Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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Being Genuine

(Jerry Fite)

Things of value usually have a counterfeit. Money, because of its purchasing power, attracts the criminal activity of counterfeiting. If one can print out 10's, 20's and 50's and pass them off as the real things, some will give in to the enticement of making a quick buck. Our government tries to make it harder for counterfeiters by changing the characteristics of our currency. The genuine money will have colored fibers in the paper, certain watermarks, and various distinctive details to thwart the efforts of the counterfeiters. Retailers constantly bring their employees up to speed by focusing attention upon the characteristics of the genuine money so they can spot the counterfeit.

If characterized as being wise and full of faith and love, we would consider such a comment a compliment. These specifics blend together to form "a good name," which "is better than precious oil" (Ecclesiastes 7:1). We, who understand this truth, value a good name by diligently seeking it and carefully guarding it.

However, like currency, wisdom, love, and faith have a counterfeit. James offers the following characteristics of genuine wisdom. *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy" (James 3:17-18).*

A person may appear wise in a worldly way. He may possess secular degrees from elite schools earning him coveted credentials. He assumes sagacity, but no one can criticize his ways or feel welcomed to question his views without a cold war. He is wiser than all, and you will be smart to just accept it as fact. James characterizes genuine wisdom as *"easy to be entreated."* A truly wise person is someone you can easily approach and with whom you can peaceably reason.

A man may manifest a "political" wisdom by using others to his own advantage *(Jude 16).* A pat on the back, or a flattering remark may move one to remember the timely praise when rewarding the next deal. This "worldly" wisdom is counterfeit of genuine wisdom for Heaven's wisdom is "without variance" or impartial.

Faith, like wisdom, can be counterfeited. God commands us to possess a *"faith unfeigned" (I Timothy 1:5).* Timothy, receiving teaching and being surrounded with godly influence, possessed an *"unfeigned faith"* just like his mentoring mother and grandmother.

Such a faith is totally focused upon Jesus Christ and the truth of His word. We can "believe" that God exists, but fail to trust in Him enough to follow His ways. We can say we have "faith," but genuine faith will always manifest itself by *"works"* of obedience (*James 2:18-22).*

Love is easily counterfeited by mere words. But genuine love is manifested by appropriate action. We can say we love the Lord, but if we do not do what He says, our "counterfeit love" is exposed by God's revealing light *(John 14:15, I John 2:5).* We can say we love our brethren, but if we do nothing to help them in their time of need, we have counterfeited genuine love *(I John 3:17).* Love for brethren is *to "be unfeigned"* and warmly *"fervent" (I Peter 1:22).*

Is your wisdom, faith and love genuine after passing under the light of God's infallible Word? If not, make it so. An entreating, struggling, and hurting brother or sister is needing your genuine wisdom, faith, and love!