

You can also evaluate a church by determining who or what they focus on. A truth teaching church will point the congregation toward Christ. If you find they are emphasizing the pastor or the social life or the good works they do, keep looking because you are in the wrong place.

**The false pastor** (teacher) wears a mask of godliness and may even be a graduate of a theological seminary, and claims God as his/her authority. Yet he/she is tolerant of the gods of other major religions and their teaching. He does not preach the power of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Often he emphasizes a religion of works and self-effort, a religion for a new age of men and women, who are considered advanced in science and technology—a religion that recognizes how wise they are so that God will accept them. In the simplest of terms a corrupt minister is a minister who preaches and teaches that a person can be good enough and do enough good to make themselves acceptable to God. In other words they believe that they can earn their way into Heaven by doing what they consider to be good works. Boy, are they in for a surprise!

“In Evanston, Illinois are the ‘Missionaries of the New Truth’ who also advertise under the heading: ‘We want you to join our faith as an ordained minister with the rank of doctor of divinity.’

“They state: ‘We are a fast-growing faith, actively seeking new members who believe as we do that all men should seek the truth in their own way, by any means they deem right. As a minister of the faith you can: Set up your own church and apply for exemption from property and other taxes; perform marriages and exercise all other ecclesiastical powers; seek

**draft** exemption as one of our working missionaries. We can tell you how. Get sizeable cash grants for doing missionary work for us; some transportation companies, hotels, theaters, etc., give ministers reduced rates. Get the whole package for \$100.00.’ This “*ordination*” is declared to be legal and valid anywhere in this country.”<sup>1</sup>

How easily fools are misled. Anyone that reads and studies the Bible would know that such teaching is from Satan.

**A corrupt pastor** is one who denies the power of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ to save men and to give them eternal life. Every generation has considered themselves to be capable of seeing more truth and that they were more enlightened than former generations. Perhaps in the areas of science and technology this is true, but it is not true in a relationship with God. You see mankind does not change regarding their sin pattern. Mankind is still corrupt and will continue to be a corrupt unless their hearts are changed and made new. This is where Jesus comes in. Only Christ can change the human heart; only He can make a person into a new creature, one who is

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<sup>1</sup> Tan, Paul Lee: Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: A Treasury of Illustrations, Anecdotes, Facts and Quotations for Pastors, Teachers and Christian Workers. Garland TX : Bible Communications, 1996, c1979

“*born again*” into a new life, and the reason it is a new life is because when you express your sincere faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit is sent by God to live within you. At that point you have all the power of God within you and the potential not to sin. **That is just like a new birth, being born again, because you can be totally transformed from what you were and who you were.**

The truth is now revealed to you, a truth that never changes. “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8). “Advancements in science and technology, psychology and medicine cannot stop the process of sin and death. Only Christ—the power of His cross and resurrection—can change people and give them eternal life. Any pastor who preaches any other message is a corrupt pastor. He is a pastor who is preaching and teaching a corrupt and false message.”<sup>2</sup>

Corrupt pastors resist the truth. Why? Because their minds are corrupted, that is, their understanding of the Gospel is twisted. They do not want to believe the kind of power that lies in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

### 2 TIMOTHY 3:8-9:

<sup>8</sup> *Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved [evil, corrupt]<sup>3</sup> mind, rejected in regard to the faith.*

<sup>9</sup> *But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also.*

Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 3.8) were two religious leaders in Egypt who made no secret about their contempt for Moses when he went to Pharaoh to deliver Israel out of slavery. In the end they were destroyed. These two men are not named in the Old Testament, but they are mentioned in other Jewish religious writings. Their names were apparently well known to all Jews.)

William Barclay clearly describes the resistance to the truth of the Gospel:

*"The Christian leader will never lack his opponents. There will always be those who prefer their ideas to God's ideas. There will always be those who wish to exercise power and influence over people and who will stoop to any means to do so. There will always be those who have their own twisted ideas of the Christian faith, and who wish to win others to their mistaken belief. But of one thing Paul was sure—the days of the deceivers were numbered. Their falsity would be demonstrated; and they would receive their own appropriate place and reward" (The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, p.223).<sup>4</sup>*

<p>Corrupt pastors and their corrupt religions will be punished. In the end all false teachers and their teaching will be tracked down and uncovered by God. It will happen when Christ returns. Corrupt pastors and teachers are headed for the hottest part of Hell according to 2 Thessalonians.</p>
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<sup>2</sup> OI  
<sup>3</sup> BI

<sup>4</sup> Op Cit., Tan, Paul Lee

2 Thessalonians 1:6-12:

<sup>6</sup> For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,  
<sup>7</sup> and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,

<sup>8</sup> **dealing out retribution to those who do not know God** and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> **These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction**, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

<sup>10</sup> when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

<sup>11</sup> To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,

<sup>12</sup> so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 TIMOTHY 3:10-13:

<sup>10</sup> Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,

<sup>11</sup> persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and **out of them all the Lord rescued me!**

<sup>12</sup> Indeed, **all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**

<sup>13</sup> But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

It is quite common for us to be influenced by the people with whom we live and spend a lot of time. Sometimes this results in good but also bad. Therefore it is very important that we carefully screen our friends and others with whom we may spend time. Here we find Paul reviewing the important principles that he has already experienced after spending many years with Paul. Other than Christ Himself there couldn't be a better mentor than Paul.

In contrast to the false teachers Paul describes in verses 1-9, Timothy has been exposed to every aspect of truth. Timothy had seen Paul in action and nothing better exemplifies the kind of person you are than how you think and act. Paul loved Timothy as a son and taught him everything about being a faithful minister. He is telling Timothy basically the same thing that he told believers in Corinth years earlier:

1 Corinthians 4:16-17:

<sup>16</sup> *Therefore I exhort you, **be imitators of me.***

<sup>17</sup> *For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.*

“Paul trusted Timothy at that time as he also now trusts Timothy in Ephesus. I like what John MacArthur has to say about these verses:

“Every church, Christian college, Bible school, seminary, and other Christian organization should be led by and, in turn, reproduce leaders who not only are orthodox in doctrine and moral in lifestyle but also are courageous and committed defenders of the faith. They should be willing to follow the Lord and lead His church in dangerous times and circumstances and at any cost steadfastly hold up the banner of God's divine revelation in Scripture.

“The nine leadership qualities, or characteristics, mentioned in 3:10-13 can be divided into three categories: ministry duties (teaching, conduct, purpose, v. 10a), personal virtues (faith, patience, love, perseverance, v. 10b), and difficult experiences, summarized by persecutions and sufferings (vv. 11-13).”<sup>5</sup>

Does the church you attend have this kind of leadership? If not, try to change it, and if unsuccessful, find one that does, like Village Church of Wheaton:  
[www.villagechurchofwheaton.org](http://www.villagechurchofwheaton.org)

If you haven't heard a sermon recently speaking out against cultural and political values that support abortion, homosexuality, adultery, same sex marriage, pornography, over emphasis on sports and entertainment, drug abuse, obesity, Islam, Tyranny, politicians, welfare, sloth, greed, narcissism, spousal abuse, child abuse, suicide, and a number of others, you're in the wrong church listening to the wrong pastor for all the wrong reasons.

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<sup>5</sup> John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 2 Timothy*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 128.

Wise up and look for a place where the truth is taught at any cost by a pastor that exemplifies the qualities of Jesus, Paul, and Timothy. Now don't call up any of the major networks and tell them that this pastor in Wheaton equates two men in the early church, Paul and Timothy, to Jesus. Rather, we should recognize that Jesus hand-picked Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and Paul hand-picked Timothy to be his successor, and both men lived the kind of lives Jesus expected pastors and teachers to live. Jesus is God and there is no other like Him! If we follow His example and His Gospel we will find peace and joy, both here on earth and a glorious existence throughout all eternity.

The way we live our lives reveals what we are really like inside. The way we deal with the circumstances that confront us every day and the decisions we make, they all reveal what we believe to be important. Paul had just finished telling Timothy that the false teachers' stupidity will eventually become evident when what they teach is compared with the light of God's truth. The lies will initially be accepted by the people of the world but that success won't last long. Remember that during this seven year Tribulation there will be two indestructible teachers with supernatural powers teaching from Jerusalem as well as 144,000 ministers appointed by God to teach that truth to the people of the world, and when they teach the truth of God's Word to the population, the lies of the false teachers will become obvious to many.

Lyndon Johnson tried to lie his way out of a poorly conceived Viet Nam War. Richard Nixon tried to lie his way out of Watergate. Ronald Reagan got into hot water by trying to hide the truth of Iran-Contra. Bill (the adulterer) Clinton tried to lie his way out of multiple love affairs, and Barack Obama in my opinion is simply an incorrigible liar and traitor as is evidenced by his behavior, and I'm sure history will support that belief. All these lies eventually became known to the country as the truth was told. The same thing will happen to these false teachers because nothing in the world can be hidden from God's truth.

False teachers and doctrines were around in Paul's and Timothy's day and Timothy may have felt that God's truth was losing out to those false doctrines and wide spread persecution. But Paul reminded Timothy that these early successes would only be temporary, Psalm 73:1-28 (NLT):

<sup>1</sup> *Truly God is good to Israel, to those whose hearts are pure.*

<sup>2</sup> *But as for me, I almost lost my footing. My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone.*

<sup>3</sup> *For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness.*

<sup>4</sup> *They seem to live such painless lives; their bodies are so healthy and strong.*

<sup>5</sup> *They don't have troubles like other people; they're not plagued with problems like everyone else.*

<sup>6</sup> *They wear pride like a jeweled necklace and clothe themselves with cruelty.*

<sup>7</sup> *These **fat cats** have everything their hearts could ever wish for!*

<sup>8</sup> *They scoff and speak only evil; in their pride they seek to crush others.*

<sup>9</sup> *They boast against the very heavens, and their words strut throughout the earth.*

<sup>10</sup> *And so the people are dismayed and confused, drinking in all their words.*

<sup>11</sup> *"What does God know?" they ask. "Does the Most High even know what's happening?"*

- <sup>12</sup> **Look at these wicked people**— enjoying a life of ease while their riches multiply.
- <sup>13</sup> Did I keep my heart pure for nothing? Did I keep myself innocent for no reason?
- <sup>14</sup> I get nothing but trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain.
- <sup>15</sup> If I had really spoken this way to others, I would have been a traitor to your people.
- <sup>16</sup> So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is!
- <sup>17</sup> Then I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked.
- <sup>18</sup> Truly, you put them on a slippery path and send them sliding over the cliff to destruction.
- <sup>19</sup> In an instant they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors.
- <sup>20</sup> When you arise, **O Lord, you will laugh at their silly ideas as a person laughs at dreams in the morning.**
- <sup>21</sup> Then I realized that my heart was bitter, and I was all torn up inside.
- <sup>22</sup> I was so foolish and ignorant— I must have seemed like a senseless animal to you.
- <sup>23</sup> Yet I still belong to you; you hold my right hand.
- <sup>24</sup> **You guide me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny.**
- <sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth.
- <sup>26</sup> My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever.
- <sup>27</sup> **Those who desert him will perish, for you destroy those who abandon you.**
- <sup>28</sup> But as for me, how good it is to be near God! I have made the Sovereign LORD my shelter, and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things you do.

Knut Larson sums it up rather well.

“When people peddling bogus philosophies or theologies encounter the truth of God and his power, **their folly will be clear to everyone.** Lies and deceptions must crumble, dissolving to dust. Among the ruins of these elaborate but false beliefs are the men who devised them, exposed in their foolishness.”<sup>6</sup>

In verse 10 Paul compares himself with these false teachers. Paul asked Timothy to evaluate his (Paul’s) behavior. A person claiming truth can be evaluated by their conduct and behavior. Paul asked Timothy to evaluate him on these issues. Paul told Timothy: “*You know my teaching, the way I live life, and what my goals are.*” Paul was confident that a careful evaluation of how he lived his life would prove him honorable, truthful, pure, and genuinely working for God to be glorified. He also wanted Timothy to remember Paul’s faith, patience, love, endurance, the persecutions he endured, and the sufferings he experienced. Such faithfulness is what results

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<sup>6</sup> Knute Larson, *Holman New Testament Commentary – I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ed. Max Anders (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 304.

from living a pure Christian life. Timothy had experienced some of the same suffering as Paul when they were travelling together through Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. He had seen how Paul lived and the way he consistently taught the truth of God's Word. He was also around to see how God rescued Paul.

As I was doing some research work on this part of the text I came across the following comment: *"Today, most Christians do not face outright persecution just for being Christians."* How quickly things are changing. Today most Christians face persecution from the culture. There is little doubt that powerful forces that would like to see the United States become a socialist or communist country are going about it by trying to destroy our faith in the One true God and to eliminate the backbone of this country which is the conventional family that He initiated. Therefore it is likely that anyone who lives to obey God and Jesus will be persecuted.

Acts 14:21-22:

<sup>21</sup> *After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,*

<sup>22</sup> *strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."*

Jesus cautioned His disciples about the same thing.

John 15:18-20 (NLT):

<sup>18</sup> *"If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.*

<sup>19</sup> *The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.*

<sup>20</sup> *Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you.*

All of us to live to maintain Christian values are going to be subject to persecution from the world. If a certain amount of that persecution is not directed toward you individually, you should self-examine your commitment.