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FAKES & PHONIES

Teaching Notes by Joyce Meyer

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FAKES AND PHONIES

I. Fake Faith

A. Are you believing God or trying to believe God?

1. **Hebrews 4:3** – Those who have believed do enter the rest of God.
2. **Romans 15:13** – Joy and peace are found in believing.

B. **Hebrews 4:10-11** – Those who have entered God's rest have ceased from the weariness and pain of human labors.

1. If there is no rest, there is no real faith. If there is no peace and joy, there is no real faith.
2. It is very important that we are honest with God and ourselves about where we are.
3. God will help an honest person no matter where they are, but a curse comes on things that are phony.

Matthew 21:18-19 – Jesus cursed the fig tree because it appeared to have fruit, but a closer examination showed it was a phony.

C. **Mark 9:17-25** – A man admitted that he had some faith and some unbelief. He asked for mercy and got it.

1. If he would have pretended and given Jesus anything other than an honest answer, I doubt he would have left with his son healed.

2. Who knows? Perhaps if the disciples would have been honest about where they were and not tried to have faith they did not have, they might have been more successful in ministering healing to the boy.
- D. I do not know about you – but I finally got weary of trying to impress God with my faith.
1. He knows how much I have and don't have – so why not be honest!

II. Faith Comes By Hearing.

- A. **Romans 10:17** – Faith comes by hearing God and hearing God comes by being in the Word of God.
1. The *rhema* word and the *logos* word are two different things.
- B. When I was baptized in the Holy Spirit, I heard God speak to me; and I immediately entered into faith and with it total rest.
1. We do not always need to hear an audible voice (and usually won't) – but we do need to know in our heart for sure what God has personally said to us.
- C. Can't we just put faith in God's written Word?
1. Yes, absolutely!
 2. But what about all the issues in life that are not specifically covered by a certain Scripture?
 3. Example: I am believing for a certain airplane, but I have not heard God tell me that He will give it to me for sure. I want it, but whether or not HE wants it remains to be seen.
- I believe God will do the right thing for us.
I believe He will do it in His perfect timing.

But I cannot say that I, one hundred percent, believe that He will definitely give me the plane that is in question.

D. I believe we can even tell by listening to our prayers what we really believe.

1. I am still asking God to give me this plane. “Oh God, please give me this plane. Lord, I really want this plane. If it is Your will, Lord, give me this plane. God, this is the perfect plane. I want this plane.”
2. If I would have definitely heard from God, I would be praying differently – perhaps something like this: “Thank you, Lord, for the plane. I am excited to receive it, God. You’re so wonderful to give it to me. I know the deal will go through at the exact right time.”

I would be decorating the inside of it in my mind.

E. When I had breast cancer, I had to follow conventional wisdom because I did not have a *rhema* word from God that He would heal me without any natural intervention.

1. We cannot force God’s hand just because we want it a certain way.
2. I would have preferred supernatural healing to an operation. But wisdom said to do what I knew to do, since God had not told me exactly what He would do.
 - a. He told me not to be in fear, to trust Him, to believe that He loved me, to believe He was good, and to believe that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. He told me to say these things over and over – especially when I felt fear. But that was all He told me.

- b. I had assurance in my heart that everything would work out all right. But I did not have a *rhema* word from God on all the particulars.
3. While I was waiting for tests to come back on my lymph nodes, I was trusting God as much as I could; but I also had some fear.
- a. **Psalm 56:3** – What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.
 - b. **Psalm 56:11** – . . . *I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*
 - c. David confessed that he would not have fear, but it seems that sometimes he still did. David did not have perfect faith, and neither do we.

III. God Will Meet You Where You Are.

- A. **Genesis 21:9-17** – God met Ishmael and Hagar in the wilderness.
- 1. **Genesis 16:4** – Hagar had a bad attitude.

Her attitude was what got her into trouble – why should God help her at all?
 - 2. **Genesis 21:9** – Ishmael mocks Isaac.
 - 3. **Genesis 21:16** – She was very negative – had no faith confession and no sacrifice of praise.
 - 4. **Genesis 21:17** – God met her where she was at.
 - a. God does not require us to come to His level; He comes down to ours.
 - b. **This does not mean that we can wallow in doubt and unbelief and receive miracles and provision from God.**

But it does mean that there are times in life when we are doing the best we can; and when God knows that is the case, He helps us!

B. **John 20:24-29** – Thomas had to see to believe, and Jesus met him where he was.

1. Why even have the story about Thomas in the Bible? Is it there simply to condemn those who have imperfect faith?
2. I think it may have been included to encourage those who are having a time of less-than-perfect faith – even a time of doubt and unbelief – to encourage them. Just as Jesus met Thomas where he was at, He will also meet the rest of us.
3. **He meets us where we are at and helps us get to where we need to be!**
4. Jesus did correct Thomas for his unbelieving attitude. He did tell him it would have been better if he had believed without seeing. But Jesus did not reject Thomas because of his weakness in this area.
5. **To be corrected without being rejected is one of the wonderful things about relationship with Jesus.**

C. Peter's faith and his failure

1. **Matthew 16:13-23** – Peter had a revelation from God about Who Christ was, and it causes him to have strong faith in that area.
 - a. When we are lacking faith, we often need to pray for greater revelation of Who Jesus is.
 - b. Some people cannot put faith in God because they have not gotten the revelation that God is good.

2. Peter turned right around and displayed fear about going to Jerusalem; he knew it meant suffering.
 3. **Luke 22:31-34** – Peter was told that his faith was going to be stretched.
 - a. When God begins to stretch our faith, it seems at first that the greater capacity is just not there. As He persists in His ways, we eventually see God’s faithfulness on a new level; and it increases our faith.
 - b. Jesus told Peter that He was praying that his faith would not fail; and when the test was over, he would be able to strengthen his brethren.
 - c. Peter failed miserably, but it left him empty of himself and ready to be filled with more of God.
- D. **James 5:17** – Elijah was a human being just like us; and yet he prayed, and God answered him.
1. **I Kings: Chapter 18** – Elijah single-handedly slays 450 Baal prophets. He displays great faith in God as he calls fire down from heaven.
 2. **I Kings: Chapter 19** – Elijah runs in fear from Jezebel and becomes very depressed and negative – he even speaks of not wanting to live.
 3. God did not give up on Elijah, and He will not give up on us either.
- E. **Matthew 14:28-31** – Peter walks on water.
1. Peter heard Jesus tell him to come. He had a *rhema* word.
 2. Peter did all right for a while, and then he became afraid and started to sink.

3. Jesus chastised him for losing his faith, but He also saved him from drowning.
- F. **John 8:31-32** tells us that the Truth will make us free.
1. I do not believe we can be loosed from anything, including a lack of faith, until we are honest about where we are.
- G. I have seen many people **FAKE FAITH** because they were too insecure to admit the truth about where they really were.

IV. Faith Is Not A Law.

- A. Faith is a channel through which we receive the grace of God, not a law that we must keep.
1. Faith is a force that releases the ability of God into our lives.
 2. Faith is released through prayer or confession, and through thoughts and attitudes.
 3. There was a time when I made faith confessions all the time. I still do that; but mainly, I walk with an attitude of faith. I trust God!
 4. I had to confess all the time – partially, to get myself convinced.
 5. **Do not reduce the wonder of faith in God to a law that you struggle to keep, hoping to buy some favors from God.**
- B. **Hebrews 11:6** – God’s Word says that it is impossible to please God without faith.
1. We should strive to have faith in God. Learn about His character and His faithfulness – grow in faith by stepping out of the boat and finding that He will not let us drown.

- C. Faith is the hand that receives the blessings of God, not the price that buys them.
- D. If we do not understand the difference, we get condemned each time we display weak faith.

V. People Have Varying Degrees Of Faith In Different Areas.

- A. **Romans 12:3** – Rate your ability with sober judgment, each according to the degree of faith apportioned by God to you.

1. **Apportioned** equals “a portion” – God gave to each of us a portion of His own faith in order that we may receive His grace for our particular, unique calling in life.
2. Do not think more highly of yourself than you should – do not have an exaggerated opinion of your own importance.

Wrong thoughts about our abilities and ourselves will release a judgmental attitude against others.

- B. Dave has a gift of faith in the area of finances.

1. In all of our years together, I have never observed him to have any fear or undue concern about our personal finances or the ministry’s finances. **He has a gift of faith in that area.**
2. I have developed faith in the area of finance, but I am not as strong as Dave is in that area.

- C. I have a gift of faith speaking in front of people. I do not think it would bother me to speak to anyone, anywhere.

1. Dave is not as comfortable or as fluent in speaking as I am.
2. Our daughter Sandra has a gift to speak in front of people.
3. Our daughter Laura hyperventilates when she even tries to speak publicly.

- D. Our oldest son David has a gift of faith concerning going into foreign countries, even potentially dangerous places, to work with missionaries. He has no fear in this area because God has apportioned enough faith to him to keep fear from ruling him.
1. I am bold in the pulpit and bold in confrontation; but I would not be comfortable on the Amazon River, facing a tribe of possible cannibals.
- E. Our oldest daughter Laura and her husband Doug have a tremendous gift of hospitality. They love to have people over, they do not mind people just stopping by, and they usually have someone living with them.
1. I do not like people to come to my house unless they have been invited. My children stop by, but even they do not just come over for the evening unless we have discussed it.
- F. Stop judging others because their gift of faith is not in equal measure to yours in a specific area. Stop judging yourself because your gift of faith is not in equal measure to someone else's.
- G. I have noticed that some ministers have a very strong gift of faith in the area of physical healing.
1. Many of them have received miraculous healing from God or have been involved in ministries where they have seen firsthand a lot of major miracles.
 2. We have many people healed, but not to the degree that someone like Benny Hinn does. The call on our two lives is different, and God has given each of us faith for our call.
- H. A minister recently told us that we have a gift of faith for our ministry. I never thought of it like that, but I bore witness that it was true.
1. We step out into things in the ministry that in the natural should really scare us, but it doesn't. We press forward boldly. When we hear God say: "Get out of the boat and walk on water," we get out!

- I. Stop comparing yourself or your faith with anyone else – **BE AN INDIVIDUAL!**
 1. Do not develop some kind of **FAKE FAITH** to impress people. Be honest before God, and you will always have all the faith you need for God’s will for your life.

VI. Other Areas Where We See Fakes and Phonies

A. Praise and worship

1. **John 4:23-24** – A time will come when people will **genuinely** worship God in spirit and in truth, **sincerely**.
2. **Isaiah 29:13** – People honor God with their lips while their heart is far away. They repeat things in a repetitious manner without any thought as to the meaning.
3. **Mark 7:6-7** – Pretenders and hypocrites worship uselessly and in vain.

B. The love walk

1. **Romans 12:9** – *[Let your] love be sincere (a real thing) . . .*
 - a. Love is insincere if done for the wrong motives – for example, to get instead of to **give**.
 - b. **Matthew 6:1-4** – Do not do your good deeds to be seen of men, for recognition and earthly praise.
2. **I Peter 1:22** – Have sincere affection for the brethren. Love one another fervently from a pure heart.
3. **I John 3:17-18** – . . . *let us not love [merely] in theory or in speech but in deed and in truth (in practice and in sincerity).*

C. Prayer

1. **James 5:16** – The fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available.
 - a. For prayer to be fervent and effectual, it must be sincere.
 - b. **We can be mouthing words AT God and not actually be talking TO God.**
2. **Matthew 6:5-7** – Prayer to be seen by people or multiplying words over and over, hoping to get attention for your much speaking, is not a sincere or heartfelt prayer.

D. Friendship

1. **James 3:10** – Double talk – out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing.

When people are nice to your face but gossip behind your back, they are phony friends.
2. **Proverbs 17:17** (KJV) – *A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*
 - a. People who are friends in good times but not in adversity are not true, sincere friends.
 - b. **Ruth 1:16** – Ruth was a true friend to Naomi. She refused to leave her in the hard times, even though it meant personal deprivation for her.
 - c. **II Kings 2:2** – Elisha was a true friend to Elijah. He refused to leave him until his life was over. He did not leave Elijah when he got old and perhaps was winding down. He stayed with him through times of prosperity and times of hardship.

- d. David and Jonathan had a true friendship. It was seen in many ways – one of which was David seeking to find a relative of Jonathan’s to bless even after Jonathan was dead.
 - e. **II Timothy 1:16** (KJV) – *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain . . .*
 - f. **II Timothy 4:16** – *At my first trial no one acted in my defense [as my advocate] or took my part or [even] stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them!*
3. I have a lot more people willing to be my friend since my ministry has flourished and I have become well known – more than I did when I was teaching 25 people weekly (all sitting on my living room floor). I got a lot of judgment and criticism then. Now everybody likes to mention that they know me, knew me, are related to me, or once came to my house for dinner.
- a. We should be friends with people because we sincerely like them, not because they are important and being with them makes us feel important.
 - b. There is a certain minister that is very well known that I could have easily moved into a very close relationship with. All I needed to do was pay some special attention to him, and I would have been “in.” I did not feel in my heart that it was a “divine connection” for me so I avoided getting into the “inner circle.” **I do not want phony relationships!**

Let us strive to be REAL, GENUINE, and SINCERE.

PURE MOTIVES mean more to God than any of our outward acts. Only those things we have done with **RIGHT MOTIVES** will be rewarded; all others will be burned up in the fire.

