



GOLD LIKE GLASS (Being Real, PART 1)

The Emperor's Seeds

May 28, 2022

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

The development of microelectronic manufacturing technology has enabled researchers to produce ultrahigh purity materials. When gold was purified to the limits of the technology, it had the appearance of clear glass and was completely transparent. This interesting and curious revelation brought to mind a Bible passage that was written some 1,900 years ago: "And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Revelation 21:21, KJV). It is now known that the deep rich yellow color is not a natural property of absolutely pure gold, but is instead the result of impurities.

Revelation 21:18 (NIV) • "The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass."

Revelation 21:21 (NIV) • "The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass."

Revelation 3:14-18 (NIV) • "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to

spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see."

Daniel 11:34 (NIV) • "When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them."

Romans 12:9 (NIV) • "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good."

1 Timothy 3:8 (NIV) • "In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain."

2 Timothy 1:5 (NIV) • "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."

Luke 12:1-3 (NIV) • "Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: 'Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have

whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.”

2 Corinthians 2:14, 15 (NIV) • “But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ’s triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.”

Psalms 66:16-20 (NIV) • “Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “GOLD LIKE GLASS”

This lesson on authenticity and hypocrisy is all about the problem of pretending. The word “hypocrite” means an actor playing a part in a play. Pretending. It is sobering to think that humans can hide behind masks and pretend that even God doesn’t see through them. The first of this two-part series on authenticity will focus on removing the mask and being true in our relationship with God (vertical). The second will focus on how we become sincere with others (horizontal). It seems that fear underwrites the desire to put on a front and resist full disclosure with God. Although we talk about God’s grace and His accepting qualities, experiencing intimacy with God can be challenging. It is necessary in this lesson to expose the myths that make us play make-believe with God. God’s almost unbelievable grace is the only thing that will enable us to come clean with who we really are.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “GOLD LIKE GLASS”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Unmask the notion that pleasing people is more important than pleasing God.
2. Examine the qualities that make people genuine.
3. Have the opportunity to deepen the commitment of who they really are to God.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) paper, pens or pencils; (Activity B) three bottles of bottled water, salt, sugar, a few dry crackers.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons.

Applying • Bibles OR copies of Matthew 23:1-36 in a contemporary translation.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this exercise is to develop an understanding of what it means to be genuine by looking at the synonyms and antonyms of key words. The students will need paper and something to write with. They will be divided into groups of three or four, or pairs (depending on how many people you have) to develop a list of words (synonyms and antonyms) that describe what “being real” (or not) looks like in real life (concrete examples) to share with the rest of the class.

Get set • Divide the students. Give each group a different word (*sincere, genuine, pure, authentic, hypocrite, impostor, fake*).

Go • **Ask:** First, what is a synonym? (Another word describing the same thing.) **Good! What is an antonym?** (Another word that shows the opposite!) **Make a list of synonyms and antonyms as quickly and thoroughly as you can.** After they have exhausted their mental powers have them share their list with the class. Then ask them to consider how their lists are similar and how they are different.

Say: Take the word you were given and think of an individual from popular culture, history, or from the Bible who is a good example of the word you were given. Be able to share why you chose that person.

Debriefing • **Say:** Please vote whether you agree or disagree with this statement: **Most people are a mixed bag of hypocrisy and authenticity.** Use a voting procedure that works for

your group. **Now, let’s have some volunteers explain why they voted the way they did.**

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this experiment is to have students experience the disappointment of water that isn’t what it appears to be, mixed with the satisfaction of tasting water that is. Using three bottles of bottled water, add salt to one, sweetener to another, and leave the third with pure water. Make sure that you dilute the sugar and the salt in warm water first so that it is clear like pure water, then put it in the bottles labeled pure water. Be aware of any food allergies the students may have and adjust the activity accordingly.

Get set • **Say** to the students: **I need three volunteers. You have just finished running a marathon and you are thirsty.** (Give them a few dry crackers to aid in drying them out.) **Your mouth is so dry you can hardly wait for a taste of pure water.**

Go • Sit each volunteer before one of the bottles of water and say, “You may drink now.” Note the expressions on their faces as they do.

Debriefing • **Ask:** How did it feel to be thirsty and taste the salt or sugar water? How did it feel to have the bottle label match the drink? How do you think this applies to people who wear the name Christian? Can you think of scenarios in which interacting with a Christian can be disappointing? refreshing?

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Share the following illustration in your own words.

How good is Jesus at seeing the “real thing” at a distance? When the disciples brought Jesus to meet Nathanael, Jesus said something peculiar about Nathanael. Have students find and read **John 1:47**. It says: “Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” (KJV).

“Guile? What is guile?” you ask. Guile is the word that used to be in use for “fish bait”! In other words: “How refreshing to see someone who doesn’t trick people by being someone he is not.” While Nathanael probably had his shortcomings, he was genuine, or “true blue,” as they say in

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4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share the following:

We are going to be talking about hypocrisy and authenticity. Citizens of God’s kingdom are called to be genuine. Some think this means flawless, but in reality, we all know how imperfect we are. Being genuine or authentic has to do with transparency more than perfection. “What you see is what you get” or “the real thing” are common ways to describe something that is genuine. Covering our shortcomings and pretending to be something we are not is outright acting. The other word used in the Bible is “hypocrite.” In what areas of church life do you think it is easy to pretend to be something we are not? Knowing what we know about God’s love and acceptance of us, why do you think people (we) so often masquerade as someone they are not?

Say: In this lesson we focus on our relationship to God. Consider whether people really believe the following myths are true or just behave like they are true.

Myths:

1. God is not able to really see my motives. (Do people really believe this or behave like it’s true?)
2. God is not paying attention all the time to my life. (Do people really believe this or behave like it’s true?)
3. God is disappointed with me because of my failures. (Do people really believe this

or behave like it’s true?)

4. God overlooks my insincerity, hoping I’ll become more genuine as I continue to grow. (Do people really believe this or behave like it’s true?)

Say: Now let’s look at the Bible Insights passages in the student lesson and try to determine which ones speak directly to these myths. What does it mean to have an authentic relationship with God?

1. **Psalm 139:1-4.** Acknowledge that He sees and knows you completely—and He still thinks you are the most precious part of His creation.
2. **Hebrews 10:22.** In order to draw near to God or be close to Him, we have to be honest about who we are. The biggest thing that stands in our way is when we are not truthful about ourselves with Him.
3. **1 Peter 1:6-8.** We are made more genuine as we struggle through life in honesty with God.
4. **1 Timothy 1:5.** The bottom line of the Christian life is a love that comes from an authentic walk with God. There is nothing more important than this.

Ask: Why is sincerity a cornerstone to our relationship to God? What does an authentic Christian look like? sound like? act like? live like? When does it seem difficult to be honest with God about where we are in our walk with Him?

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Debriefing • Ask: In what sense does it pay to be forthcoming and genuine with God? What about the story of Ling? How does this story apply to being a part of God’s kingdom? Explain how this may be true: Being authentic/genuine is a reward in itself—no games, no pretending, no masks, no acting,

no double-talk or hypocrisy. What other rewards come from living in an authentic relationship with God?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Have the students find and read **Revelation 3:14-18**. Point out that the church of Laodicea (that's us) is described there.

Say: Here's your chance to line up your beliefs with your life. The following are some scenarios in which taking a risk is required. Let's use the three categories listed in the verses we just read to categorize responses that could be made to these scenarios: cold, lukewarm, or hot.

For each scenario, think about what a cold response would be, what a lukewarm response would be, and more important, what a red-hot action that proves you to be genuine would be. Remember: **Ice Cold, Lukewarm, Red-hot**. Stop and discuss the possible responses to each scenario.

1. A good friend asks if they could see your homework assignment. They are behind, and while they did not use the word "copy" or "cheat," you both know what is going on. What do you do?
2. In a group of friends the conversation leads to attacking someone else behind their back. In a moment of weakness you participated in the slander, but now you feel horrible. You know this is wrong and no one deserves this kind of treatment. How do you respond to your friends in light of the conviction you feel? How do you respond to the person you were talking about?
3. You and some others are hanging out at a friend's house and they are looking at inappropriate websites. What do you say or do to be true to your beliefs?
4. You were not honest with your parents about what you did after school. You lied to avert trouble, but you know it was wrong. How do you deal with this problem?
5. You want to sing out because you love

singing praise to God, but you worry it could bring some ridicule your way. What do you do?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Ask: What is so wrong with playing the game or pretending? Compared to adultery or murder or stealing, surely hypocrisy can't be all that bad. Right? **Say:** Take a look for yourself. There were people caught in the act of adultery who found compassion with Jesus. Simon the Zealot, one of Jesus' disciples, probably knew too well how to kill Romans. A thief on the cross got a quick pardon at the last second.

Now, notice how Jesus responds to people who play games, wear masks, and pretend to be something they are not.

Have the students all find **Matthew 23:1-36**. (You might reproduce it from a contemporary translation and distribute it to the students.) Ask them to read through and find the three rebukes they think are most surprising. Have them explain why. (If you are using a reproduced copy of this passage, have the students circle, highlight, or underline the three rebukes they choose.)

Now, ask them to imagine if the leaders would repent and change as a result of each rebuke. **Ask:** Which rebuke, if the behavior was turned around, would bring the most positive change to our church? Why?

Which rebuke strikes closest to home with you?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Why is talking to God honestly so difficult to do? In what areas of your life do you find it difficult to be genuine or up-front with God?
2. Who in Scripture seems to be as genuine as they come? Who do you know today who is sincere with their faith in God?

What qualities or experiences seem to have helped them with being genuine with God?

3. When in your life have you felt that you were not wearing a mask or pretending with God?
4. What do you think causes people to pretend or live two lives?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

No amount of goodness or badness is going

to cause God to love you more or less. Do you ever wonder why we fake it? Why do we pretend or wear the masks? It's not like God can't see to the very depths of our motives. God has always been able to forgive the most atrocious behaviors in people. Think of the worst of sinners in the Bible who turned around and became agents in God's kingdom: Saul/Paul, Mary Magdalene, David with the Bathsheba incident, etc. God cleanses us completely when we come clean with Him. His hands are tied, however, when we refuse to recognize how much we need Him and how far we are from Him. If anything, hypocrisy is not "getting" (understanding) God's grace. Authenticity is being transparent with God. It is probably safe to say that God is more comfortable with the "real me" than I am.



STUDENT LESSON

GOLD LIKE GLASS (Being Real, Part 1)

The Emperor's Seeds

May 28, 2022

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 10, The Experience of Salvation:** "This saving faith [faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord] comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin."
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 76-78.

THE EMPEROR'S SEEDS

Once there was an emperor in eastern Asia who was growing old and knew the time was coming to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his own children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, "It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you." The kids were shocked! But the emperor continued. "I am going to give each one of you a seed today. One seed. It is a very special seed. I want you to go home, plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year

from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring to me, and the one I choose will be the next emperor of the kingdom!"

There was one boy named Ling who was there that day, and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. She helped him get a pot and some planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Ling kept going home and checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. By now others were talking about their plants, but Ling didn't have a plant, and he felt like a failure. Ling didn't say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow.

A year finally went by, and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot. But she encouraged him to go and to take his pot and to be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace.

When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by all the other youths. They were beautiful—in all shapes and sizes. When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. "What great plants, trees, and flowers you have grown," said the

emperor. "Today one of you will be appointed the next emperor!"

All of a sudden the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified. "The emperor knows I'm a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!" When Ling got to the front, the emperor asked his name. "My name is Ling," he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling and then announced to the crowd, "Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!"

Ling couldn't believe it. How could he be the new emperor?

Then the emperor said, "One year ago today I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds, which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!"—Wayne Rice, *More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995). Used by permission.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Hebrews 10:22.
- » Kim wrote this question: "When I pray to God, I want to be open and honest, but I don't know where to begin. I feel as though there is so much to tell Him, but He obviously knows already. How do you talk with someone who knows what you are going to say? I have made so many promises to Him that I have broken. I keep asking for forgiveness. Is there a better way? I'm really open for suggestions."
- » What would you say to Kim? Is there anything you have experienced that might encourage her? When have you felt the

same? What solution did you find?

Monday

BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION

- » Read Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 10:17; Galatians 3:26.
- » When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we become sons and daughters of God. And as sons and daughters of God we want our actions and the words we speak to match. We want to be examples of living according to God's plan for us. God's plan is found in His Word—the Bible. When we study His Word, our faith in Jesus will grow.
- » Why is it important that the things we do and the words we speak reflect clearly that we have a genuine relationship with Jesus?

- » Unscramble the verse below and answer the following question.

God now to then 20 reconciled we be are
behalf Corinthians ambassadors Christ's for 2 on
Christ you as implore 5: though we God us were
NKJV through pleading

- » What does Christ implore us to become for Him? _____
- » What does this mean? _____

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Revelation 3:14-18.

- » Having a “see-through” faith is what God is calling young people to. Have you noticed how difficult it is to believe people are who they say they are today? They say one thing and do something different. Their actions do not match what they say. They leave you confused as to the type of person they really are. Are they someone you want to be with or be like?
- » The Bible refers to our faith as being “of greater worth than gold” (see 1 Peter 1:6, 7). When gold is completely purified, it is transparent—the yellow color in gold comes from the impurities still remaining in the metal. When John describes the streets of gold, they are “like glass.” God’s hope for you is that you become pure and others can see the real you—a child of God.
- » It’s not as though God can’t read your thoughts and know your mind. He does not scratch His head and wonder what you are thinking or if you really do love Him. He knows. He also knows that a relationship is a two-way street, and although your ticket to heaven isn’t earned by being good, it has everything to do with knowing God (see John 17:3).
- » One thing is certain: no one will sneak through the pearly gates with a mask on pretending to be a child of the King. God’s children will let the world see who they are and to whom they belong. How pure is your life?

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the following texts with the words that correspond to them. All texts are from the New International Version of the Bible. If you do not have a copy, you can find one at www.BibleGateway.com.

- A. 1 Peter 1:6, 7
- B. Hebrews 10:22

- C. Psalm 139:1-4
- D. James 3:17
- E. 2 Corinthians 11:3
- F. 1 Timothy 1:5
- G. 2 Corinthians 6:2-10

- _____ “You have searched me, Lord, and you know me . . .”
- _____ “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure . . .”
- _____ “In all this you greatly rejoice . . .”
- _____ “I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor.”
- _____ “The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”
- _____ “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning . . .”
- _____ “Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings . . .”

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Galatians 3:16.
- » Review the memory text.
- » While shopping with his father, a young boy tried to scare his dad by putting on a mask and sneaking up behind him. He donned the image of some weird creature, but the father saw the boy’s sandy hair sticking up. His shoes, which the father had bought him the previous week, were untied, as always. The hands contorted in the form of scary claws were familiar.
- » The father had held those hands as they trembled with fear when the boy got his first shot from the doctor. The father had wrapped countless Band-Aids on those fingers over the previous five years. The voice, although garbled by the plastic lips of the mask, was unmistakably clear—it was his son’s. Although the son was pretending, the father could never imagine his son, no

matter how crazy or scary he dressed up, being anything other than his son.

- » The boy pulled the mask off and said, "It's me!" God is waiting for you to say the same thing. Probably the safest place to remove your mask is on your knees before Jesus.

Friday APPLYING

- » Read 1 Timothy 1:5.
- » Make a list of three things you want to pray about this week to practice being authentic.

