

# Are We An “Imitation” or “Genuine” Believer?

## Introduction

1. There are various beliefs in the religious world today as evidenced by a Gallup poll entitled “Religion in America.”
2. What is the difference between an “imitation” or “genuine” believer?
  - A. **Imitation:** “To be like in appearance; Made to resemble something else, usually something superior or genuine.”
  - B. **Genuine:** “Really being what it is said to be; true; authentic; sincere; without hypocrisy.”
3. Imitations exist today on every hand; There’s imitation gold, imitation leather, imitation flowers, imitation flavors, and on and on.
  - A. The same thing is also true of religion. Imitations exist on every street corner. However, it is also possible that in the pews of those who call themselves after Christ, that imitations are there.
    - 1) Some come and imitate without really knowing the real reasons why. (Calvin Coolidge example)
4. Self-examination is critical for the faithful child of God. Continual scrutinization must take place to avoid having a counterfeit faith.
  - A. The “Genuine” believer is not content with “occupying space” in a building during the public worship but pursues their desire to be a “real” Christian.
  - B. The apostle Peter offers some good suggestions on how we can confirm our claim as being that “Genuine” believer in God (1 Pet 1).
    - 1) As we study these together, let us remember the admonition of Paul as he said:

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?-- unless indeed you are disqualified.

5. **We can distinguish the “genuine” from the “imitation”. This morning, let’s look at the characteristics and attitudes of the “genuine” believer.**

## **THE “GENUINE” BELIEVER:**

1. **The “Genuine” believer in God is **sanctified by the Spirit of God.****

1 Peter 1:2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, **in sanctification of the Spirit**, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

- A. **This idea of being sanctified is that one is set apart for the special purpose of glorifying God. How is this accomplished?**

- 1) **The apostles were told to preach “repentance and forgiveness” when the power of the Holy Spirit came to them.**  
**Luke 24:46-49**
- 2) **The power of the Holy Spirit came in Acts 2:1-4 and gave Peter the words in which to say to the people in Jerusalem. As a result of Peter’s sermon men were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).**
  - a) **Therefore, they were then set apart from the world; that is, they received the sanctification of the Spirit.**

Acts 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

**2. The “Genuine” believer in God is a redeemed person through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:2).**

1 Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

- A. The true believer in Christ understands that at one time he had been a slave to sin but is now made free by the blood of Christ.**  
**Romans 6:16-18**

John 8:32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

- 1) As a former slave, the true believer appreciates the ransom that Jesus paid to set him free!**

**3. The “Genuine” believer calls upon God with the knowledge that His father will judge him in the last day.**

1 Peter 1:17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;

- A. The prayers are serious. One is not about to fool God.**

Hebrews 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

**4. The “Genuine” believer in God is a child of obedience (1 Peter 1:2).**

1 Peter 1:14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;

**A. When one thinks of a child, it will have certain characteristics depending upon its parents.**

- 1) For example, the “puppy” of a dog will most likely bark, have a tail and four legs.**
- 2) “Children” of obedience are those whose “habit” and “characteristics” coincide with being “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).**

**5. The “Genuine” believer is one who endeavors to be holy as God is holy.**

1 Peter 1:15-16 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

**A. This is the intent of the religion of Christ. Our aspirations are to think, talk, and act like God.**

- 1) With each passing day we progress closer to being perfect as God is perfect and to being pure as God is pure.**

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

**6. The “Genuine” believer possesses a living hope which anchors his life.**

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

**A. Without this, one will not fight as hard as he should (Rev 2:10).**

- 1) This is the major thrust of the entire epistle of 1 Peter.**

**7. The “Genuine” believer does not fashion his life through the lusts of this world in ignorance.**

1 Peter 1:14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;

**A. The way one talks, dresses, and even his entertainment is fashioned after the society he lives in.**

**1) The true believer is one that refuses to be like the world but transforms himself into being like God.**

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. **And do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

**8. The “Genuine” believer purifies his soul.**

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

**A. He has made his life sinless not because he is perfect, but because he has repented and confessed his wrong.**

**1) When he fails, he continues to confess and repent asking for forgiveness that the blood of Christ will cleanse (purify) his soul.**

1 John 1:8-9 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

9. The “Genuine” believer **loves his brethren with a love that is unfeigned (genuine, real, sincere).**

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

- A. His love for others in Christ will not be with pretense or hypocrisy, but in sincerity. It is a love that is manifested in HIS ACTIONS!

## CONCLUSION

1. A “Real” believer is one that fears God.  
**1 Peter 1:17**
  - A. He recognizes that God is the judge.
  - B. He reverences and respects God’s Word.
  - C. He understands that God is a consuming Fire (Hebrews 10:29).
  - D. He understands that it is truly a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31).
2. The “Genuine” believer therefore lives in the favor of God so that God in turn will protect him.  
**1 Peter 1:5**
3. There will not be any “imitation” gold in heaven and there will not be any “imitation” Christians there either!
  - A. God knows if you are “genuine”, the real thing, or just an “imitation” or a hypocrite. It would be good that we also know which one we are. Because if we are “imitation” we need to be transformed into the “real thing”!



## **Beliefs**

Of unchurched Americans, two-thirds believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ and that He was resurrected from the dead. The belief that Jesus Christ will return to earth someday is held by 62 percent of all Americans. Of the total American adult population, nearly half believe in creationism, and 37 percent believe the Bible to be the actual word of God, to be taken literally, word for word. One-third of church members believe that a homosexual cannot be a good Christian or Jew. Two-thirds of all Americans think their chances of going to heaven are “pretty good.”

George Gallup, “Religion in America”, Leadership, Fall, 1987

## **Calvin Coolidge**

President Calvin Coolidge invited some people from his hometown to dinner at the White House. Since they did not know how to behave at such an occasion, they thought the best policy would be just to do what the President did. The time came for serving coffee. The President poured his coffee into a saucer. As soon as the home folks saw it, they did the same. The next step for the President was to pour some milk and add a little sugar to the coffee in the saucer. The home folks did the same. They thought for sure that the next step would be for the President to take the saucer with the coffee and begin sipping it. But the President didn't do so. He leaned over, placed the saucer on the floor and called the cat.