



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. Repeatedly in this letter the Apostle John identifies three character traits evident in all true Christians. What are these? Why does John emphasize these in light of Gnosticism?
2. Read 1 John 3:11-24. In this passage John clarifies the second character trait: love for others. **All true Christ-followers are marked by love for others, especially other Christians.** Earlier in chapter 3 we learned that all humanity can be divided into one of two groups: those born of Satan and those born of God. Looking at vv.14b-15 what is the sign of those born of Satan? What is the sign of those born of God (v.14a)? To which group do you belong? How do you know?
3. Those born of God should expect the world to hate us (v.13). How will knowing this change how you respond when you face opposition for being a Christian?
4. Love means different things to different people. What is the supreme picture of supernatural love for others given in v. 16? How then are we to love others in the body of Christ? What is the test that reveals whether you have this kind of love or not (v.17)? Do you have a need or know other Christians in material need? If you have the means to help, how will you respond?
5. For those born of God the reality is that sometimes our hearts condemn us. When this happens we must learn how to overcome this. According to vv.18-19 how do we set our hearts at rest in the presence of our all knowing God? How will you respond the next time you face condemnation?
6. Read Hebrews 4:16. How are we, as God's children, to approach him in prayer? However, when our hearts condemn us this directly hinders our prayer life. According to vv.21-24, if we love other Christians why can we be confident that God will answer our prayers? How will this change your prayer life?