

News Story Summary

In April of 2015, counterfeiter Tony Torbert was arrested after placing a Craigslist ad offering his services manufacturing “Legit counterfeit \$\$.” The police found in his home a printer, which he had used to print \$20,000 in fake 20s over a period of several months. Torbet had been charging customers \$1,500 for producing \$5,000 in fake bills.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the phrase “Craigslist ad for legit counterfeit money.”)

Focus Attention

As the group arrives, relay the story about Torbert. Call attention to the word “Legit” in the ad. Invite the group to define how they understand the word and what would make something “legit.”

Discuss: How was the advertisement, “Legit counterfeit \$\$,” an oxymoron? (Something that is legitimate cannot be counterfeit and vice versa) Point out that Torbert was perpetuating a lie; he was claiming to have something legitimate, which, in fact, was only a fake. Ask: If a fake looks exactly like the real thing and fools a lot of people, why is it inferior to the real thing?

Explain: John began today’s scripture by explaining that some followers of Christ are genuine, the real thing; others are counterfeit. Counterfeit Christians might do a lot of good things and fool a lot of people. Ask rhetorically: So why is their status inferior to the real thing? Challenge the group to look for the answer to that question as they study 1 John.

Challenge

Remind the group of the story about the counterfeit money. Point out that the counterfeiter faces consequences for his dishonesty. What he had was only an imitation; he didn’t have something genuine. Challenge the group to prayerfully examine their hearts to see if their relationship with Christ is genuine. Ask: Do they walk in the light (righteous living)? Do they fellowship with Christ? Do they admit and confess their sins? Do they follow His commandments?

Encourage anyone who feels they are struggling with the answer(s) to any of these questions to consider making a commitment to a genuine relationship with Christ. Explain that you will be available after the group time to help them sort out and surrender to the convictions they are experiencing.