

# Real life – Real faith

## Part one: “Right from the start”

Reflection and study notes on 1 John 1:1-5

Background issues in 1 John

*Docetism:* Jesus appeared as a man. God dressed up to look like a man but really he was God all along and therefore he didn't really die on the cross or rise from the dead.

This makes Jesus “other worldly” with no identification with humanity. When this happens human life is devalued.

*In what ways is human life devalued today?*

*In what ways does the humanity of Jesus place value on life?*

*Gnosticism:* A dualistic belief system that separated spirit and matter. Spirit was seen as good while matter was evil.

Salvation came by secret knowledge (gnosis) that freed you from the material world.

This led to extremes of asceticism (self denial) and hedonism (self indulgence).

*What are some modern day examples of these?*

*Try Madonna and the influence of Eastern religions into main stream western thinking.*

### Introduction:

Have you ever been conned? Thought you had the real thing but ended up discovering you had a fake?

*Share your personal experiences of being conned.*

*Now what if your faith is a con? What if the foundation of what you believe is based upon a number of errors or wrong assumptions?*

That's the issue that the book of 1 John addresses – how to tell the difference between the real thing and the phoney. Sad to say the same issue faces us today. Don't be conned by a phoney faith.

How do you spot a phoney?

Become familiar with the original – the real thing!

### From the beginning vs 1

The original template for life is in Genesis 1 and John 1.

This phrase is like the monopoly card that says, “return to go”. Return to the beginning! Get it right from the start! If your life or faith is not working for you right now, this is not the way it was meant to be!

In the beginning God

God is community / relationship - “let us make”

God made the material world.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us - John 1.

John is saying that this is the template for all life. Get it right from the beginning!

### Life is a revealed (made known) experience vs 2

Not a concept but a reality.

Heard, seen and touched.

God is in the multi-media communication business, so that you might experience the life designed for you from the very beginning. Hear it, see it, touch it and experience it (the rest of 1 John gives examples of how this life is heard, seen and touched).

Today, many people have reduced faith to a concept. God becomes an idea among many ideas. When this happens the words become separated from action. We then live in a dualistic world of ideas and spirit and actions and matter. This explains why it is possible to believe the right things yet live a wrong life.

NOTES	Real life – Real faith part one: “Right from the start”
<p>“...Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe you sent me: I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. May they be brought into complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” John 17:21-23</p> <p>“We want more from religion now than rules. We want something to help us find meaning in life when all the rules cease to make sense, when all the old systems break down and fade away. We want a glimpse of God here and now.” Joan Chittister</p>	<p><b>Intimacy of relationship vs3</b> Life patterned on the original design always leads to koinonia, which is translated as fellowship or community. Koinonia, however, has a much richer meaning – to share life in common. It is the opposite of estrangement. An experience of God is always in the context of relationship. Love is a meaningless word outside of a relational experience.</p> <p><b>God is not a privatized religion!</b> <i>When God is privatized what do you think the church would look like?</i> <i>What has been your very best experience of koinonia?</i> <i>What has been your worst experience of koinonia?</i></p> <p><b>Here is the most amazing good news. You have been invited into God’s relationship!</b> You are invited into the Trinity (Father, Son and Spirit) of relationship. That’s the way it has been designed <b>right from the start</b>. Eternal life is not a destination (heaven). It is a relationship with the one who is eternal, who was from before time began and who will be forever. <i>Imagine some of the privileges you share by being invited into this relationship - koinonia with God!</i></p> <p><b>Joy vs 4</b> The greatest joy in life is the experience of relationships in alignment. Complete joy – this is as good as it gets. The opposite is also true – the greatest sadness in life is relationship estrangement, be it with God, others or creation – that’s pain.</p> <p><b>Reflection</b> What is the condition of your life and faith? Is it real? Is it working? Is it in relationship? Is it joyful?</p> <p>Next week: “Where your feet lead” How to walk the talk</p>