



## The Pretenders

1 John 3:1-10

**Big Idea for the Series:** Ten weeks of biblical truth designed to show the evidence the Apostle John points to revealing true, saving faith. John said, “I write these things to you so you may know you have eternal life.”

**The Bottom Line:** The children of God will be marked by holiness.

### Introduction

The United States Department of the Treasury doesn't focus on the fake bills, but the real ones!

Church history has taught us over and over – there are pretenders *even* in the church.

How do we spot the pretenders?

### Tension

The world cries out, “live your truth!” Who am I to judge them?

Remember, this letter is not for unbelievers but for believers. There are two types of Christians: those who *are* saved and those who *think* they are saved.

### Truth

#### Read 1 John 3:1-10.

John doesn't spend most of his efforts pointing out what the unbelievers or fake-believers do. Rather, he points out how the real, authentic believers will live (1 John 3:5-7).

The two signs of an authentic believer are righteousness and love. This week's text focuses on the former, while next week's text will focus on the latter.

The authentic believer does not simply know about God-but actually knows God.

Does today's text contradict John's teaching in 1 John 1:5-10? No. In this text, John is referring to practicing habitual sin.

Is John proposing that my salvation is based on my works of righteousness? No.  
John is saying that your works of righteousness are based on your salvation.

God's people have always been marked by holiness (or at least they are supposed to be). To be holy is to be called out, different than the others, and living by a higher standard.

Those who practice habitual sin are not just bad people, but they are children of the devil. These are the Apostle John's words.

Are we instructed to call out other believers when they live in consistent sin? Yes,  
this is why we practice church discipline.

Still, this passage of scripture was not written so much for believers to spot fake believers, but to examine ourselves and make sure we are in the faith.

Three reasons the believer will remain holy:

1. God the Father loves us (3:1-3).
2. God the Son died for us (3:4-8).
3. God the Holy Spirit lives in us (3:9-10).

### **Application & Conclusion:**

Examine your own life and bring to light any sins you've been keeping in the darkness. Pray Psalm 139:23-24 and ask a friend to help find blind spots. Confirm your calling and election in the Lord by walking in holiness.

### **Next Steps:**

- Memorize 2 Corinthians 7:1.
- Sign up for Biblical Counseling – [www.southbaychurchli.org/counseling](http://www.southbaychurchli.org/counseling).
- Do some research on the differences between justification, sanctification, and glorification.