

Inside and Outside



Week Six

inTro



Read This Week's Passage:
Matthew 23:13–30

THE SEARCH FOR AUTHENTICITY

They are different words, but the meaning is the same: poseurs, show-offs, frauds, knock-offs, shams, wannabes, and sell-outs. Being fake is a public transgression in many subcultures, especially in the teen and young adult years. In the developmental years of one's social life, being a fake by compromising standards of individuality and authenticity are akin to sin.

It's a fine line though, as many try to be "real" and authentic but still end up being within the boundaries of another community. There are those who are trying to "find themselves" by doing all sorts of socially unacceptable things. But what is unacceptable in one group is then established to be the norm in a subset of the community, and the pattern starts all over again.

Regardless of the sociological causes, it's the desire to be authentic, genuine, and true that feeds this phenomenon. The question that often remains unanswered is: What is authentic and true? Secular society, through the history of philosophy, has sought to find where truth lies, from "essences" and "quintessences" out there to "true forms" down here. Others have compared and contrasted cultures, genders, historical eras, and even species to discover where the locus of truth lies. Where science cannot venture, artists have created imaginary worlds and posited theoretical possibilities and permutations of truth.

All the while, the human question and the human problem still exist and continue. This week we will look at where the place of change occurs and how this impacts our understanding of the will of God.



inScribe

Write out Matthew 23:13-30 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Matthew 23:27-30. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?



Memorize your favorite verse in Matthew 23:13–30. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

How have you asked for and depended on God for internal change at the heart level?



Read more at www.inverseible.org/will6-3

CHANGING OF THE INSIDE

What is often not articulated but innately known is that the place of authenticity is the heart—in the inside of who we are. Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” This is often a subjective arena that both the hard and social sciences want to avoid, but one that the religious world has known well. The issues of truth, authenticity, reality, and morality reside in the human heart. The problems of humanity such as overpopulation, political corruption, global terrorism, world hunger, and environmental disaster can all be boiled down to the issues of the heart—inside the individual.

Another term for this innate human fault is sin. If there were no lust, all forms of sexual abuse would be removed. If there were no greed, all forms of environmental abuse, corporate waste, and financial crimes would be gone. If there were no pride, all forms of conflict, war, and struggle would disappear. This is Jesus’ thesis for the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7. Considered Christ’s new constitution for the kingdom of God, the principles of this sermon do not state political or socioeconomic ideals. Jesus is preaching that the issues of this kingdom reside inside all of us.

For this reason, Christ disdains religion that seeks only change on the outside while protecting the vices of the heart! “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9). The righteousness of the Pharisees only sought to be external, while the righteousness of Christ exceeds this (cf. Matt. 5:20). He then elaborates on specific internal issues: conflict (Matt. 5:21–26), lust (5:27–32), deceit (5:33–37), revenge (5:38–42), and hatred (5:43–48). Christ’s passion comes out in His admonition against external religion in Matthew 6:1–18 as well as Matthew 23:13–30. The greatest argument against Christianity is the attitude of those who only keep its standards externally!

Government persecution and policy cannot change the heart, though they may change outward behavior. Human institutions, such as even church and religion, cannot change the heart, though they may change outward behavior. We ourselves cannot change the heart, though we may change outward behavior. Only God can change the individual at the heart level from the inside out. God says, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them” (Ezek. 36:26, 27).

CHANGING OF THE OUTSIDE

The changes that God starts on the inside also have effect on the outside. Although it starts on the inside, the two aspects nourish each other. Repentance, spiritual longing, heart change, whatever you call it, the inside desire of the heart needs to find outer expression. Spiritual commitment to Jesus Christ and the Christ-following life can only flourish if there is an external manifestation.

With these two aspects, two dangers also exist. One ditch we can fall into is to focus only on the external while remaining unchanged inside. Christ calls this hypocrisy. Israel and Judah (many times) outwardly honored God, doing the right rituals and practices. But when push came to shove, there was no “heart” love for God.

Isaiah 58:2–4a has God saying, “They seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and did not forsake the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching God. ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?’ In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exploit all your laborers. Indeed you fast for strife and debate, and to strike with the fist of wickedness.”

Instead of external religious rites, God sought real, authentic, internal heart religion. “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?” (vv. 6, 7).

This ditch of only focusing on the external is called hypocrisy. Its root comes from a word meaning “actor.” The inner heart desires the religious praise of others more than God. Indeed the hypocrites were “poseurs, show-offs, frauds, knock-offs, shams, wannabes, and sell-outs.” Their outside didn’t match their inside.

Other versions of this hypocrisy include trying to fix the symptoms of the sinful heart through one’s own effort. Some throw financial resources at it, others medication, or education, and even technology. These have their rightful place, but the root of the problem continues to exist.

The second ditch we can fall into is to focus on the inside and believe nothing happens on the outside. This is just as dangerous because true transformation occurs in both. If there is no external manifestation, the question remains whether the power working within is truly of God to begin with. Those in this ditch deny the power of godliness and the power of God to change the heart. Mark 7:15 says, “There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.”



inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Which area of prayer is needed more in your relationship with God?



Read more at
www.inverseible.org/will6-4

Inside and Outside



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

1 Corinthians 10:31-33

Romans 12:1, 2

Philippians 4:8

2 Corinthians 3:18

Psalm 51:1-17



What other verses/promises come to mind when thinking about the inside and the outside?

Review your memorized verse from Matthew 23:13-30.

THE LORD OF INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

For true authenticity, the inner and outer component of ourselves must connect. The internal heart should inform and nourish the external manifestations of spiritual life. Despite what human inventions have been discovered through the centuries, this is something that no amount of research can do.

Paul writes about how true authenticity and holiness can correspond only through the creative power of God. “Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:16–19).

Paul’s conclusion is, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God” (v. 20). As Christ has died and resurrected in our hearts, we Christians should now live as ambassadors for Christ on the outside to represent Him.

Take some time to reflect on how we are ambassadors for the Lord Jesus Christ in the following areas. Are the topics listed below connected to God in our hearts? How are they being manifested on the outside? In which area do you need re-creation and God’s power?

Time Management / Sabbath Keeping
Reverence / Worship
Finances / Tithe
Health / Diet
Exercise / Nutrition
Modesty / Dress
Media / Internet
Relationships / Family
Marriage / Sexuality



inVite

Where do you see Jesus in Daniel 6?



Where is Jesus in our standards of Christian lifestyle and behavior?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



Read more at
www.inverseible.org/will6-6



Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your
life this week?

→
After this week's study of the
chapter, what are personal
applications you are convicted
of in your life?

What are practical applications
you must make?



Read more inSight from the
Spirit of Prophecy at
www.inverseible.org/will6-7

CHRIST WITHIN

“God does not require us to give up anything that it is for our best interest to retain. In all that He does, He has the well-being of His children in view. Would that all who have not chosen Christ might realize that He has something vastly better to offer them than they are seeking for themselves. Man is doing the greatest injury and injustice to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the will of God. No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by Him who knows what is best and who plans for the good of His creatures. The path of transgression is the path of misery and destruction.

“It is a mistake to entertain the thought that God is pleased to see His children suffer. All heaven is interested in the happiness of man. Our heavenly Father does not close the avenues of joy to any of His creatures. The divine requirements call upon us to shun those indulgences that would bring suffering and disappointment, that would close to us the door of happiness and heaven. The world's Redeemer accepts men as they are, with all their wants, imperfections, and weaknesses; and He will not only cleanse from sin and grant redemption through His blood, but will satisfy the heart-longing of all who consent to wear His yoke, to bear His burden. It is His purpose to impart peace and rest to all who come to Him for the bread of life. He requires us to perform only those duties that will lead our steps to heights of bliss to which the disobedient can never attain. The true, joyous life of the soul is to have Christ formed within, the hope of glory.

“Many are inquiring, ‘How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?’ You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.

“Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not now choose to be Christians.

“Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith.”

(Steps to Christ, p. 46-48)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



How have you been a wannabe or fake in the past? Have you felt pressure to be fake as a Christian? Why?

What is it about the human heart that refuses and even despises change?

Which of the two ditches (internal change only; external change only) are more prevalent in your life? Which of the two ditches are more dangerous in the church? Why?

As Christians, if we aren't representing Christ, who are we representing instead?

How do we center our beliefs in Christian standards and lifestyle on Jesus Christ more?

How does this week's lesson impact knowing God's will for your life?