

Spotting Counterfeits

n/a

Ready:

“Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don’t understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. “

-2 Corinthians 4:4 (NLT)

Set

Several years ago, I was given a North Face-brand fleece and coat as a Christmas gift. Most people are familiar with the North Face brand and know that it’s top-of-the-line and made to last a lifetime. In fact, the company backs up its products with a guarantee to make repairs or replace the item at no cost.

After a short time, though, my coat’s pockets tore, the stitches unraveled and a few zippers broke, so I sent the jacket to the company with the expectation that they would repair it. But when the jacket returned in the mail, I was surprised to find it still damaged. In an enclosed letter, the company revealed that my coat was not a real North Face. It was a fake—a counterfeit. To the untrained eye, it looked like the real thing. But to the trained eye, it was an obvious fake.

Our adversary, the devil, is a master at counterfeiting. Revelation 12:9 says that he is a deceiver and will do anything to confuse Christians. And in 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul wrote that the devil blinds the eyes of nonbelievers to keep them from coming to Christ for salvation. One of Satan’s favorite tactics is mixing truth with lies. Things appear to be real but aren't.

Beyond fake coats, our entire society is saturated with counterfeit messages. Sometimes they can come from friends and teammates. Sometimes they come from messages displayed in movies, music, books and TV. When I shared this North Face story with the youth at my church, I asked them, "How do you spot counterfeits? " One student who normally doesn't say much provided a very profound answer. He said, "You compare them to the real thing. " What an awesome answer! He was completely right. Because, to trained eyes, counterfeits just don't look like or hold up against what is real.

So what is the real thing? For one thing, we have a book that is filled with real truth. It’s called the Bible. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that the Bible shows us the truth, helps us to correct false messages and trains us to live in that reality that Jesus died on the cross for us. Scripture truly is the one "real thing" we can use to spot counterfeits.

This Christmas, spend some time reading the truth of God’s Word, especially the part about the birth of Christ. Reflect on the greatest truth of all: that God sent His Son to become man

and bring us salvation. No counterfeit message can ever compete with that.

Go

1. What are some ways you can identify counterfeits?
2. How are you training yourself to know what is real and what is counterfeit?
3. Are you willing to stand up and expose counterfeit messages to prevent your teammates, coaches, family or friends from being deceived?
4. This Christmas, if someone asked you to communicate the truth of Christ, what would you say?

Workout

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 Peter 2:1-2



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