

BEWARE COUNTERFEIT FORMS OF GODLINESS

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: LIVING IN PURSUIT / SERIES: 2 TIMOTHY

BIG TRUTH: BEWARE COUNTERFEIT FORMS OF GODLINESS

2 Corinthians 11:3-4; Galatians 1:6; Psalm 1:1-3; 2 Peter 1:5-8; 1 John 2:15-17; Deuteronomy 10:12; Hebrews 5:11-14

BIBLE VERSE: 2 TIMOTHY 3:5

"...having the appearance of Godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people."

BIG IDEAS

- Counterfeit godliness is self-centered, not God-centered.
- Counterfeit godliness loves pleasure, not God.
- Counterfeit godliness looks wise, but rejects the truth.

BIBLE PASSAGE: 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9

TRANSFORM - LIVING IN PURSUIT

In High School, the Transform Year is an exploration of what it looks like to have transformed influence as we seek to live for a Kingdom that is greater than our own. First, we recognize that we will never be transformed if we are not Living for Jesus. To do this, we must first know who Jesus is by looking at who He says He is (John 8:58), and then look at what the Bible says about how in Him, we live by faith (James 1:6). Next, we recognize that to have transformed influence means that we must live as disciples in pursuit of Christ and His Kingdom over ourselves and our own kingdoms.

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- God never leaves or forsakes His children
- Holiness makes us ready for every good work
- God's Word equips us for every good work



Every student should feel...

- Strengthened and ready for the fight of the Christian life
- Love for God's Word which changes our lives
- Responsible to use their influence for Jesus alone



Every student should strive to...

- Read the entire book of 2 Timothy
- Memorize the Bible verse each week
- Recognize and flee forms of counterfeit godliness



Every student should want...

- To grow in how to rightly handle God's Word
- To faithfully face weakness so that God's strength would be on display
- To remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, in all they do and in all their conversations

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BEWARE COUNTERFEIT FORMS OF GODLINESS

BIBLE VERSE: 2 TIMOTHY 3:5

“...having the appearance of Godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”

Counterfeit godliness exists in the world.

“...having the appearance of Godliness, but denying its power.”

- There is a false godliness that exists in the world. It is fake and it follows after the pattern of Christ. This false godliness is an imposter of true Godliness. It seems good and holy, but it is not.
- Paul writes to Timothy warning him of this false godliness. It is promoted by teachers who teach a Gospel that is not the real Gospel. Instead of teaching the truth of Jesus, they teach some other truth. They deny the power of Christ and present a fake gospel. This isn't true Godliness.

Believers learn to recognize counterfeit godliness.

“Avoid such people.”

- Because this counterfeit godliness exists, believer must learn to recognize it. They do this by understanding true Godliness. When we understand true Godliness, we can easily recognize the fake.
- Believers know God so well that when they hear or see something that isn't true to Him or His character, they immediately know it to be false. They understand that the type of godliness that is being presented to them is fake and not from God.

Believers pursue true Godliness.

“...having the appearance of Godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”

- Jesus followers not only recognize true Godliness, but they pursue it. Paul writes to Timothy to avoid the people that deny the power of the Godliness. Avoiding those people also means pursuing the right thing. Believers pursue true Godliness by pursuing Christ.
- When we pursue a relationship with Jesus, we are pursuing true Godliness. We will avoid false godliness when we are focused on knowing Jesus and becoming like Him. We will not be deceived by false teachers, but instead, we will recognize those who are false and seek, instead, the truth.

BEWARE COUNTERFEIT FORMS
OF GODLINESS**BIG IDEA #1: COUNTERFEIT GODLINESS IS SELF-CENTERED, NOT GOD-CENTERED.¹****[THIS]**

Selfishness is sin and a true indicator of a person's sinfulness. When we act in sinful ways, we are not behaving in a Godly way. When we put ourselves first and seek our own way and demand our will over others, we are not exhibiting true Godliness. Even though we may seem righteous and Godly, if our behavior is self-centered in any way, we are not truly Godly. In 2 Timothy 3:1-2, Paul speaks of the type of person who is not truly Godly. This person is a lover of self and money. They are proud, arrogant, abusive, and ungrateful, to name a few of the things he mentions. These things may or may not be overtly evident in their lives. They may seem godly on the outside, but their hearts are full of these types of feelings and emotions. This is not true godliness. Instead, it is counterfeit. This fake godliness cannot lead a person to live a holy life that is pleasing to God. Instead, it leads them to lead a fake life that is displeasing to God.

[THEREFORE]

Read 2 Timothy 3:1-3. How is a "good" life confused with being Godly in church culture today?

When Paul writes to Timothy to beware of this type of behavior, he points out the behaviors of people who aren't living for the Lord. These people can deceive others and make them believe that they are followers of Jesus, but deep in their hearts, they are not submitted to Him. Often, people believe that just doing good things or kind things makes them Godly.

[THIS]

A truly Godly life is centered on God. If we want to live a Godly life, then we must know God. When we know God, we will center our lives on Him. Everything we do will be for Him because as we know Him, we will fall more and more in love with Him. The more we love Him, the more we will sacrifice for Him. We will want to live our entire lives for Him because we will understand how beautiful He is, and we will begin to comprehend the depth of love He has for us. Godliness is focused on God's glory. It seeks to elevate God above all else. This will lead a person to die to self and humble themselves before God. There will be no room for self-centeredness in this person's life. Instead, they will seek to make God's name famous in all of the world.

[THEREFORE]

What is the struggle in elevating God above ourselves in our daily lives?

When we have pride in our hearts, we are in direct opposition to God. Proverbs 8:12-13 teaches us that God opposes the proud and pride is an abomination to Him. We can't elevate ourselves and elevate God, too. Our purpose is God's glory, so if we are focused on ourselves, we are not focused on God.

What in your life reveals that your Godliness is not counterfeit?

Psalm 1:1-3 teaches us that those who seek to live a Godly life do not surround themselves with ungodly people. 2 Peter 1:5-8 also reminds us that when we seek to be Godly, we are living a life that is growing our faith and the knowledge we have of God. 2 Timothy 3:12 reminds us that those who are truly seeking to be Godly will face trials and persecution.

1. 2 Timothy 3:2: False godliness is focused on self and not on God.

BEWARE COUNTERFEIT FORMS
OF GODLINESS**BIG IDEA #2: COUNTERFEIT GODLINESS LOVES PLEASURE, NOT GOD.²****[THIS]**

Paul warned Timothy of those who seemed to be godly, yet they were actually following their own sinful hearts in 2 Timothy 3:1-5. In 3:4, he points out characteristics of these people, noting that they loved pleasure and not God. Paul's statement in this verse isn't a statement against enjoying anything in this life. He isn't saying that believers should never experience any good thing in this world or find pleasure in any earthly thing. He is speaking of people whose hearts are given entirely to the pursuit of pleasure. The pleasure they seek is not pleasure that glorifies God because they place it above their devotion to God. They seek to fulfill their own desires instead of seeking the glory of the one true God. A person cannot live for his or her own pleasure and live for God. This type of godliness is counterfeit. It's not real and doesn't reflect the one, true God. This is worldliness. Loving pleasure is focusing on temporal things that please us in the moment. This isn't focusing on what pleases God or furthers His kingdom.

[THEREFORE]

What earthly pleasures are you tempted to love more than God at times?

Often, we are drawn away by earthly things that bring us joy in the moment, such as material possessions, earthly success, or the approval of man. These things do not last. Luke 12:15 reminds us to not root ourselves in these things and 1 John 2:15-17 teaches us that these things are passing away and we cannot hope in them.

[THIS]

True Godliness is loving God more than we love pleasure. This doesn't mean that we never have fun or enjoy anything in this world, but it does mean that we keep fun and pleasure in the right place in our hearts. When we begin to place having a good time and pleasing the desires of our hearts above serving God and bringing Him glory, we are no longer living for Him. Instead, we're living for ourselves and following our sinful hearts, which are deceptive and lead us astray. Paul understood what it meant to live a life for God and his life is an example of loving God more than pleasure. Paul suffered for the sake of the Gospel again and again. He didn't forgo sharing the Gospel to prevent himself from suffering. He endured the beatings, imprisonments, and near-death experiences for the sake of spreading the Gospel. He did this because He loved God more than he loved his own comfort and pleasure. He put to death his earthly desires for pleasure and submitted his life to God's will and plan for His life.

[THEREFORE]

How does the idea that we deserve happiness prevent us from denying ourselves pleasure?

Living in America leads us to believe that we deserve a life free of struggle and trials, but Jesus promised that for those who follow Him, they could expect suffering. 1 Peter 5:10, James 1:2-4, and John 16:33 help us see that suffering are part of the Christian experience. This "no suffering" mindset keeps us from denying ourselves pleasure.

How does Paul's example of loving God more than pleasure lead you to a deeper commitment to love God more than pleasure?

Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, and Deuteronomy 10:12 teach us that our greatest command is to love God with all of our being. Paul's life is an example of this type of love for the Lord. This is how we should love God and when we do this, we will not love pleasure more than we love Jesus.

2. 2 Timothy 3:4: Fake godliness does not love God, but instead pursues pleasure and the things of this world.

BEWARE COUNTERFEIT FORMS OF GODLINESS

BIG IDEA #3: COUNTERFEIT GODLINESS LOOKS WISE, BUT REJECTS THE TRUTH.³

[THIS]

In 2 Timothy 3:6-7, Paul writes to Timothy of people who are always learning, but never arrive at the truth. The people he is speaking of are not people who are earnestly and honestly seeking truth. They are people who have rejected truth and are pursuing knowledge for prideful reasons. They desire to puff themselves up and promote themselves. They are not seeking to grow in the knowledge of God, nor do they desire to submit to His Lordship over their lives. This is not true godliness. It is fake and those who practice this type of godliness are imposters. They may look wise on the outside and even speak as people with great knowledge, but they are far from the Lord and their hearts are not submitted to His truth because they lack true understanding of His Word. We cannot mistake people who have a lot of head knowledge for people who possess true Godliness. As believers, we must practice discernment and recognize counterfeit godliness.

[THEREFORE]

How can a person grow in knowledge, yet fail to grow in Godliness?

1 Corinthians 8:1 speaks of the way that knowledge can puff up a person and lead them to grow prideful. This can prevent them from becoming Godly. Hebrews 5:11-14 also speaks to people being dull in their hearing of truth. When we grow used to hearing something, we can become immune to the truth of it.

[THIS]

Those who grow in truth are those who are truly Godly. Real Godliness doesn't reject the truth, but accepts it and hides in the heart. When we desire to become like God, we will hear His truth and apply it to our lives. We will submit our lives to it and allow it to permeate every part of us. We will not deny it, nor will we reject it. When we desire to be like Christ, we will accept all of God's Word regardless of how popular it is at the moment. We will trust His wisdom over our own or that of the world around us. We will not just gain knowledge for the sake of having knowledge. We will grow in true wisdom and discern good from evil for the sake of living lives that bring God glory. Paul warns Timothy to beware of people who seek knowledge, yet never arrive at the truth in 2 Timothy 3:5-7. He warns him to avoid those people. Believers will beware of people who practice counterfeit godliness.

[THEREFORE]

How have you seen knowledge lead a person to become prideful? How has this pride kept them from glorifying God?

Proverbs 16:18 and 29:23 teach us that pride comes before a fall. This means that when we become prideful, it will lead to us falling. We will not glorify God as we should. When we gain a lot of knowledge, it is easy for us to think this happened in our own power, when it was really the blessing of God that allowed it to happen.

Read 2 Timothy 3:5-7. How can you learn to discern between counterfeit godliness and true Godliness?

Paul writes to Timothy to warn him of a fake godliness. He does this to help Timothy learn to recognize those who are fake in his congregation. As believers, we must discipline ourselves to discern the difference between fake godliness and true godliness. When we know what true godliness is, we can easily spot an imposter. Knowing true Godliness helps us understand what is not Godly.

3. 2 Timothy 3:7: Those who practice false godliness reject the truth.