
Words of Truth

Knockoff Christians

By: Brian A. Yeager

A man once came to visit El Paso and of all things he could have wanted to do, he desired to find a fake Rolex watch. He had learned that such could be obtained in Juarez and even sometimes in downtown El Paso at some of the pawnshops near the border. He had his mind set on getting one because he said he could never get a real one. This man also professed to be a Christian. After getting to know him for a few days, I came to realize that much of his life was about appearances. Upon spiritual investigation (Matthew 7:15-20), it also became apparent that his spiritual life was also all about appearances.

We read of such individuals in the Scriptures whom just wanted to put on a show of faithfulness to God only for the sake of appearance. Notice: *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him... Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation... Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity... And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness”* (Matthew 6:1-8, Matthew 23:14, Matthew 23:27-28, and Luke 11:39).

I am sure we can all think of some, if not many, whom we have known that profess to be faithful followers of God with their mouths, but inwardly they are far from it (i.e. Mark 7:1-9). It doesn't matter how good of a pretender some are, at some point they will be exposed for being fake (I Timothy 5:24-25). Such doesn't even always take a “trained eye”. Like a fake Rolex, sometimes you can just tell something doesn't line up with what you appear to be seeing. The Lord speaks of this. Notice: *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate”* (Titus 1:16). Now, let's stop thinking of all the fakes we've seen. Let's check out our watches (so to speak).

Are You A Knockoff?

Of course, most will jump up when questions like this are asked and they will deny such is the case. The guiltiest fakes are sometimes even confident in themselves that they are genuine. This happens because of self-deception. As you are reading this article, no person on earth is listening to your thoughts. There is no one to try and convince that this does not apply to you. Of course God knows what's going on inside of you (Revelation 2:23), but you cannot fool Him regardless (Psalms 44:21). So, the only person you'd be deceiving by not honestly examining yourself is yourself.

Self-deception is a real problem. Some don't even realize they are doing it (Galatians 6:3). Thus, you have to test yourself (II Corinthians 13:5 and Galatians 6:4). We all have to realize that it is easy to convince ourselves that we are something when such is not the case (Proverbs 21:2). To overcome self-deception you have to set your mind upon the right courses of action and do it (James 1:19-27). Now, ask yourself, are you just doing what you do to keep up an appearance of faithfulness to God? Process this question by asking yourself a series of questions.

Some Good Questions To Ask Yourself

Do you want to serve God (Deuteronomy 4:29)? Have you properly prepared yourself to serve God (II Chronicles 12:13-14)? How much of yourself have you completely surrendered to the will of our Heavenly Father (Mark 12:30-33)? What selling price would it take for you to walk away from the Lord (Matthew 16:24-27)? Do trials you face make you stronger or weaker in the faith (James 1:2-3)? Who do you love more than the Lord (Matthew 10:34-37 and Luke 14:26)? What would you NOT be willing to give up for the Lord (Matthew 19:16-29)? Do you delight, even when it is hard, to do the will of our God (Psalms 40:8)? Now, there are many more questions that we could and should ask ourselves. The above is just a start. If you answered those questions acceptably, to God, consider asking yourself more questions. Suit those questions to you. Make those questions about things you have struggled with in the past. What may be hard for you might be easier for others. Pattern your examination over your "tough questions". If you are a fake, consider how pointless that is.

Knockoffs Won't Be In Heaven

As we've already addressed, we cannot fool the Lord (Jeremiah 23:24). He will judge us based upon what we really are (Jeremiah 17:9-10 and John 5:28-29), not on what we want people to think we are. It is the pure that will see the Lord (Matthew 5:8). If a person is not holy they will not see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). Again, what are you?

Conclusion

It takes much more effort to be a fake than it does to be real. Being fake ends in damnation (Romans 2:1-6). It is a waste of time. Why do it? The end of fake Christianity is the same end as a non-Christian. A disciple of the Lord is one who continues in His will (John 8:31). You are not a disciple of the Lord if you are pretending to follow His will. There is one difference between a fake Christian and a fake Rolex though. If you are a fake Christian you can change that. So, if such applies, change it now (Acts 8:12-24).