

RECOGNIZING DEFECTIVE vs. GENUINE FAITH isn't some type of ambiguous, subjective, opinion-oriented activity.

 We have seen many Scripture passages that explain the differences between defective vs. genuine faith, and shows us how we should respond to them.

RECOGNIZING FALSE vs. FAITHFUL **TEACHERS** isn't some type of ambiguous, subjective, opinion-oriented activity.

- Jesus said "you <u>can</u> recognize them."
  - The apostles showed us <u>how</u> to recognize them.
  - Some of the apostles even demonstrated it, by recognizing them... and *pointing them out by name*.

### **BUT THE ISSUE IS THIS:**

All this "recognizing" has got to be by <u>Scripture's</u> criteria, not by personal opinion/prejudice/fault-finding.

SEARCH and RECOGNIZE **GOD HAS ALREADY DEFINED THE ISSUES** OT JUST WITH THE FAIR related to salvation. WE CAN'T CHANGE THE ISSUES and get away with it! **OUR JOB** is to **SEARCH** the Scriptures to know what God says, and **RECOGNIZE** the issues for what they ST ALSO WITH THE GENUIN are – the difference between genuine and fake! They searched the Scriptures day after day... Acts 17:11b (NLT) You'll recognize them by their fruit.

We have done these things – search and recognize – with the concept of FAITH (and related matters).

# AND FOR GOOD REASON!

- √ "Faith" (and what opposes it) is <u>a serious</u>
  <u>matter</u> and is often mentioned in
  Scripture approximately 600 times in
  the New Testament alone.
- ✓ It's what <u>God</u> says (not personal opinion).
- ✓ In many churches, the concept has become so distorted, that people think they are "saved" <u>even though their lives</u> <u>DENY everything that Scripture says about faith and salvation</u>.



# **FAKE** FAITH:

 It tends to be dissociated from Scripture facts and their application to life. It may even be left undefined.

Matthew 7:16a (CSB)

- ✓ It downplays the fact that <u>Scripture</u> says specific things must be believed, and that specific life-changes must occur.
- + Hopefully by now, you can recognize this fakeness for what it is! +

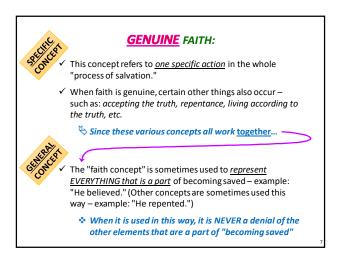
### AS PAUL SAID:

### ["GOSPEL" = "GOOD NEWS"]

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

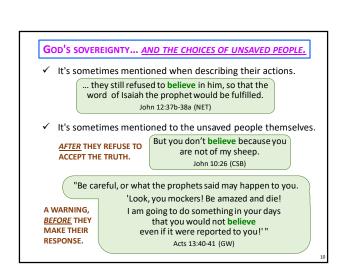
Galatians 1:8-9 (ESV)

"FAITH" is not a "private" matter that can be modified according to one's own liking. Rather, it's a "public" matter that can be seen and recognized by others.

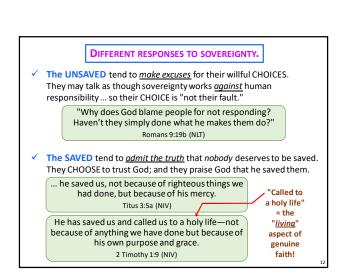




# FAITH & God's actions Never forget that GOD Is Involved! ✓ Scripture says that certain things are a part of salvation. God guarantees that these things will occur... ❖ So pretensions about salvation don't work. ✓ Scripture shows us (repeatedly) that in no way does God's involvement go against or contradict our responsibility... ❖ So we can't blame GOD for our choices! JESUS AND THE APOSTLES WERE ALL WILLING TO TALK ABOUT GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY... EVEN WHEN TALKING ABOUT HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY.











WE must be willing to pay attention to the Good News, and to respond to it favorably (= faith/trust in what God says). Normally, OTHER PEOPLE are also involved in this process.

### WHAT OTHERS MUST DO.

- 1. God's people need to speak the truth to share the good news. (We've noted this fact in the past - example: Romans 10:14.)
- 2. They need to oppose false teaching, false teachers and sin.
- · Those who mislead must be rebuked.

For there are many rebellious people, idle talkers, and deceivers, .. who must be silenced because they mislead whole families ... For this reason rebuke them sharply that they may be healthy in the faith... Titus 1:10a, 11a, 13b (NET)

• They need to do this because it is an expression of love (even though others may criticize and oppose them for doing so).

As I urged you ... instruct certain people not to spread false teachings, nor to occupy themselves with myths and interminable genealogies. Such things promote useless speculations rather than God's redemptive plan that operates by faith. But the aim of our instruction is *love* that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. Some have strayed from these and turned away to empty discussion. They ... do not understand what they are saying or the things they insist on so confidently. 1 Timothy 1:3-7 (NET)

• God opposes those who encourage sin... so should we!

"If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a large millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned at the bottom of the sea.

... how terrible it will be for that person who causes someone to sin!" Matthew 18:6-7 (ISV)



WE must choose to follow Jesus - repent, trust, etc. Here are some attitudes that will help us as we make this change:

SOME THINGS TO DO, AS WE PURSUE THESE CHANGES.

1. Pursue genuine faith - fact-based and alive - and oppose defective faith in its various forms.

> ... if you have faith and do not doubt, .. [= a prerequisite for answered prayer - v. 22]. Matthew 21:21b (NET)

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, ... Luke 17:5-6a (ESV)

## 2. Pursue the right priorities.

• We must value a living fact-based faith more than we value religious activities. (This will result in a focus on more important matters.)

'Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You give a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, yet you neglect what is more important in the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness! You should have done these things without neglecting the others." Matthew 23:23 (NET)

- 3. Cling to moral integrity (so your faith won't be destroyed).
  - Moral integrity results in a good conscience which influences the outcome of your faith.

Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked. 1 Timothy 1:19 (NLT)

4. Pursue the visible aspects of this saving change.

. (We will look at this issue next time.)

FAITH & #3 Consequences

Salvation comes with many wonderful consequences – but only for those who are willing to make the necessary changes.

> These things don't happen to those who want the "consequences" without the "changes."

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE Changes THAT RESULT IN SALVATION?

- 1. What <u>GOD</u> does. (<u>He</u> does it; we are <u>passive</u> in this matter.)
  - · He saves us.

[We are] those who have faith and are saved. Hebrews 10:39b (CSB)

• There are many other things... we will look at them later. (We already saw some as we examined the "faith" issue.)

### 2. What WE do. (We are active in this matter.)

(We already saw some of these things as we looked at the "faith" issue.)

- There are things we will do, if our salvation is genuine. Our willingness to do such things is a good indicator of whether or not our salvation is genuine.
- We need to take this matter seriously (rather than ignore it), because <u>God</u> said it will be this way. And his sovereignty guarantees it.



OUR "OLD LIFE IN SIN" may be fighting to express itself (and will sometimes succeed); but OUR "NEW LIFE IN CHRIST" will be expressing itself in increasing ways, as we grow in the grace of "following Jesus."

• We will pursue godly conduct... because God teaches us to do so.

[God's grace] teaches us ... Titus 2:12a (NIV)

(The full verse = quoted on the next page.)

· We will want to learn God's ways; and God will make sure we succeed!

God's sovereignty guarantees that these things will occur. But in no way does it diminish the fact that we will willingly CHOOSE to do them.

[God's grace] teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age ...

Titus 2:12 (NIV)

I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds.... Hebrews 10:16b (CSB)

### 3. Faith and consequences are connected.

- 1. If we have pursued the "changes" related to genuine faith, we can be assured that the "consequences" that come from it WILL OCCUR.
- 2. As we grow in our knowledge of Scripture, we will learn about things we  $\underline{\mathit{aren't}}$  doing, but **NEED** to do...



 $\ldots$  we will  $\boldsymbol{WANT}$  to change, because God is at work in ALL who have genuine salvation!

> It is God who produces in you the desires and actions that please him. Philippians 2:13 (GW)

Many church-going people have no clue what genuine faith is. Yet God has said so much about it in Scripture, that <u>nobody</u> has a legitimate excuse.

Hopefully, having looked at this issue... we are different!



Praise the Lord for "faith" and all that it implies!

"Faith" may be a "simple" word; but it is so rich in meaning and significance!

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