

Not everything that shines is gold

It is for the destruction and ruin of your spiritual life to make an error in whom you submit and learn the Bible. God has given us criteria to discern between good and bad instructors of our moral life (and whom we support economically), and we should not ignore these divine instructions. A false prophet distracts you from these spiritual requirements which you as a child of God have to absolutely insist upon in the person from whom you learn morally.

Are they really pastor and churches?

1 Pet 5:2 Feed (pastor) the flock of God... **4** and when the chief Shepherd shall appear...

TV churches present themselves as the perfect alternative to “traditional churches.” You can sit in your pajamas in front of the TV set eating your cereal and “be in church,” and you just need to send them your money. They pretend to be expert Bible teachers, in a degree that no “normal” pastor could ever be. It is God himself that teaches us that His true flock is directed by pastors under His direction (**Jer 3:15**). **Jn 10:14** “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.” Your pastor can give you what you spiritually need only when the church is of such a size and situation that the pastor can know his members and their situations. If he does not actually know you, your problems, and your life, he cannot meet your needs. Equally your spiritual learning is dependent upon your trust of his person through your personal knowledge of observing his life (not what is staged for public display). The form that God has given us is one of a “local community of faith”, where one can attend and participate, where the members and the pastor know each other’s personal and intimate life. Seeing his testimony, you will receive his teaching because he lives what he preaches. He preaches what you need.

Super churches are another perversion of our day, and no true son of God will be a part of them, being deceived with their teaching, nor fall under

their influences. Equally there are groups that deny the idea of a “normal local church,” and present their non-biblical ideas as alternatives. But if we understand the Bible correctly then we conclude that the church, that it is a local community of faith, and that the teachers in a local church are the only biblical source of instruction. Why would we reject what is obviously what the New Testament teaches for some alternative? Isn’t this just rebellion?

Do they respect the Structures of God?

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God...

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. **30** Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. **33** I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel.

Part of protecting yourself from false prophets and deceptive ministerial frauds is to return to the Bible and to see that the ministry of teaching and pasturing is not about control and money harvesting but being a biblical example to the flock of God. Service is not domination. Grievous wolves will come from our own (whatever the group may be) identifying themselves as “one of us”, but their plan is to drag after them the disciples (followers) so that they can control them and take their money. In this they work forming copies of the true church or alternative church styles

What Authority do they use?

Matt 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. **22** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? **23** And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

There are ministries that will go to hell, and these will even have “great ministries” with many

supposed spiritual signs of their divine approval (miracles, powers over demons, special revelations, etc) but they and their ministries in the end will be disapproved by God, and they will go to hell because they haven’t obeyed God’s express Will. The true minister of God “takes heed how he builds” (**1Cor 3:10**), and recognizes the commandments of God as his authority and guide (**1Co 14:37**). Jesus identified as true Christians only those “do the will of my Father which is in heaven” (**Mat 12:50**). Strictly obeying God is what marks a true Christian and a biblical ministry. Apart from being dedicated to the will of God (and we only know God’s will through exposition of the Word of God, and a biblical ministry has to highly focus on this understanding and extracting spiritual principles from God’s Word), a biblical ministry will base and focus on the Scriptures as its guide for standards and authority. The false teachers “handle the word of God deceitfully” using dishonesty (**2Cor 4:2**), and they “corrupt the word of God” (**2Cor 2:17**). This is to change what it really says. Paul exhorted Timothy to “study to shew himself approved unto God.. rightly dividing the word of truth.” **2Tim 2:15**.

What are their motives?

1Pet 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, **but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 either as being lords over [God’s] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 5 ... be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.**

1Tim 6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, **supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.**

The false and bad minister is marked by his character in wanting to dominate the brethren, in ignoring and despising Christian liberty (**Gal 2:4; 5:1**), and in wanting to enrich themselves through the ministry (a covetous man is disqualified from the ministry **1Tim 3:3**). Almost always the domination or covetous motives of a false prophet

will come through. In some cases it is because they are vain and want to be famous and popular.

Do they teaching the whole counsel of God?

Acts 20:27 *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

A good teacher of the Bible will give good spiritual food balanced and complete. He will not avoid important points because it is not convenient for him, like preaching against riches because his people are rich. He teaches the whole counsel of God. Why do these TV preachers not preach the need for attending and participating in a local church? Obviously, it isn't in their best interests.

What is their personal example?

Heb 13:7 *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of [their] conversation.*

One of the marks of a false prophet is what he teaches, but also that he doesn't submit himself under his own teaching (he has double standards). God has given us this principle that greatly helps and protects us, our teacher or morality MUST personally live what he teaches us, and we must see it visible, active, and natural in his life. Remember:

- From an arrogant person, we only learn to despise humility, and that its okay to haughty and show off our greatness.
- From a hypocrite, we only learn that it is not important to actually live what you religiously ascribe to.
- From a bad spiritual example, you learn wickedness.
- You will never learn faith from a person that has everything, that fleeces the poor so he can live in luxury.

If you cannot say with all honesty, that my pastor or "teacher of morality" is a good example of Christ, and that you want to be just like him spiritually, then he is a false prophet. You should

flee from him immediately! If he is not "blameless" **1Tim 3:2**, then you will learn bad things spiritually from him that you really will not notice until they are permanently in your own character. Read 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and when you there is a difference between your Bible teacher and these requirements, or you simply cannot obviously and easily see what the spiritual life of your Bible teacher is, then you are probably sitting under a wolf. Run! I cannot emphasis this sufficiently. Paul's exhortations to Timothy as a minister: **1Ti 4:12** *"be thou an example of the believers," Tit 2:7-8* *"shewing thyself a pattern of good works... having no evil thing to say of you."* **1Cor 11:1** *"be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"* **1Co 4:16** *"be ye followers of me"* **Phil 3:17** *"be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example."* **1Th 1:6** *"ye became followers of us and of the Lord".*

What is the Leadership style?

Acts 20:29 *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

One of the very clear marks that distinguish what type of minister a person is, is their form of dealing with the sheep. The true pastor contrasts with the wolf in his tenderness and meekness with the sheep, and the wolf does care how he treats them, and normally his brutality and cruelty (**Eze 34:4**) will come through with time. The minister is disqualified if he is a striker or a brawler, if he isn't patient (**1Tim 3:3**). In **Jer 23:1-4**, God describes the evil pastors as destroying, scattering and not gathering together the flock. He will scare, and discourage the flock by his brutal and violent actions. The true pastor gathers under his gentle personality a following of people who love the true pastor because he is good to them (treats them well). He focus on service, not dominion.

1Cor 16:15 *I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and [that] they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.)* **16** *That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with [us], and laboureth.*

Grading a Bible Teacher

By David Cox v1 © 2011

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For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 2Tim 4:3

Today it is in fashion to reject the traditional local church and a good pastor in order to sit under expert Bible teachers. Typically these are charismatic personality teachers, that people just love to hear. From hearing their followers, "everybody should leave their local churches and come study with these great teachers." The Bible has a response to this, and it is the model for learning which God has given us, in a local church with a qualified pastor.