

# CHRISTIANS: ARTIFICIAL VS. AUTHENTIC

*"If we have got the true love of God shed abroad in our hearts, we will show it in our lives. We will not have to go up and down the earth proclaiming it. We will show it in everything we say or do." – Dwight L. Moody*

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Galatians 5:22-23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

Romans 12:2

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

1 John 1:6

"If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth."

Psalms 119:1

"Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD."

Christmas. "It's the most wonderful time of the year." Songs fill the radio, ads fill the television, people fill the stores, and lights and Christmas trees fill the window displays across the town. Every year there are approximately 25-30 million real Christmas trees sold in the U.S. However, a large percentage of Americans choose to buy artificial trees. Artificial or synthetic trees are quite popular due to convenience, easy maintenance, and lower cost over the years.

Even though it may look authentic from a window display, an artificial tree will never have soft bristles or that fresh smell of pine. Although the maintenance of a real tree throughout the holiday season may take more work, in the long run it is worth doing. Consistently adding water to the base of your tree stand ensures the life and freshness of your authentic Christmas tree.

In the same respect, people may be authentic or artificial Christians. Just like your Christmas tree in the window display may seem to look real, people may also appear to be Christians but aren't always authentic. So how do you make sure you don't become an artificial Christian?





First and foremost, you must ask yourself, "What does it mean to be authentic?" To be **authentic** means "to be real," "to be certified," and "to be proven." It is "verifiable evidence of what someone or something really is." As a Christian you cannot model yourself after images and media of society, but rather, you must discover who you are in God's eyes.

Just as authentic Christmas trees need to be watered consistently, a Christian needs to be watering his spirit consistently to ensure life and freshness in his spiritual journey. It can take up to 15 years to grow a tree to a typical height of 6-7 ft or as little as four years. A tree does not develop overnight; it takes time, nurture, and care. Likewise, your spiritual walk will not be perfected overnight. It too will take time, nurture, and care. But unlike trees that are only on display for a month's time, you are continually displaying your character every day of your life. Your character is a representation of yourself, your spiritual journey, and of God.

### WHAT IS AN ARTIFICIAL CHRISTIAN?

An artificial Christian is one who claims to have accepted Christ into his or her heart but lives out the belief that "because I am saved it does not matter what I do." Rather than use salvation as an opportunity to NOT sin anymore, many artificial Christians argue that their salvation allows them grace to sin even more. **Artificial Christians** profess Christianity but live like people of the world. Being pretenders of the faith, but having no real substance is destructive both to the body of fellow believers and the reputation of Christ. It can also cause others to question your own character. It is essential that when you claim to be a follower of Christ that your character and behaviors reflect Him.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 📄 [Are You a Checklist Christian?](#)  
Creflo Dollar
- 📄 [What is Christian Character?](#)  
Dr. Richard J. Krejcir
- 📄 [Authentic Christianity](#)  
Ray Stedman
- 📄 [Three Tests of Authentic Christianity](#)  
Mark Copeland
- 🎵 [Take My Life and Let It Be](#)  
Chris Tomlin

*Character and integrity are demonstrated when our words and actions are coinciding with each other.*

## WHAT IS AN AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN?

You've probably heard or said the phrase, "You can talk the talk, but can you walk the walk?" Likewise, many people talk about being a Christian, but never live it out in their everyday lives. When you say you follow Christ, do your actions show that you do?

An authentic Christian is one who is secured in the Word of God. He or she has a disciplined walk with Christ. On your spiritual journey you must learn to walk in **faith** and **dependence** on the Lord. You can live a life of obedience by applying God's Word in your daily life. An authentic Christian is one who **actively** demonstrates the characteristics of Christ and the Fruits of the Spirit.



AN AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN STRIVES TO POSSESS THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT:

LOVE • JOY • PEACE • PATIENCE • KINDNESS •  
GOODNESS • FAITHFULNESS • GENTLENESS •  
SELF CONTROL

*Does the Fruit in your life reflect the character of Christ?*

God gave us the **Fruits of the Spirit**. These consist of LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, AND SELF CONTROL. These nine characteristics are ones, we should try to live out in our daily lives. We are not called to be perfect, but we are to try to do our best with the power that He gives us through the Holy Spirit.

**Character** is who you are to God and to those around you regardless of the stresses of everyday life. It's easy to be kind to people and thanking God when all is going well in your life, but when your path gets a little bumpy do you still reflect the Fruits of the Spirit?

## CHARACTER CHECKLIST

- ARE YOU DEALING WITH PEOPLE IN HONESTY?
- ARE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS CONSISTENT?
- DO YOU PUT THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS BEFORE YOUR OWN?
- DO YOU DO THE RIGHT THING EVEN IF IT MAY COST YOU?
- DO YOU KEEP YOUR COMMITMENTS NO MATTER WHAT?