



We live in a culture of fakes. Fake images created by airbrush, fake bodies enhanced by cosmetic surgery, fake athletes juiced up on steroids, fake opinions designed to garner votes and fake foods filled with artificial ingredients. And this counterfeit culture has spilled over into the church. Yet this is nothing new, the early church encountered the same problem. So what is an almost Christian? What are the characteristics of an authentic Christian? And how can I be sure my faith is genuine? These are just some of the questions we'll answer in this eight-week series starting Easter Sunday, 2013.

**Discussion Questions:** (Leaders please review each question and pick those that will be most beneficial for your group.)

1. According to The Barna Group, 8 out of 10 Americans, identify themselves as Christians. Yet at the same time only 4 out of 10 consider themselves to be “born again.”<sup>1</sup> What do you think the difference is between an almost Christian and an authentic Christian? Explain.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-20. An authentic Christian believes in the gospel (that Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised on the third day, vv.3-4). And the power of the gospel hinges on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But “what if Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead?” If Christ is not alive then . . .
  - the message of the gospel is meaningless v.14a
  - our faith is futile v.14b and 17a
  - we are still under the condemnation of our sins, v.17b
  - Christ-followers who have already died remain in death, v.18
  - we have no future hope, v.19Explain each of these in your own words.
3. Paul invites us to consider the hypothetical so we can more clearly understand and appreciate the reality of the resurrection – “Christ has indeed been raised from the dead (v.20)!” Looking back at vv.4-11 what proofs does Paul give for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?
4. The truth of Easter is that Christ has indeed been raised from the dead! The question is do you believe it? According to vv.1-2, an authentic Christian *receives, takes their stand on* and *continues to hold firmly to* the gospel; *otherwise you have believed in vain*. Have you received the gospel? Have you taken your stand on the gospel? Are you holding firmly to the message of the gospel? If not, what is holding you back? If so, what do you need to keep holding firmly to the gospel?

<sup>1</sup> The Barna Group, *How Americans See Themselves*, <http://www.barna.org/culture-articles/149-barna-survey-offers-a-profile-of-how-americans-see-themselves?q=self-descriptions>, (August 14, 2006).