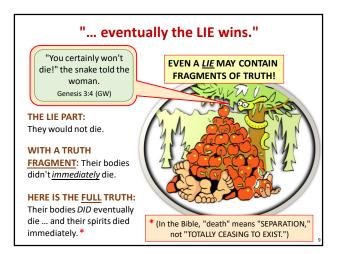


#### "HALF-truth is half-LIE... THIS ATTITUDE IS NOT NEW. WHY would MEMORIZE And eventually the LIE wins." It's been going on for they do that? centuries... or even JUST BECAUSE YOU SAY SOMETHING TRUE I just don't DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE BEING TRUTHFUL! millennia. understand! THE TRUTH PART: The "mental framework" on which "You'll be like God, this thinking is built has been knowing good and evil." around since the beginning of time. Genesis 3:5b (GW) It goes all the way back to when the IT WAS PARTLY TRUE. Serpent taught Eve (and eventually Then the Lord God said, "The man has become like Adam) to view reality in terms of one of us, since he knows good and evil "half-truth." BUT THEY WOULD LOSE THE Genesis 3:22a (GW) ABILITY TO DO THE GOOD.



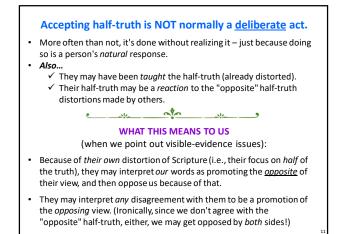


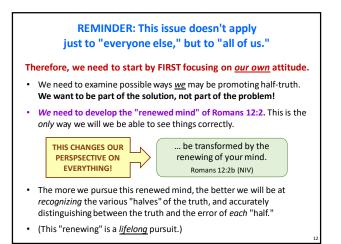
- Ever since that event in the Garden, it has been *natural* for people to focus on half-truth. This tendency occurs in <u>all</u> areas of life.
- It has become the NATURAL (though not correct) mental framework that controls how a fallen race of humans views reality.
- Even before looking at an issue, 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).



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.





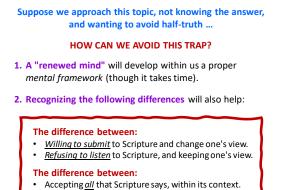
### The "ideal" way to study this Bible issue:

- 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. <u>Each side would probably claim that</u> 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."

<u>Every</u> 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").



Using <u>one</u> passage to change the meaning of <u>another</u>.

## 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.
- FOCUS #2: Dealing with the misunderstandings of <u>others</u>.
  ★ Scripture <u>does</u> 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 <u>are</u> 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 <u>us</u> how to respond in different situations. (We must also do what they say.)
  - ✓ (Their spiritual condition will influence their response.)

# 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 <u>include</u> 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.

## 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!

SIG.

They would have been promoting <u>works</u> for salvation, and would have opposed us if we pointed out concepts such as <u>grace</u>!

## 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 <u>both</u> 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.



 RECOGNIZE that <u>WE</u> can easily become victims of halftruth. 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 <u>do</u> 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!



- ✓ 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.

## EXAMPLES of half-truth vs. Scripture:

### WORKS:

- ✓ If we were promoting "works" in order to <u>become</u> saved, they would be justified in opposing us. But our focus is on a type of works that they don't acknowledge:
- There <u>are</u> 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 <u>all</u> 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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