



COLOSSIANS: IDENTIFYING AND WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS  
SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2024 \* PASTOR ANDREW SMITH

## YOUR LOVING GOD CHALLENGE

1 Corinthians 2:9: *Our focus this year—Love God. We just need to be people who love Jesus with every facet of our being. When you go to work or school or whatever this week has for you, love Jesus with whatever you have called me to do. Any stewardship or responsibility.*

1. How did you love God better this last week? How will you love Jesus in whatever you are doing this next week?
2. Following up on last week, how did you run your decisions through your faith instead of feelings this last week?

## TO DETECT A COUNTERFEIT, STUDY THE REAL THING

Pastor brought up a volunteer to try to identify the counterfeit bill from a \$5, \$20, and \$100. (It was a big challenge!) Many times, the forgery can pass for the real thing because we're not sufficiently familiar with what the real bill looks like. Law enforcement doesn't study the counterfeits—they study the real thing because that's how to best identify the counterfeit. To identify the counterfeits, you have to be well-versed with the real thing. Counterfeits can look good, but have no true value. responsibility.

3. How does this relate to faith?

## SO NO ONE CAN DECEIVE YOU

[Colossians 2:4] Paul tells us Jesus is the source of truth and knowledge in part so we can detect a counterfeit. He does this so no one can deceive us with arguments that sound reasonable. Some of the arguments we hear today concerning universal spirituality may sound or look good at first glance, but we can only determine a counterfeit faith by knowing our faith and the truth of Jesus that much more.

4. What counterfeits to faith do you hear promoted?
5. How do we detect counterfeit teaching in faith? How can you arm yourself to be a good counterfeit detector?

## CONTINUE AS YOU BEGAN

[Colossians 2:6-7; Ephesians 2:8-10] Paul commands us to continue as we started, not allowing our faith to become something it wasn't meant to be. To understand that, we have to look at where our faith began. What is the crux of our faith and how do we know Jesus is Lord of our life and we're in good standing with God the Father? The Bible tells us in Ephesians 2:8-10 salvation is only by grace and not by works. Grace is a gift given to us by Christ and accomplished by Him alone and that's it, yet most of us will struggle with that for the rest of our lives because in our economy we get what we deserve or earn. Our action is by faith—placing our trust in Jesus and what he accomplished on the cross for you. Any other teaching that says you have to do something else more than what Jesus already did for you is a counterfeit. We are saved **for** good works, not **by** good works. The things God wants to do through and for you are not part of the contingency of salvation—not christening, baptism, or anything else. This is evident from the story of the thief on the cross.

6. Do you relate to this struggle? What do those voices in your head try to speak to you about needing to "do" something?

## COUNTERFEIT TELLS #1: ANYTHING THAT PROPOSES JESUS AS LESS THAN FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN

[Ephesians 2:8-14] Christ made us alive and forgave all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt with all of its obligations...and nailed it to the cross. Colossians 2:9 tells us that the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ. Anything that proposes Jesus as less than fully God and fully man is a counterfeit. Anyone who says that Jesus was a good man and taught good things or that Jesus was a good moral example of the good life you need to live to be right with God are all counterfeits. Anything that says Jesus became God at some point is a counterfeit because Jesus existed before time and the Bible tells us that when the time was right Jesus put on flesh and came to man. How we understand that is a mystery we have to be okay with because the Bible tells us truths that are beyond us. Man is prone to want to create God in man's image, but C.S. Lewis notes that we either subject the Word of God to ourselves or subject ourselves to the Word of God. We have to understand that Jesus is God and only the God-Man could accomplish what no other could.

7. What does this C.S. Lewis quote mean to you and how do you live it out?

## COUNTERFEIT TELLS #2: SHAME THAT ATTEMPTS TO LABEL YOU INCONSISTENT WITH THE FORGIVENESS OF CHRIST

[Colossians 2:13] There is nothing the sacrifice of Jesus didn't cover. There is no one who has the power to do what Jesus did for us. We can confess our sins to one another, but no one except Jesus can forgive our sins. Sin is doing something out of alignment with God's best for us or others. God's forgiveness alleviates shame. Shame sets us back while forgiveness sets us free. Shame labels us in a way that is not consistent with new life in Christ. Forgiveness allows us to realize we are not what we've done in our past. We can own our mistakes, ask for forgiveness, and ask God to work on us, but sin is not our identity. Forgiveness allows us to value ourselves and lets us stop suppression conviction as a bad thing. That action in your past does not have to define you because Christ created a greater action.

8. What shame do you need to release in order to acknowledge the gift of forgiveness Jesus has given you?

## COUNTERFEIT TELLS #3: WE CAN'T PAY GOD BACK FOR SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T EXIST

[Colossians 2:14; Colossians 2:23] We are free from the sense of having to pay God back. Our faith should come from a place of gratitude rather than obligation. If God has erased our sins, we can't pay Him back for something that no longer exists! The debt has been paid and it's over. You're free to live in the freedom and liberty He gives us. But we have a hard time living into this in the same way we may have difficulty receiving gifts. We think, "You shouldn't have" or we think we need to give a gift in return. We have a hard time just saying thank you. But that is our proper response to God. This is how we "continue on" as in the beginning of our faith as Paul commanded. Colossians 2:23 tells us that false beliefs have no value to change us. Only Jesus can create life transformation.

9. What are the things that you need to say "thank you" to God for right now?
10. What counterfeit ideas have you innocently adopted that you need exchange for freedom, gratitude and transformation?