



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#182)

Visible evidence vs. "half-truth" that opposes it.



SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES WE HAVE SEEN:

- ✓ The "Salvation topic" itself – along with "Learning How to Study the Bible" (an easy-to-use method).
- ✓ Justification and forgiveness.
- ✓ Sanctification and holiness (two words pointing to the same concept).
- ✓ Resurrection and eternal life.

THE NEXT CONSEQUENCE TO LOOK AT:

- ✓ Visible evidence and "assurance of salvation."

**Visible evidence related to being saved.**

IT IS NEEDED...IT CAN EXIST IN A PERSON'S LIFE.

**By now, it should be obvious!**

(In the past ...)

We have come across so many Scripture passages that point to the need for evidence, as well as to the existence of evidence.

→ We could wonder why anyone would question or oppose it! . . . . Yet they do.

Verses about this issue do exist!

**If you point out verses that mention this issue ...**

Those who reject it tend to:

- Ignore you.
- Oppose and Slander you.
- Call you a "self-righteous hypocrite."
- Accuse you of being "judgmental."
- And so much more.

When you try to show them specific Scripture passages:


- They don't look.
- They don't care.
- They don't want to know.
- They don't like what the verses say.

WHY? (typical reasons)

- It goes against their beliefs (often distorted *half*-truths from the Bible) AND against the spirit of this age (which still controls them).
- It goes against the way they live, AND may even suggest that they are unsaved (along with many of their family and friends).
- It's not what they want to hear; they say it's not "positive."
- ★ Rarely can they say they haven't seen those passages. (After all, those passages aren't hidden! They're available for all to see!)

**THIS ATTITUDE IS NOT NEW.**  
It's been going on for centuries... or even millennia.

**WHY would they do that? I just don't understand!**




The "mental framework" on which this thinking is built has been around since the beginning of time. It goes all the way back to when the Serpent taught Eve (and eventually Adam) to view reality in terms of "half-truth."

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**"HALF-truth is half-LIE... And eventually the LIE wins."**

**MEMORIZE THIS!**

**JUST BECAUSE YOU SAY SOMETHING TRUE DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE BEING TRUTHFUL!**



**THE TRUTH PART:**  
"You'll be like God, knowing good and evil."  
Genesis 3:5b (GW)

**IT WAS PARTLY TRUE.**  
Then the Lord God said, "The man has become like one of us, since he knows good and evil."  
Genesis 3:22a (GW)


**BUT THEY WOULD LOSE THE ABILITY TO DO THE GOOD.**

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**"... eventually the LIE wins."**

"You certainly won't die!" the snake told the woman.  
Genesis 3:4 (GW)

**EVEN A LIE MAY CONTAIN FRAGMENTS OF TRUTH!**



**THE LIE PART:**  
They would not die.

**WITH A TRUTH FRAGMENT:** Their bodies didn't *immediately* die.

**HERE IS THE FULL TRUTH:**  
Their bodies *DID* eventually die ... and their spirits died immediately. \*

\* (In the Bible, "death" means "SEPARATION," not "TOTALLY CEASING TO EXIST.")

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**How does this apply to us?**

Ever since that event in the Garden, it has been *natural* for people to focus on half-truth. This tendency occurs in *all* areas of life.

- It has become the NATURAL (though not correct) *mental framework* that controls how a fallen race of humans views reality.
- Even before looking at an issue, people are *predisposed* to seeing things that way.
- This is the reason for so much disagreement in the world (especially when the "half-lie" has taken over).

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**THIS MEANS** (related to the "visible evidence" issue):

- We shouldn't be surprised when people attack what we say. They are just doing what comes natural, when controlled by a *mental framework* that is geared toward seeing half-truths.

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**Accepting half-truth is NOT normally a deliberate act.**

- More often than not, it's done without realizing it – just because doing so is a person's *natural* response.
- **Also...**
  - ✓ They may have been *taught* the half-truth (already distorted).
  - ✓ Their half-truth may be a *reaction* to the "opposite" half-truth distortions made by others.

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**WHAT THIS MEANS TO US**  
(when we point out visible-evidence issues):

- Because of *their own* distortion of Scripture (i.e., their focus on *half* of the truth), they may interpret *our* words as promoting the *opposite* of their view, and then oppose us because of that.
- They may interpret *any* disagreement with them to be a promotion of the *opposing* view. (Ironically, since we don't agree with the "opposite" half-truth, either, we may get opposed by *both* sides!)

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**REMINDER: This issue doesn't apply just to "everyone else," but to "all of us."**

**Therefore, we need to start by FIRST focusing on our own attitude.**

- We need to examine possible ways *we* may be promoting half-truth. **We want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem!**
- **We need to develop the "renewed mind" of Romans 12:2.** This is the *only* way we will be able to see things correctly.

**THIS CHANGES OUR PERSPECTIVE ON EVERYTHING!** → ... be transformed by the renewing of your mind.  
Romans 12:2b (NIV)

- The more we pursue this renewed mind, the better we will be at *recognizing* the various "halves" of the truth, and accurately distinguishing between the truth and the error of *each* "half."
- (This "renewing" is a *lifelong* pursuit.)

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### The "ideal" way to study this Bible issue:

- **Ideally**, everyone involved (people on both sides) would seek to attain renewed minds.
- **Without this**, it becomes a matter of one "half-truth" attacking the other "half-truth" – *each side fully convinced that its view is what the Bible teaches. Each side would probably claim that they're just "using Scripture to interpret Scripture!"*

#### "Using Scripture to interpret Scripture"

This is a good thing to do. It can be done ... but "saying it" is not the same as "doing it."

Every false teacher will claim to be doing so. But they are actually using *one* passage in *one* context to distort *another* passage in *another* context (as though the two passages were "enemies," instead of "friends").

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Suppose we approach this topic, not knowing the answer, and wanting to avoid half-truth ...

#### HOW CAN WE AVOID THIS TRAP?

1. A "renewed mind" will develop within us a proper *mental framework* (though it takes time).
2. Recognizing the following differences will also help:

#### The difference between:

- Willing to submit to Scripture and change one's view.
- Refusing to listen to Scripture, and keeping one's view.

#### The difference between:

- Accepting all that Scripture says, within its context.
- Using one passage to change the meaning of another.

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When dealing with half-truth, we need to have TWO FOCUSES.

#### FOCUS #1: Dealing with ourselves FIRST.

- Follow God's priorities! Focus FIRST on our own misinterpretations!
  - ✓ We should consider OUR undealt-with false views to be a bigger matter than THEIRS. We should deal with ours FIRST!

You hypocrite! **First** remove the beam from your own eye. **Then** you will see clearly to remove the piece of sawdust from another believer's eye.

Matthew 7:5 (GW)

- ✓ Our opponents may attack what we are saying, and may make many unjustified and vicious accusations against us.
- ★ But if we don't FIRST apply these Scripture principles to ourselves, some of the things they say may be *well-earned accusations*.

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#### FOCUS #2: Dealing with the misunderstandings of others.

★ Scripture does give us obligations toward each other. ★

- We may have to say they are wrong (if we can support it in Scripture); but *that does not necessarily mean they are unsaved!*
  - ✓ Unless there are compelling reasons, we normally do not have to reach any conclusions about a person's salvation. (There are Scripture examples that illustrate times when we need to do so.)
- When it comes to "visible evidence," we may have to warn them, if evidence of salvation is absent.
  - ✓ Scripture gives us examples in which: ① people are warned against sinful conduct, and ② people are encouraged to pursue godly conduct. These examples are to teach us how to respond in different situations. (We must also do what they say.)
  - ✓ (Their spiritual condition will influence their response.)

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#### NOW REGARDING THE ISSUE OF "VISIBLE EVIDENCE."

We live in a day in which many church-goers *oppose* the concept.

- They may talk about grace, faith and forgiveness, but deny any visible-evidence issues.
- Some may even accuse us of promoting "works salvation," or something similar.

The very fact that they do this *proves that they see only half of the issue*. (It also shows that they *don't* have a renewed mind.)

- Otherwise, they would have accepted the "half" they have omitted! They would have been inclined to include the verses they are ignoring (or reinterpreting, based on the "light" of their half-truth interpretations).
- Even if they *want* (or claim to want) to pursue truth, their half-truth perspective prevents them from doing so.

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#### In their opposition to visible evidence, what types of half-truths might they stress? EXAMPLES

- ✓ Each person is different; but typically they might focus on things that (*in their thinking*) do *not* place obligations on us to change our values and conduct. This might include concepts such as: grace, forgiveness, love, faith (most likely, all poorly defined).
- ✓ So when we point to verses about "visible evidence," they tend to view it as an *attack* on grace and faith, and the *promotion* of "works righteousness."



- *If we had lived 500 years ago, the whole situation might have been reversed!* They would have been promoting works for salvation, and would have opposed us if we pointed out concepts such as grace!

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### How should WE respond to this?

- WE need to oppose BOTH false views – both half-truths – which is possible only with a renewed mind.

#### ALSO ...

- We need to examine Scripture for BOTH concepts, to distinguish between what is true and what is false, in both of the half-truth views. (We can't just randomly choose which parts to "believe.")
- We should listen to what others say. There may be truth in some of what they say; and we may learn from it (if we remain aware that it may be only HALF of the truth). Since their view may be a reaction to an "opposite" false view, we may learn how to avoid over-emphasizing something that would cause us to fall into the "opposite" half-truth trap.

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## < Our MISSION >

We need to deal with this emotionally-charged issue accurately and carefully; and attempt to communicate it in a clear manner.



Today, it would help if we focused on the word  
"RECOGNIZE."



We need to recognize...

- ✓ RECOGNIZE the nature of half-truth. Also the fact that half-truth affects ALL OF LIFE. (We can apply these principles to the broader context of life, and benefit from doing so.)

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- ✓ RECOGNIZE that WE can easily become victims of half-truth. Even if we are correct in *this* issue, there are thousands of other issues in life that we could get wrong.

And lest we conclude that "we" are better than "they" ...

- ✓ RECOGNIZE that our own weaknesses do exist.
  - We ourselves are imperfect. We need to *grow* in the truth and its application to life (= a lifelong pursuit).
  - We need to *credit God for any truth we know*.
  - We need to *realize that, even if we are strong in one area of life, we may be weak in other areas*.

- ✓ RECOGNIZE that we should not "give up" on those who disagree with us. Some may be hopelessly lost ... but we don't know what the future holds. God may be at work in ways we cannot see!

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### Some verses that could guide us in our pursuit of the truth:

- ✓ Do not add to or subtract from what God says. Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19.
- ✓ Do not depart right or left from what God says. Deuteronomy 5:32; 28:14; Joshua 1:7; 23:6.
- ✓ Do not go "beyond what is written" in Scripture. 1 Corinthians 4:6.

Each of these passages applies these principles to a specific context. But we can view these as basic principles to guide us in *all* the issues of life.

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### EXAMPLES of half-truth vs. Scripture:

#### WORKS:

- ✓ If we were promoting "works" in order to become saved, they would be justified in opposing us. But *our* focus is on a type of works that *they* don't acknowledge:
- ✓ There are passages that treat "works" as an *incompatible opposite* of grace/faith. But there are other passages that *connect* these concepts. What we need to do is to accept all of these passages, and work toward understanding how they relate to each other. (For example: Doing works "for" salvation is a whole lot different from doing works "because of" salvation.)

#### LIFE CHANGES:

- ✓ They may claim that God *changes* lives, but deny the need for visible evidence. Yet ...
- ✓ There are passages that tell us that God's *grace changes* us, so that we have a built-in *desire* to do good. But don't use that "half" of the truth to deny the other "half": the fact that *none* of us have yet attained perfection. *We still fall into sin!*

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