



Quick Backdrop

Authentic, *adjective*, not false or copied; genuine; real

I admit that I enjoy a good-natured prank from time to time. So when I found myself in possession of a sleeve of Starbucks coffee cups I knew I had a golden opportunity. I invited a couple students to join me for coffee, but before they came, I ran to McDonalds, ordered several coffees, then transferred them into the Starbucks cups.

Initially the students were pumped that I had sprung for Starbucks. But as they finished their coffees I dropped the bomb that I had actually treated them to McDonald's coffee. While they all got a laugh out of being tricked, there was still an element of disappointment when they realized that the coffee they were drinking was not "authentic" Starbucks coffee.

1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

But what about when it comes to our own lives: are we authentic in the ways that we live out our faith? The Bible actually has a lot to say about striving to live authentically. As you read each Scripture below, highlight any reference made about authenticity and put it in a list you can later review, and determine what Biblical authenticity looks like.

Philippians 1:27 (NIV)

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel

1 Timothy 6:11-13 (NIV)

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ...



Ephesians 4:1-2 (NIV)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

Understand that authenticity doesn't equal perfection. Trust me when I tell you, if it did, we would all be disqualified. Even the Apostle Paul, who wrote each of the passages you read above, admitted that he was far from perfect. In Romans 7:15-24 he wrote about his struggles with sin and in verse 21 he writes the following "So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me." (Take a moment and read the entire passage. Can you relate to Paul's struggles?)

3 Putting Into Practice (God, Change)

So if authenticity doesn't equal perfection, what does authenticity demand of us in the way we live our lives? While we could spend all day writing out a complete list of what makes for an authentic lifestyle, below are four scriptural concepts that point us toward authenticity.

Be Humble and Christ-like in your relationships.

Philippians 2:3-5

Be Moved to Action by your faith.

James 1:22

Be Connected to Christ.

John 15:5

Be Willing to Confess when you've failed.

James 5:16a

Take a moment and write or journal about these four concepts. Which ones do you struggle with the most? What needs to change in your life in order for you to be more authentic in these areas? Specifically, how can God help you change?

The world we live in is full of the counterfeit and artificial. Do you ever get the sense that our world is literally dying for the chance to experience something authentic and real? We know from experience that following Jesus is the only authentic way to live a life of meaning. Let's make sure that the lives we lead truly reflect the authenticity of the savior we serve.

Fold or Cut