



What is Real?

Week 5 | Marks of Genuine Faith

| KEY THOUGHTS

- Sometimes when you use a substitute for the real thing, it turns out okay. But when it comes to faith, **the difference is between life and death**, like trying to substitute an umbrella for a parachute when jumping out of a plane.
- It sounds strange to say, but being “good” has nothing to do with earning God’s favor.
- Genuine faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit.
- I become a genuine Christian when the Holy Spirit...
 - opens my eyes to my sin and my need for a savior;
 - enables me to understand that **Jesus has paid the penalty for all my sin**;
 - gives me the faith to choose Jesus as my Forgiver and Leader;
 - shows me that I’m free from trying to do it myself; and
 - enables me to depend on Him.
- This is *justification*, which is accomplished by Christ alone; my good works didn’t earn it for me, and my bad deeds can’t disqualify me from it.
- Once I’m in Christ, my life is different as I turn away from self-leadership and learn to depend more and more upon Him.
 - The theological word for that is *sanctification*, which is another work of the Holy Spirit as I let Him show me how much God loves me.
- Knowing the motive for sin is everything, because the heart behind what I do is what God is most concerned with.
- We sin when we try to secure for ourselves a closer relationship with God, or seek happiness, satisfaction, or a feeling of self-worth in something other than Jesus; I sin every time I try to be my own savior.

| SCRIPTURE

⁹ But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) ¹⁰ And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. ¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

¹⁵ So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. ¹⁷ And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

Romans 8:9-17 (NLT)

| PRACTICAL

- Though genuine faith is entirely a work of the Holy Spirit, I have a part to play as well as I say “Yes” to Jesus every step of the way from the moment of salvation onward.
- How do I do that?
 - Rejoice in the truth of my salvation and enjoy God’s grace;
 - Walk in obedience and dependence on Christ, not in fear or self-dependence;
 - Accept no substitute for the real thing.
- If you’re not sure about all this, pray for the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to the gospel and transform your life. When you trust Him to do this, He will!

| REFLECT

- If I'm in Christ, I don't need to worry about losing favor with God because of poor performance; there's no room for fear when I'm a child of God.
- If I am a child of God, it's because of His grace, not my merit; my relationship with Him is *despite* my deeds, not because of them.
- As a Christian, you know you belong to Christ because His Spirit assures your spirit that you are His.
- If you can't see the Holy Spirit working in your life, is it possible you've been trying to restore your own relationship with God instead of trusting in the finished work of Christ?
 - If so, confess and repent of your sin and say "Yes!" to Jesus as your Forgiver and Leader.
 - Then enjoy God's grace and experience the joy and peace that can only come from knowing, loving, and depending on God as you were created to do.

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