

***Wasted Faith* Discussion Guide**

by Jim Elliff

Introduction

If you are a professing Christian, you are in one of three categories:

- You may be a Christian and have biblical reasons to think so.
- You may be a Christian yet struggle with troubling doubts.
- You may *think* you are a Christian yet be deceived.

Wasted Faith is a tool to help you determine just where you stand.

You are studying ***Wasted Faith*** because you take salvation seriously. You want to be sure for good reasons. This discussion guide may help strengthen that assurance, or it may reveal subtle deceptions that have controlled your thinking. Either revelation is of untold value. Of course, examining one's life for the evidences of salvation is not an exact science, so you will need to think through these lessons carefully.

Examination for a deeper assurance should never be seen as a quick or casual thing. Think how foolish it is to *hope* you are a Christian, when with close scrutiny and the aid of the Holy Spirit you can be sure beyond doubt—and for all the right reasons. And think about how many people have come to understand that they were deceived just because they finally took the time to look at themselves honestly.

At least one additional benefit will come from this study. You will be able to help others, including your own family members, discern their true relationship with God. That alone will make this study worthwhile.

A Revival Issue

The subject of true or false conversion has an interesting and enduring history in connection with genuine revival. It was preaching on the subjects addressed in these lessons that God often used to bring the depth of conviction needed to revive the church.

Historic revival preachers were not so much concerned with helping their listeners make better psychological adjustments in life, but rather with persuading *professing* Christians to examine whether their spiritual apathy, absence of love, or habitual sin could be characteristic of people who have been given new life in Christ. If God sends revival today (and we *must* pray

that He will), He will likely do it as He has before—through the recovery of the truths we will study.

Preparation

This discussion guide is designed for small groups and mentoring relationships. Each person involved should have his or her own copy of ***Wasted Faith***.

The study is divided into nine lessons. It will not be helpful to rush through a lesson in order to stay on schedule. Depending on the amount of time available, two sessions may be needed to complete a lesson in some cases. Consideration should also be given to studying the appendix called *The Unrepenting Repenter* for one or two additional sessions.

The subject of true or false conversion should be approached with prayer and sensitivity by the leader and by each participant. Three rules apply for the best possible result. Please remind yourself of these often:

1. ***Be serious*** in evaluating your condition and applying the Scriptures to your life. Do not treat this study lightly.
2. ***Be honest*** in your answers. Making others think better of you than is strictly true will not help you or them.
3. ***Be open*** to the *possibility* that your preconceived notions may be in error.

It would be helpful for each participant to read ***Wasted Faith*** prayerfully in preparation for the course, if possible. Some may read it several more times during the group study. There will be no writing assignments unless designed by the leader. The bracketed portions are suggestions for leaders.

Finally, if a church or organization decides to take a larger group through the study, the leaders may find it helpful to conduct a preliminary group study among themselves before teaching others.