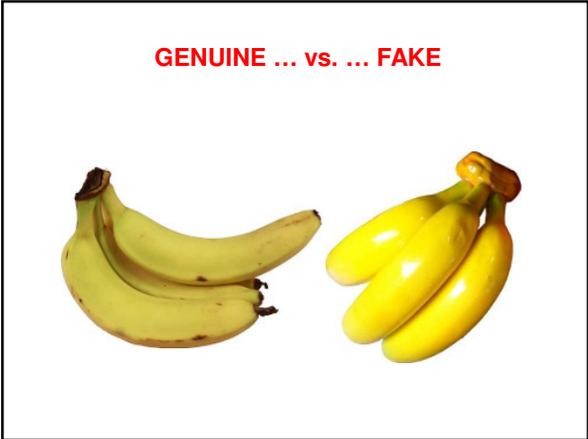
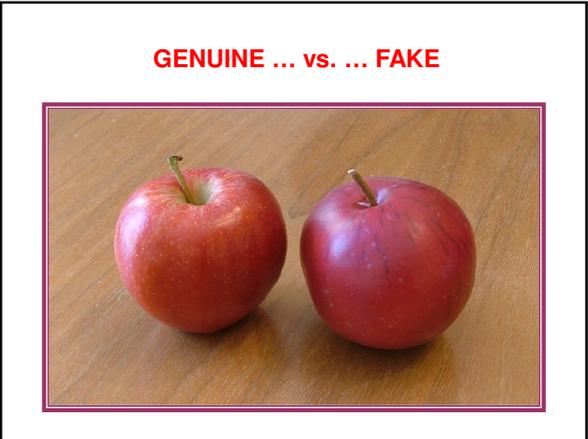


Assurance of Salvation
Part 115

GROWING IN GRACE
– About the FAKES



- Growing in Grace**
GENUINE ... vs. ... FAKE
- **For a while:** Some fakes may look like they're growing. (Jesus warned us about this!)
 - **In the end:** The differences will be obvious for all to see.
-
- **WE** might think they are saved (until it becomes obvious).
 - **God** sees their fakeness at all times, and is never surprised.

The PARABLE

About:

- the obviously unsaved
- the fakes
- the saved

The following parable focuses on the human responsibility aspect of following Jesus.

Last week, we saw how God's sovereignty is involved.

The Parable of the Sower *

(Found in Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8)

"A farmer went out to sow some seed..."



★ THE SEED = God's Word
★ THE GROUND = the people

* [SOWER = someone who plants (or "sows") seeds.]

The Parable

"Some of the seed fell on the path. The birds came and ate it up."

IF THE SEED HAD GOTTEN IN, THE BIRDS WOULDN'T HAVE EATEN IT!

GOOD SEED... BAD SOIL!

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The People

"When they have heard, the devil comes and takes away the word that was sown. They do not believe and become saved."

YOU CAN'T BLAME THE BIRDS!



The Parable

"Some fell among the rocks, where there was little soil. It quickly sprang up, but the sun scorched it, and it withered away."

IT LOOKED GOOD FOR A WHILE!

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The People

"They receive the word with joy. They believe for a while; but when trials come, they fall away."

THE SEED COULDN'T SURVIVE IN SUCH SHALLOWNESS!



The Parable

"Some fell among the weeds, which grew up and choked the plants."

WHAT A WASTE OF GOOD SEED!

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The People

"They hear the word; but the cares and pleasures of life choke the word. They remain fruitless."

THEY PREFERRED TO GROW OTHER THINGS!



The Parable

"Some fell on good ground, grew and became fruitful."

FINALLY! SOIL THAT WAS RECEPTIVE TO THE SEED!

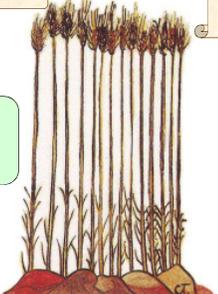
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The People

"They hear the word; they accept it, live by it, and have fruitful lives."

THE SEED ACCOMPLISHED ITS PURPOSE!



Two reasons FAKES can look "saved."

- **REASON #1 = THEM!**
They may have a temporary appearance of "growth."
- Fakes can often counterfeit good characteristics for a while. (In the past, we've looked at many examples of this.)



THE GROWING STOPPED!

Two reasons FAKES can look "saved."

- **REASON #2 = US!**

We may be looking at the wrong things: characteristics that are NOT evidence of growth.

- We often look at characteristics that anyone can have. (Example: A religious life.)



LOOK AT THE BEAUTIFUL WEEDS!

★ FAKES ARE NEVER ACTUALLY SAVED ★

(Their growth is temporary and fruitless.)

- Eventually, their supposed "growth" comes to an end.
- For those who leave the church (i.e., God's people), their "**past tense**" supposed salvation is proved false by their "**present tense**" departure.

They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

1 John 2:19 (NIV)

Scripture describes genuine spiritual growth as an ongoing process.

- In Scripture, "growing in grace" is an ongoing way of life.



- God's sovereignty has guaranteed it will be that way.
- If it's genuine, we won't do it at one moment in life, and then stop for the rest of life.

Fakes can have a "BACKWARD FOCUS"!

EVIDENCE OF BEING A FAKE

I did some growing 3 years ago. Now I can stop growing and claim I'm saved!

★ God's people can have a "FORWARD FOCUS"! ★

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philip. 3:14 (NIV)

The PICTURE GALLERY

The fakes vs. the saved.

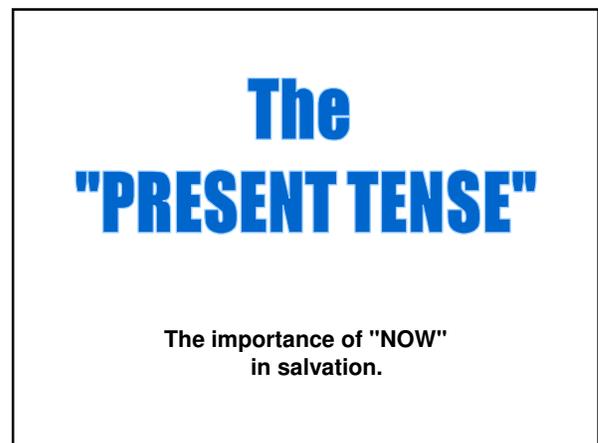
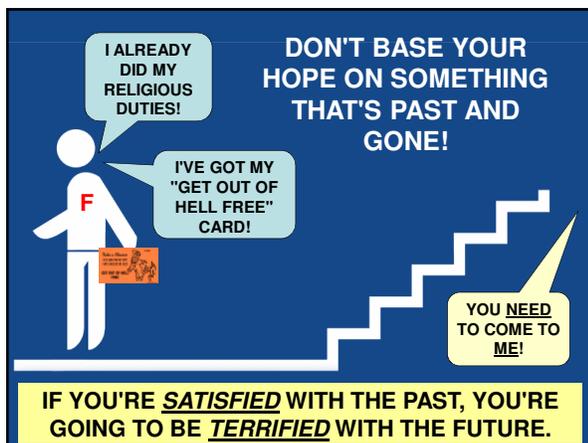
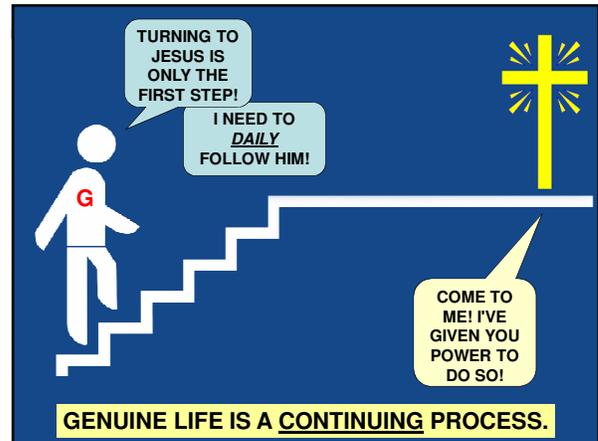
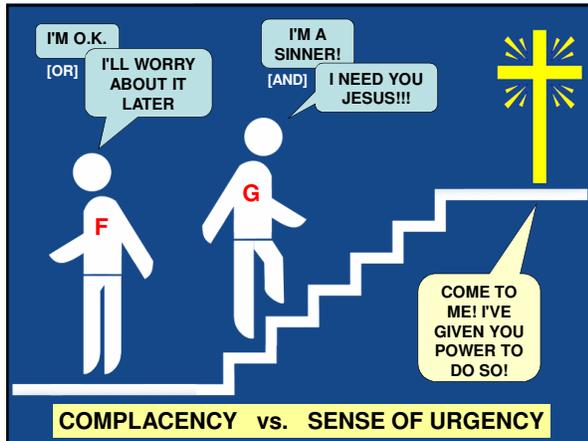
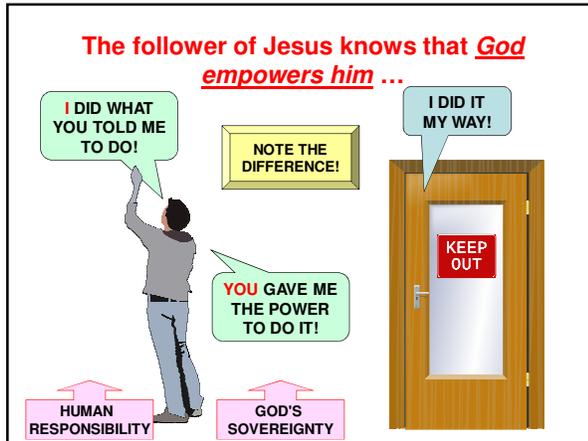
The follower of Jesus knows he needs Jesus ...

I NEED YOU, JESUS!

NOTE THE DIFFERENCE!

I CAN DO IT ON MY OWN!





Most "assurance" passages describe a "present tense" growth.

NOTE THE DIFFERENCE:

- **Present tense:** "You are growing." (= not stopped)
- **Past tense:** "You grew." (= could have stopped)
(For fakes, it does stop.)

God works in the "NOW time" – "Today."

"**Today**, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as [Israel did] in the rebellion."
Hebrews 3:15b (LEB)

Some examples of "assurance" passages:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven."
Matthew 7:21 (HCSB)

- He does it, not did it.

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."
John 10:27 (NIV)

- They listen and follow, not listened and used to follow.

... and, once made perfect, [Jesus] became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ...
Hebrews 5:9 (NIV)

- They obey him, not used to obey him.

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
1 John 2:3-4 (NIV)

- God's people obey him, not used to obey him.
- The truth is not in the fakes, (whether or not they had it in the past).

This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.
1 John 3:10-14 (NIV)

- ALL **present tense!**

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.
1 John 3:14 (NIV)

- Our "**past tense**" salvation is proved genuine by our "**present tense**" love.



"PAST-TENSE GROWTH" without "PRESENT-TENSE GROWTH" has no FUTURE VALUE



- **GENUINE...**
like being born into new life... and still growing.



"PAST-TENSE GROWTH" without "PRESENT-TENSE GROWTH" has no FUTURE VALUE



- **FAKE...**
like an abortion... "never got very far."



TODAY's mission is special! It's for the **FAKES!**

- In the past, you may have done the things that characterize a **saved** person.
- For whatever reason, you've taken on the characteristics of a spiritually **dead** person.

... you have **fallen** away from grace.
Galatians 5:4b (NIV)

TODAY's mission is special! It's for the **FAKES!**

- We who are following Jesus **beg** you to return... to take hold of something **genuine**... to **grow** in grace!

[Don't] **fall** from your secure position.
But **grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:17b-18a (NIV)

THIS IS DIFFICULT! **BUT BY GOD'S GRACE, I KEEP CLIMBING!**

Growing takes effort... falling doesn't.

THOUGH WRITTEN TO A CHURCH, WE CAN TAKE THESE WORDS TO HEART AS INDIVIDUALS.

Remember the height from which you have fallen!
Repent and do the things you did at first.
If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

THIS IS EASY!

Rev. 2:5 (NIV)



Credits (1)

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- Parable of the Sower - A paraphrase based on all three accounts (in Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8).

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