



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. Read 1 John 4:7-5:5. Until now the Apostle John has repeatedly said that those who have been born again manifest three defining character traits: belief in Jesus Christ, love for others and obedience to God's commands. Now in this passage he explains how these three character traits work together interdependently. Let's find out.
2. In 1 John 4:7-12 John starts by explaining that those who have been born again love others. Who is the source of our love for others? What proof do we have that God loves us? What happens when we love others like God has loved us?
3. Next, in 1 John 4:13-21 John explains how belief in Jesus Christ enables us to love others. How does reliance upon (i.e. belief in) God's love for us in Jesus Christ and loving others work together? Biblically, what would you say to help another Christ-follower who is having a hard time loving someone?
4. Finally, John's letter crescendos in 1John 5:1-5 when he shows us how faith in Jesus Christ, love for others, and obedience to God's commands work together. In your own words, how do these three character traits work together interdependently?
5. In what area(s) of your life do you struggle most? What would it look like for these three character traits to work together in your specific situation? Make this the focus of your prayers for each other.
6. Just like breathing, brain activity and a beating heart are evidence of physical birth, belief in Jesus Christ, love for others and obedience to God's commands will be evident in the lives of everyone who has been born again. Have you been born again? If not, are you ready to repent of your sin believing in Jesus Christ to save you from death and give you eternal life?