

- ➡ Remember from last time: the Bible is very interested in our practice; a professor of Jesus is not necessarily a possessor of Jesus, and the difference is in how we practice our faith, **Matthew 7:21-23**. Do they practice lawlessness? Is God the King of their lives? This doesn't mean they don't break the law; it just means that it is not their heart's desire. They are in a continual progression from sinner to saint through repentance and change. Is there evidence of the Holy Spirit working out His salvation in them to set them apart from the world? These questions cannot be answered on a religious level. That is, just because they are religious tells us nothing about who they are.
-

1. The illustration of Romans 2:13-22.

- ✓ The Jews that Paul spoke of were very religious people and boasted of their relationship with God; they were confident that they were headed to Heaven because of their Jewish blood, and they thought knowing God's laws made them special and more spiritual than all others. The problem was that they professed a relationship with God but did not possess one. Their lives demonstrated that they didn't know God because they did not obey Him. They stand as an illustration of many who call themselves Christians and profess a relationship with Jesus but, in reality, do not possess it.

2. What is the difference between a possessor and professor?

- ✓ It is a similar difference between a counterfeit bill and the real thing. A counterfeit bill cannot be something that looks very different from the real thing, it has to pass as legal tender even though it is not. The scary thing about counterfeit Christians is that they pass for the real thing. It's scary not because we are afraid of them but because we are afraid for them. They profess Jesus as their Savior but yet they don't have Him as their Savior. They have been baptized, own their own bibles and even attend Bible studies, how is it they can do all of those things and still not be a Christian? It is because none of those things can make them a Christian. Substance is the difference; they have words and actions, but they have no real substance. The substance of the Jews was that they were teachers and preachers, **Romans 2:21-22**. They were also thieves and murderers in secret. They had an external profession of faith, but their substance was not in agreement. It's the same difference between a real Christian and a fake one. There is no substance in the fake one: no changed life; no real difference in life, attitude or outlook. There is no difference between them and the average lost person out in the world. The Bible teaches that it is impossible for us to change our own character, **2nd Peter 2:22**. They just eventually go back to their sin, so the net result of their life is still one of sin even though they've cleaned up for a time. No matter what you do with a pig, they are still a pig and will eventually do what pigs do. A lost person will go back to living like a lost person, even though they professed Christ at some point in their life.

3. Character is who you are when no one else is looking.

- ✓ When we accept Christ, His presence begins to dominate our life and practices. He promises us this. Over time, we progressively become more and more like Him and He dominates our actions, desires, and practices. The substance of actually being a true believer produces that character. When a person professes but does not possess Christ, they do not change permanently, they are not really interested in righteousness any more than a pig is interested in living in a mansion. They just simply aren't attracted to it. We put too much stock into the profession of faith as opposed to the possession of it. Jesus sent us out to make disciples, not decisions. We like to comfort ourselves with "they made a profession of faith", but if they have no fruit of salvation, no interest in a holy life, no desire for the word of God or fellowship with the saints, they are not saved!

4. Some would say, "we shouldn't question someone's profession of faith", but the Bible says the opposite is true, **2nd Corinthians 13:5** and **2nd Peter 1:10**.

- ✓ Christianity begins with a profession of faith, but it does not end there, and if it does end there then there was only a profession of faith but a possession of faith, **Matthew 7:21-23**.
-
-
-