

Introduction:

1. In talking about a church, have you ever heard it said, “All those people down there are hypocrites”?
 - a. The motivation for making such statements might be varied. Maybe it is to justify self. Or maybe someone in that church is that way—and the speaker paints with too broad a brush.
 - b. Regardless of motivation, the statement is rarely—if ever—true.
2. There are some people who really are genuine—who are absolutely not hypocrites!
 - a. A case in point is young Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:5. The word “genuine” (NKJV) is a word that means “without hypocrisy.” In context, it is “faith without hypocrisy.” It has the same root word that Jesus used in Matthew 23:14 for “hypocrite,” except that it has the negative participle “a” in front of it which negates the word. It is, then, the opposite of “hypocrite.” It means “sincere.”
 - b. You could not point to the church (at Ephesus?) and call all of those Christians “hypocrites.”

The Lesson:**I. What Constitutes Genuine Faith?**

- A. While there are many elements of sincere faith, our study will only be from 2 Timothy. And, we will not address everything found in this book. But, I think we can find some key elements that will help us understand and attain genuine faith. Our study will focus only on those things that Paul says about Timothy’s faith. Our first element is found in our key text.
 1. Genuine faith finds its source in the Sacred Writings, 2 timothy 1:5; 3:14-15.
 - a. You have to understand what these women taught Timothy. While grandmother and mother had taught him, they were not the ultimate source. They had not taught mere family tradition or custom. They taught Scripture. Timothy could say, “This faith is mine!”
 - b. Genuine faith has no other source, Romans 10:17. Only by this can you survive the tests of time and trials. God designed this faith fo endure in every season and stage.
 2. Sincere faith retains the standard of sound words, 2 Timothy 1:13.
 - a. This kind of faith recognizes and respects that God has a standard (pattern) that is unchangeable. These things are true in the 1st and 21st centuries.
 - b. True faith does not embrace a few Bible precepts and then call the rest “non-essential.” It retains (holds to) all of God’s pattern revealed in Scripture. The gospel is the word of salvation. It is not to be tampered with, tempered or toned-down to please anyone.
 3. Unhypocritical faith is unashamed of the testimony of the Lord, 1 Timothy 1:8.
 - a. Sometimes the devil’s people criticize God’s people and the message of God’s people. They may evn do evil things against God’s people (as they did with Paul). But sincere faith stays with the gospel and is not ashamed! Remember Romans 1:16.
 - b. It is not ashamed of the overall message or of the specifics in the message. It is not ashamed of Jesus or His teaching on salvation, marriage, heaven, hell, or anything.

4. Unfeigned faith is ready to suffer for the gospel of Christ, 2 Timothy 1:8.
 - a. Men like Paul and Timothy believed the gospel was worth dying for, if need be. Would you be willing to suffer and even die for Jesus? That could happen to us in America.
 - b. We must be careful about boasting in our faith. For, if we would not live for Jesus, it is not likely that we would die for Him.
 5. Unpretended faith abstains from all kinds of wickedness, 2 Timothy 2:19.
 - a. This is for everyone who names Christ, not just preachers. There is nothing more hypocritical than to claim to follow God while living in sin. (Remember Matthew 23:14.)
 - b. People with sincere faith still make mistakes, sometimes bad choices, and will sin. But that doesn't make them hypocrites. People who have the real thing grieve when they sin. They feel bad; they have remorse because their faith is more than just mental assent to a list of facts and a catalog of commands. They have a heart for God.
 6. Faith without hypocrisy has a powerful element of emotion, 2 Timothy 1:4.
 - a. Some might advocate a stoic faith, devoid of feelings or emotion. Not Paul or Timothy!
 - b. These men (real men) could shed tears over the lost, over their own sins, over Jesus' death, over the passing Christians whom they loved, and over missing each other.
 - c. When real faith is in the heart, it is combined with emotional elements that us to love, to serve, to sacrifice, to suffer, and to hope.
 7. Genuine faith remembers the resurrected Christ, 2 Timothy 2:8.
 - a. Jesus Christ is what it is all about. He is the gospel story. He is risen from the dead. In all circumstances of life, heartfelt faith thinks about Jesus—in temptation, in trials, in good days, in bad days, in happy or sad days—eyes focused on Jesus will sustain.
 - b. I need to think about Him and what He did for me and what He promises me at all times. This is at the very heart of sustaining faith.
- B. To these seven elements, could others be added? Of course. There is nothing specific here about worship, about marriage, about raising kids, or about evangelism. But all of the things in this list will prepare you for all other things you have to face.

II. Many Christians Have Genuine Faith.

- A. If that were not true, then heaven would be like a ghost town, with no inhabitants. But Scripture describes heaven as filled with people who lived right, Revelation 7:9-10
- B. There are people on earth (even in this church) who are people of genuine faith (though maybe not everyone). Some have the qualities we have discussed. They are real, genuine, and are not hypocrites. Some would like to think that no one is genuine—that everyone is a hypocrite. They are wrong. God's church contains those who are real!

Conclusion:

1. Genuine faith is accessible to everyone. It's all about what you choose. Jesus changes hearts!
2. It is the love of Christ that compels us to change. Has your heart been changed by Jesus?