

OLTL- The Troubled Life!

Luke 6: 24-26

January 22, 2012

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Have you ever been annoyed by a clerk at a store who pulls out the counterfeit money detecting marker to see if the cash you handed them was real or fake?

This past week I was waiting in line with my wife at a Starbucks store to order a tall bold Italian coffee and to pay with her gift card she received from a student in her class. I got annoyed waiting for the second register to open. Why the delay? It was because the manager had to take a \$20 bill to the back of the store to check and see if it was counterfeit or real.

I wondered how a simple swipe of a sharpie marker can tell if a \$20 bill is real or counterfeit. I goggled and found my answer. The counterfeit marking pens are basically just a marker filled with iodine. When a clerk writes on a bill with the marker the iodine either turns yellow or brown based on the amount of starch in the paper.

The U.S. Treasury uses paper to make real money that does not have any starch in it. So if you swipe the marker across real money the line turns yellow. However, when the marker is swiped across normal wood-based paper with starch in it the counterfeit bill will result in a brown line.

According to Naples Police, crooks will wash and bleach \$5 bills and then print the larger denomination on top of it. That way when the paper is tested it appears real. Is this counterfeit money problem really a big problem? Last year over \$189 million dollars worth of counterfeit money was discovered!

What the counterfeiters are trying to do is create something close enough that people won't notice anything if they give the bill a passing glance.

That marker is an easy counterfeit test for currency; but how do we test for a counterfeit life? It is not as easy as a sharpie marker swipe across your forehead.

As we continue on in our OLTL...One Life To Live series we come to the troubled life...the counterfeit...the not real life. Many people are trying to pass off a life that is not real. They are in trouble and some don't even realize it. They are trying to simply live a life that looks real and fun to those around them...according to them.

There are numerous counterfeit tests we can take a look at that will help us to know what a trouble life looks like versus the One Life To Live God created us to live.

I want us to take a look at four counterfeit confessions/marks of a person living a troubled life and then swipe across it, not with a sharpie marker, but rather with a scripture highlighter...God's word.

I Got It Made!

The first marking we see on a troubled life is someone who says, "I got it made!"

This is someone who has it all. They have put their trust and happiness in things. The meaning of life for them is found in the material world. They may truly be happy here and now. But when they die their happiness dies with them. They can't take with them those things that made them happy.

The trouble with this counterfeit confession is that it destroys the person from the inside out. They implode upon themselves. They may appear to those looking at them as happy and together. But only the counterfeiter knows the emptiness in their heart.

Jesus talked about where your treasure is there you will find your heart. He told the disciples to store up treasures in heaven and not in the things here on earth. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Two questions: Where's your heart?

Where's your storage unit?

James, the brother of Jesus, warned the rich about the coming misery they will experience. He told them they will weep because they will have lost it all. (James 5:1-6)

James proclaims the worthlessness of riches...a counterfeit life in God's standards. Today's money, possessions, portfolio, etc. will be useless when we die and meet Jesus or when Jesus comes again. It will be like you taking Monopoly money and trying to buy groceries with it. No need for a counterfeit marker...it is obvious the Monopoly money is worthless...counterfeit.

This is the message of Jesus...a life based on false values will be valueless to the one who thinks they have it made. Money itself is not the problem...it is the love of money that leads to a counterfeit life...a life without Christ at the center.

John gave a warning about this in the book of Revelation. Basically, he wrote how the people bragged about all they had in life. He called them blind beggars. He told them to buy gold. Buy God's gold...a gold that has been refined...is pure and real. Buy designer clothing...designed by God and not man. The people God sees are real are those who are corrected and guided in their life by God alone. (Revelation 3:17-19)

Stuck on you!

Another counterfeit marking is a "stuck on you" marking. This is someone who looks for the answers to life in themselves and not others. They attend "ME University." They get their full in themselves...they are full of themselves. They are warned by Jesus that they will experience a famine. The famine is that they will not look or listen to anyone not even God's Word.

The cure to this counterfeit image is the reality of humility. Pride makes us stuck on ourselves. We think we are so real and can't detect the fakeness in our living. We conclude that we deserve all we have in life. It grows within the person a greediness that will go after what they want, even if it means hurting or shaming someone else.

We can be made real if we allow the reality of God's love to sweep over our lives. We can repent and confess our self-centeredness and

ask God to take control of our lives. There is to be less of me and more of Jesus. (Galatians 2:20) We can see the approval of our Creator when we become real with Him.

A Spoiled Child!

Have you ever been around a spoiled child? This is another counterfeit marking on the hearts of people. What adjectives would you use to describe a spoiled child?

Complacent...not willing to work...arrogant...conceited...demanding. A spoiled child thinks their life should be all about fun and games without responsibility. Their pleasures should be met by those around them.

We have a loving Heavenly Father who desires the best for us in life. However, He doesn't give us whatever we want when we want it. We can throw a temper tantrum and still not get what we whine about. He teaches us discipline, obedience and submission to His loving will for us. (II Timothy 3:16,17) He wants us to have life to its fullest. He does expect us to work.

How can we overcome this counterfeit spoiled childhood?

We draw near to our Heavenly Father. We seek His will. As we draw near to Him He draws nearer to us. (James 4:7-10) We begin to see ourselves in His light and not our counterfeit countenance. Our hearts desire is no longer what I want but what does my Heavenly Father desire of me.

Our love grows and we want to please Him instead of desiring to be pleased so selfishly. We discover that when we surrender ourselves to His will He will lift us up to a life we never could have imagined or dreamed of...life eternal.

Popularity contest!

One final counterfeit marking is that of trying to be someone you are not in order to please others, your peers. Popularity is a powerful peer pressure. We often will do things we know are not right just to fit in to be a part of "your crew."

We will try to wash and bleach our \$5 hearts and then try to be more important than we really are; a \$50 heart. Popularity contests are not truth contests...they are counterfeit.

To live for the approval of others will more often than not cause you to live a fake life. Human flattery/approval doesn't necessarily equate with God approval.

Here is how the Apostle Paul talked about trying to fit in with the world's ways instead of walking in the way of Jesus:

“So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life---your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life- and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out.

Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.” Romans 12:1-2 MSG.

Who are you trying to be popular with?

Let God make you real in all you do in life.

The counterfeit life is a fake and will cause nothing but trouble.

The OLTL we have to live is not one where we think we have it made.

The OLTL we have to live is not one where we are stuck on ourselves.

The OLTL we have to live is not one of a spoiled child.

The OLTL we have to live is not one of popularity among the world.

When we swipe the scripture reality marker across our heart we discover that our true self is found in who we are in Christ Jesus.

We are children of our Heavenly Father. Our real joy is found in our being obedient to His will for us. We experience His love in all we do when we seek Him.

The troubled life is a counterfeit life...a life lived by the standards of ourselves and the world we live in.

The OLTL is the true life in the reality of God's love.

Are you trying to wash and bleach yourself to fool others about the life you are living?

What does the scripture marker reveal to you about who you really are in Jesus?

What OLTL will you seek to live?