

How can you spot a 'false' teacher

For the time will come when men will not tolerate sound doctrine, but with itching ears they will gather around themselves teachers to suit their own desires. So they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.... *2.Timothy 4:3*

One of the signs of the end times will be an increase in false teachers and a wide acceptance of false teaching across many churches.

While false teachers and false teaching has always been present in the church throughout history, it has rarely if ever been as wide spread as it is today.

False teachers have infected large numbers of Christians with their false teaching and they have been accepted by many with wide open arms.

So what is the appeal that causes so many Christians to turn away from sound Biblical truth and fall for the myth, the deception and the lies that such man promote?

1. False teachers very often claim to have a 'new' message. They claim to have received a 'new' or a special revelation from God. This is usually a revelation which appeals to the flesh, which caters to our fleshly desires.

False teachers will never preach a message which calls Christians to die for their Lord, which will encourage them to forsake all that they have for the sake of following Jesus. It is never a message of total surrender but instead it will be a message which has an appeal to the flesh.

The false 'prosperity gospel' is one such example.

The false teachers who promote this false gospel (man like Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, Joseph Prince, Oral Roberts, Joel Osteen and others) will always appeal to the flesh. The focus is always on 'benefits'. The message will always center on what's in it for 'me'. The entire appeal of this false gospel is built around our 'fleshly' desires.

It promises health, wealth and other material blessings.

There is no mention of dying to self, of surrounding everything we have to Jesus for the sake of spreading the gospel.

Instead of issuing such a challenge to their followers (which is exactly what Jesus used to do) the messages of such false teachers is solely focused on 'benefits', on what's in it for me.

As a result it often produces 'Christians' who are not truly converted but who are motivated by their selfish desires and who are driven by greed and ruled by the flesh.

Because false teachers are poisoning the minds of their followers with subtle and often with very destructive lies, they have to discredit anyone and everyone who appears as a threat to them.

And the greatest threat is always Jesus himself for the message that Jesus preached was one which was very different in substance to that what the promoters of the prosperity gospel preach to their followers today.

The 'hyper-grace' preacher, Joseph Prince, implies that what Jesus taught before He went to the cross is not relevant for believers today.

He writes: "There is a lot of confusion and wrong believing in the church today because many Christians read their Bibles without rightly dividing the old and new covenants. They don't realize that even some of the words which Jesus spoke in the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are part of the old covenant. They were spoken before the cross as He had not yet died. The new covenant begins only after the cross, when the Holy Spirit was given on the Day of Pentecost" (p. 92, "Destined to Reign" by Joseph Prince).

The implication of this statement is very far reaching indeed. This is one of the subtle lies of the devil himself. He had already used this lie in the garden of Eden when he tempted Adam and Eve and discredited what God had told them (as recorded in Genesis 3).

Jesus was (and is) the word of God incarnate. He was God's word in the flesh.

Jesus is and always will be the eternal 'word of God'.

Every single word, every sentence which Jesus had spoken is of eternal value and of eternal significance. Jesus never spoke one word which is not of great importance to us.

When Jesus opened his mouth it was God speaking to mankind on earth!

Nothing could be more important than that.

To downplay or even to discredit those words are always the work of the devil himself!

To discredit Jesus this way is one of the greatest insults which a man can commit.

It is the ultimate expression of human arrogance. Even the thought of it indicates that this man think far too highly of himself for no one has the right to discredit the 'word of God' that was sent to bring light into darkness.

Every word which Jesus had spoken before he went to the cross was and still is divine truth and it will always remain absolute truth!

Only a heart full of pride would try to discredit what Jesus had spoken to us!

2. False teachers often claim to have received 'special' or even 'new' revelations from God. The Bible reveals everything which we need to know about truth and about God himself. There has never been any need for any additional revelations. While personal prophecies have always been part of the church, they have never replaced what is already written in scripture. We must never accept and tolerate any such 'new revelations' in connection to the truth which has already been revealed to us in the Bible.

Scripture stands as 'the' ultimate, as the complete revelation in regards to truth.

The Bible contains everything that we need to know in this life.

It outlines the path of salvation and it reveals the true character of God.

But instead of studying and of searching the scriptures for themselves, many gullible Christians are tempted by men who tickle their ears with 'new' revelations.

Every single cult started out that way in the past.

Every cult leader had claimed to have received 'new' or 'special' revelations from God which eventually turned their church into a cult.

We have been told to test what we hear and to ensure that it lines up with the truth of our scripture.

We have been told to reject anyone and to reject any teaching which promotes another gospel that will promote a false image of God.

Many 'false teachers' also claim to have a special and a rather unique relationship with God. Some even claim to hear His voice audible or converse with Him in a rather casual way. One such 'false teacher' shared with his congregation that he had to correct God for some of the mistakes He (God) had made. His congregation was spell bound by his words, but not because they were offended by his blasphemous statements but because they looked up to their Pastor as if he was God himself.

False teachers often have a very charismatic personality and as a result of it they become an idol to their followers. They become the man who can do and who can say no wrong. The thought that this man could possibly lead them astray simply appears absurd and completely impossible.

But the 'new' revelations will soon place such false teachers into conflict with much of Christendom and with any 'sound', credible teacher of the Bible today (as well as anyone in the past)

3. Whenever 'new' revelations and new teachings are rejected by most of the church (particularly if they are challenged and rejected by every 'sound' and credible church leaders, the warning lights must always come on.

Joseph Prince has been challenged (and has been publicly opposed) by a number of the most senior Christian leaders today.

There would not be one credible Christian leader who would agree with his teaching. One of the many well-known (and highly credible) ministers who oppose this man's teaching is David Pawson, the senior Baptist minister from the U.K. David Pawson had tried to point out some of the serious errors and the many dangers of Joseph Princes teaching but unfortunately he was rejected for his warnings and caution.

False teachers will always place themselves above anyone else who might appear as a threat and as a challenge to them.

Joseph Prince even went as far one time to tell his followers to burn and destroys any books and any pieces of literature which disagree with his teaching.

The last person who called for a public burning of books that appeared as a challenge was Adolf Hitler himself.

No genuine Christian would ever tell his followers to burn any books which disagrees with their teaching.

The only books which we should burn as Christian are books about pornography and witchcraft, books that will cause Christians to 'sin'.

A person who preaches a message which is based upon scripture has nothing to fear.

He will be at peace in himself and know that God stands behind his message. He will never fear a threat from anyone else.

Every sound Christian theologian and every credible Bible teacher has often encouraged his followers to read books which present different views, a different perspective to what they teach. They will always encourage their followers to discover the truth for themselves. It is only someone who has something to hide that will feel threatened by the truth of God's word.

4. False teachers will always claim to be someone unique or somebody 'special'.

They will appear as someone who has received a special calling and a special message from God.

A true saint will appear as someone who stands out for his humility but rarely as a man of great stature.

The apostle Paul was a classic example of that. Paul was very much aware of his lack of public appeal. He was the exact opposite of charismatic and charming preachers who manage to fill his church because of his human appeal.

Whenever you look at a true saint in human history you will encounter a man (or a woman) who often lacked human appeal. They usually stood out as someone who would have been easily overlooked by the crowds but who left an impression for their humility.

Richard Wurmbrand was such a true saint of our times.

His books reveal a depth and closeness with the Lord which we find in few other books that had ever been written.

He was a man who suffered greatly in life. He was imprisoned for his faith, he was tortured on many occasions but he remained faithful even during the hardest time of testing.

Yet none of his books are sold in any of the big charismatic or Pentecostal churches today.

His books would always appear as a threat to the superficial faith of anyone who only seeks after a blessing.

The 'best sellers' of the modern church are books with little true spiritual content.

They are books which are focused on 'self' (on what benefits I can receive as a Christian). They are usually void of any true spiritual substance.

I am certain that the Apostle Paul would never be invited to speak in any of those large Charismatic or Pentecostal churches today.

He would simply lack the 'charisma', the public appeal and his message would be far too direct and too 'discomforting' to any Christians who follow Christ for the sake of his own personal gain but who would shy away from carrying the cross for the sake of spreading the gospel.

Neither would Jesus himself be allowed to preach in any of such churches today.

His message would always be perceived as a threat.

For Jesus would always correct a false image of God and challenge the wrong, shallow teaching which is promoted in such churches today.

5. When you look at church history and study the life of 'true' saints you will always encounter men and women who had died to themselves, who had surrendered all that they had (both in material terms as well as in status and reputation) for the sake of the gospel.

But not so when you look at the lives of 'false teachers' today.

The Pastors who preach a false gospel (the prosperity gospel) often live an incredible lifestyle. They live in huge mansions, earn millions of dollars a year, travel in their own private jets and live a life which would never be obtainable for the rest of their congregations (who have paid for it all).



David Oyedepo, a 60 years old Pastor who lives in poverty stricken Nigeria is worth U\$150 million dollars today.

He sells an unobtainable dream to millions of poor Nigerian Christians. Unfortunately most of them are willing to pay dearly for this dream, for the dream to become as rich as the thief who had stolen their

money through lies and deception.

Chris Oyakhilome, another 50 years old Nigerian preacher is worth U\$ 50 million today.

He sells the same dream and steals money from the poorest of the poor, from the most gullible in his desperate poor nation.



Benny Hinn, the American thief is worth U\$42 million today.

Every single cent of that money has come from Christians who believe in his lies.

Joseph Prince only has a net worth of U\$6.3 million but he is working hard to increase his wealth every day. But he can still afford a rather luxurious lifestyle on his U\$700,000 annual income.

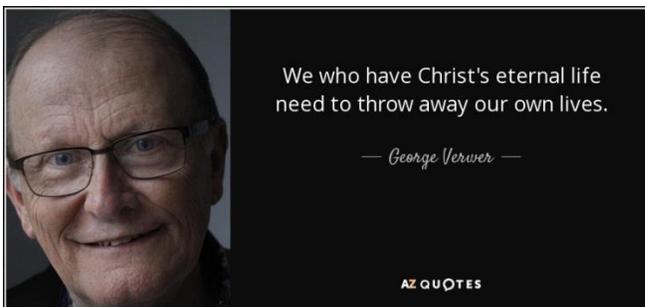
Every single cent of that money comes from his devoted followers who are willing to pay for their 'Prince'.



In Acts 3:6 Peter said to the sick person on the street who could not walk: "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" None of the apostles had ever experienced any great luxuries in life. Not one of them was rich by human standards. Their true wealth was stored up in heaven instead!

Most of them died for their faith.

A pastor who earns 700,000 a year, whose net worth is in the millions, cannot have a passion for souls. Every genuine Christian would spend such a large amount of money on missions instead.



George Verwer, the former Head of Operation Mobilization had sold many thousands of his books across the world but he never kept 1 cents from his sales. Every cent, every dollar went back to his mission and was used for saving more souls.

Only a fake Christian would enrich himself through the donations of his followers.

A genuine disciple of Christ would always use what he has for the sake of saving more souls!

Pastors who exploit their own propel for the sake of their personal gain are the most shameful examples of a Christian today. They are not Sheppard's, they are ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing instead!

They are exactly the same as the money changers in the temple and there can be no doubt that their fate will one day be exactly the same.



When Jesus encountered the money changers in the temple he was overcome with anger and it was the only time that Jesus physically attacked anyone. The image of Jesus acting in violence towards a human being simply does not fit the image we have of Jesus that we have in our mind.

But a pastor who deliberately exploits God's people for his own personal financial gain will one day face the severe anger of Christ.

Let them enjoy their money and their riches for the moment for their time is short and there will be no eternal reward.

There will only encounter the 'wrath of the lamb' once this life is over.



Whenever a Christian encounters a pastor who lives a very luxurious lifestyle as a result of the money he skillfully stole from the pockets of his faithful followers, the warning lights must always come on. No genuine man of God would ever do such a terrible thing.

This is a gross sin in the eyes of the Lord!

And it is such people who often claim to have received special revelations from God!

Would God really entrust a man who enriches himself from his own congregation (and from other Christians) with a 'new' revelation?

The answer is very obvious indeed. God would never do such a thing.

Whatever 'new' revelation such man may have will always come from another spirit but never from the Holy Spirit himself for the Holy Spirit is holy and pure.

Anyone who uses God's money to enrich himself is a thief in God's eyes!

For a Pastor to exploit his own church (or any other Christians) for his own selfish material gain is one of the most serious sins which a person can ever commit.

Any Pastor or minister who exploits his congregation physically (by cashing in on his followers) will also exploit them spiritually. Such exploitation always goes hand in hand.

The message that such a preacher conveys to his followers will always have a hidden meaning to it.

It's all about money!

Money, prosperity, good health and the power to reign!

Anyone who preaches such a message will be highly successful for who wants to hear a message of 'total surrender', of 'death to self' instead?

Who wants to hear a message of allowing Jesus to reign instead of reigning over our own life instead?

Who wants to hear a message of surrender and sacrifice, of paying the ultimate price for following our Lord?

Anyone who is truly in love with the Lord will not be easily tempted by the lies of such preachers. He will be repulsed by their message instead!

The 'tickling of the ear' always relates to the flesh. It spiritualizes human selfishness.

2. Timothy 4:3 is focusing on 'our desires', on teachers which preach a messages which tempts our human desires.

A message of 'death to self' never suits our desires.

Who really wants to die to self? Who wants to surrender all that he has and place it into the hands of the Lord as a sacrifice?

The true Christian walk is all about God taking up the reign in our life. Any benefit which result out of this total surrender is only the result of Him having taken up the reign over our life.

But seeking Christ for the sake of gaining a benefit has nothing to do with the gospel which has been preached by the Lord!

Christians in other country understand this much better than us.



Joseph Prince and his message of 'cheap grace' would have little appeal to Christians in North Korea today. Benny Hinn would not find many followers among the persecuted Church of Iran.

Whenever Christians suffer for Christ they are not easily misled by false teaching.

Scripture tells us very clearly how we need to treat such false teachers in our churches today.

We need to distance ourselves from them and their lies. We need to close our ears to their subtle deception and turn our minds back to truth (as revealed in the scriptures)

"As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!" *Galatians 1:9*