

MAMA BEAR  R

Apologetics

Progressive Christianity

- Imagine that all the “isms” you’ve read about so far in this book are options in a soda dispenser. Grab a cup labeled “Christian,” go down the line and put in a little bit of everything. A little bit of new spirituality, pluralism, self-helpism, feminism, Marxism, relativism, naturalism, skepticism, postmodernism, and emotionalism. What new libation will you have created? **You will be quenching your spiritual thirst with an effervescent fusion of ideas called – progressive Christianity.**



Recognize the Message

“Traditional understandings of Christology, Atonement, and the Incarnation are all in flux. In fact, many people find these concepts to be irrelevant to contemporary spirituality. Yet thinking theologically creates a disequilibrium that makes us continually rethink our beliefs in light of our changing understanding and ongoing experiences.”

Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity

by David M. Felten and Jeff Procter-Murphy

Recognize the Message

- A rejection of the exclusivity of Christianity (that Jesus is the only way to God)
- A rejection of the atoning blood sacrifice of Jesus on the cross
- A lowered view of Scripture

Recognize the Message

“The Bible is the witness of generations of faithful people recording their own understandings of the divine in their particular time, place, and culture. This theological pluralism reveals changing, developing, and sometimes conflicting ideas about God.”

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Recognize the Message

- A rejection of the exclusivity of Christianity (that Jesus is the only way to God)
- A rejection of the atoning blood sacrifice of Jesus on the cross
- A lowered view of Scripture
- A redefining of words (linguistic theft)
- A focus on social justice

Offer Discernment

- Progressive Christianity offered some critiques of evangelical Christian culture that were valid and sorely needed.
 - Recognized the hypocrisy of condemning homosexuality while winking at the sin of gluttony
 - Acknowledged spiritual abuses and the damaging effects of legalism
 - Rightly pointed out that we shouldn't be afraid to ask questions and think hard about what we believe and why
- This is what makes progressive Christianity so attractive to so many people – it appears to provide a safe place to process these concerns.

Offer Discernment

- Progressives set their aim on the actual doctrines of Christianity rather than the abuses committed by Christians.
- Doctrine doesn't abuse people; people abuse people.
- We can't judge a belief system based on the abuses of some, and we can't abandon objective truth because it appears too difficult to follow or seems to ask too much of us.



How can we avoid extremes and develop a biblical and healthy faith?

Argue for a Healthier Approach

- We have all kinds of information crashing into us, but it doesn't have to send us swinging. This is why we have the Word of God.
- It is vital that we adhere to the doctrine of biblical authority.
- This is the key difference between progressive Christianity and historic Christianity. Through the ages, Christians have sought to submit their lives to the teachings of the Bible. Progressive Christians, however, see the Bible as a helpful resource but subject to their own opinions and preferences.
- Holding firmly to the doctrine of Biblical authority will ensure that we are the middle ball in Newton's cradle.



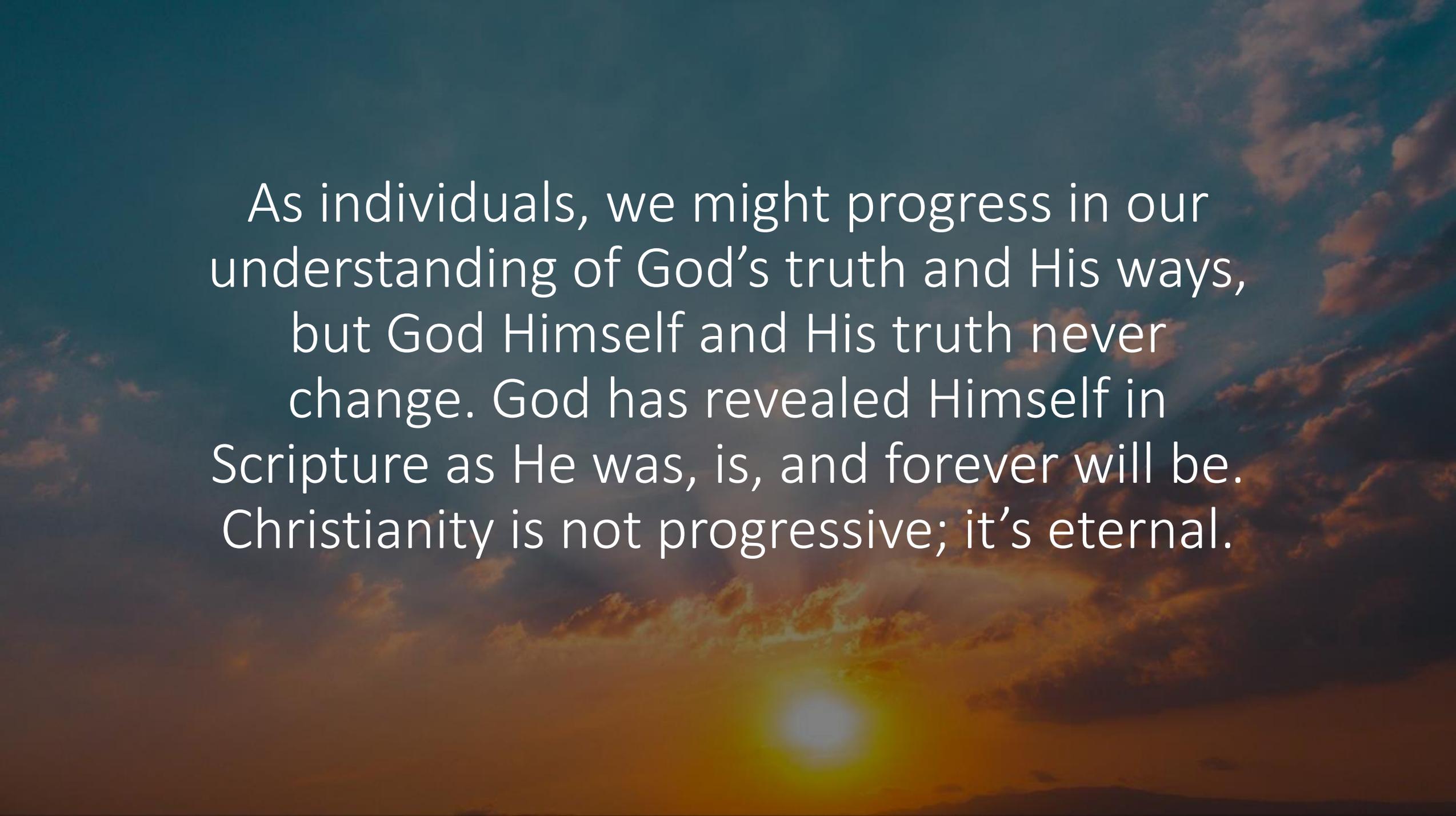
How do you spot the counterfeit?

Reinforce by Discussion, Discipleship, and Prayer

- The best way to spot counterfeit Christianity in any form is to know the real thing.
- We can teach our children about doctrine, church history, apologetics, all the “isms” in this book... but they will actually *learn* what we ourselves *embody*.
- Progressive Christianity is almost the real thing. Remember, the best and most convincing lies are packaged in truth.
- There is enough truth in progressive Christianity to make it attractive and persuasive to the undiscerning believer.

What we believe about God
should be informed by the Bible,
not our feelings, perceptions, and
experiences.





As individuals, we might progress in our understanding of God's truth and His ways, but God Himself and His truth never change. God has revealed Himself in Scripture as He was, is, and forever will be. Christianity is not progressive; it's eternal.