



*Generic Equivalent*s

More than ten years ago, as pharmaceutical costs began to rise, drug manufacturers touted the effectiveness of generic drugs as being the same as their name brand counterparts without the added cost of branding applied to the product. News stories showed generic drugs coming off the same line at a plant that the name brand drugs rolled off of and so the consuming public was reassured that there was no reason to doubt the quality or effectiveness of the medicines. Rolling forward fifteen years there is now a rising concern over the quality, effectiveness and safety of generic drugs. Many pharmaceutical companies that manufacture generic drugs at the present time are under fire due to practices that have been permitted by negligence and sometimes fraud. Reports from patients of not feeling well or the reappearance of symptoms during treatment have caused some doctors to demand that insurance companies modify their policies for the dispensing of generic drugs. Some insurance programs will only pay for generics no matter what. Why is this a problem? Over the past several years, according to news sources, drug companies that manufacture generic drugs have moved their operations overseas where there are fewer controls and wages are lower. These companies are bound to conduct certain tests and meet standards in spite of being outside the United States. One drug company under investigation has already closed down its operation because they were not testing the drugs or observing manufacturing guidelines. What does this have to do with being a Christian? In the beginning of the church there was only the gospel and sound teachers who led others in the way of truth. Over a period of time false teachers crept in for the sole purpose of leading others astray for their own personal satisfaction. Over time these individuals became known but not before they had done what damage they could and their lingering influence would undoubtedly hover for years spreading the seeds of dissent and faithlessness. John, speaking of the spirit of antichrist, that proceeded to follow falsehood, writes, ***“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but***

they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” (1 John 2.19). Paul speaks of the subtle nature of false teachers in his writing to Timothy stating that these individuals were ***“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Tim 3.7).*** Christ warned of the deceptive nature of false teachers stating they would claim to be prophets and even Christ himself (**Matt 24.24**). Paul further tells us that Satan is transformed into an angel of light (**2 Cor 11.14**). Those taking poorly manufactured generic drugs report a number of problems that have no apparent connection to a defined illness. They may not be able to pinpoint the exact reason why they feel that there is something wrong but they sense that all is not right. In religious affairs there are times when many people feel that there is something not quite right with what they have been taught and what has been practiced in a particular religious body. They may not know exactly what is out of place but they realize that something is amiss. Sometimes they decide to change churches hoping to remedy this and may lose their sense of foreboding for a while as a new environment lifts their spirits. Unfortunately the search for truth may end there. Or was there a search for truth to begin with. What many do not realize is that the Bible is the only book that we have to base our belief in God to begin with. If what we are doing and believing religiously seems to be off then perhaps there is a reason for that. Maybe it's not us that has the problem. Perhaps there is something missing that is causing the situation. Too many times what is missing is the truth of the word of God in a pure state without the application of man's thinking. Generic religion, like generic medications, leads to a feeling that something is not right. Only by returning to the source, the Bible, will we find full strength truth. Generic drug labs have avoided being shut down because of a lack of testing to confirm their products are inferior. In the few cases that testing has been done manufacturers who were cutting corners have been identified and closed operation. Our testing lab is the Bible and by comparing what we hear and see with what we read in the Bible, generic religion can be identified and avoided which will save our spiritual life.

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