

# SHEPHERD'S STAFF

A newsletter for "Pastors who pastor."

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## Marks of the False Prophet: Their Fruit.

■ **Matt 7:20** *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* In this teaching of Jesus, he made it very clear to us the existence, presence, influence, and danger of teachers or false prophets. But here we must understand that it is very difficult for most laymen, and even a lot of ministers to identify false doctrine from true doctrine. The believers of false doctrine are often adamant and passion about what they believe in.

God gave help though, and this help is in the form of a spiritual principle. False prophets want something from what they are doing, and this desire is an unbiblical, ungodly desire, not valid before God. As they work within the church, with time this comes out by what their work produces, what fruit it has. The flip of this truth is that biblical teaching of true doctrine ALWAYS produces piety and godliness.



**1John 4:1** *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.* The fact of the existence of false prophets is beyond debate. They exist, and they attack the truths of Christianity. As Christians we have no other option except to examine everything and discern what is of God, and what is not. Any church or Christian that doesn't discern avidly and correctly is doomed to ending up a spiritual shipwreck. This ability to discern correctly what is false from what is biblical is like a compass on a sailing ship. Without it, all is lost.

**Good Doctrine Produces Holiness and Piety.** In my tract **Ch39** on "[What should we preach?](#)" (cocontracts.com) I explain this point further, but in Paul's exhortations to Timothy, he marks out and explains that good doctrine produces piety and holiness in a person's life. **2Tim 3:5**, Paul exhorts Timothy to depart from those men who have "*a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.*" The entire point of all preaching and teaching is to be Christlike, that is, to form the morality and attitudes of Christ in one's own life and mind (and spirit and soul). This in essence is embracing Christ, or accepting him as your Savior, i.e. believing in Christ has to include a pursuit of his moral pattern. Salvation is given immediately on belief, but the pursuit of holiness is seen as the sincerity of your salvation (a real consequence). In **1Tim 6:3**, Paul exhorts Timothy to seek out "*wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness.*" Biblical doctrine preached from a godly man produces the fruit of piety (holiness) in the hearers.

**Morality is transferred ONLY by moral teachers.** When a man teaches a lecture on the sins of smoking with a cigarette in his mouth the whole time, his words may be exactly precise and tremendously motivating, but his practical effect upon his audience is null. The reason for that is that God has insisted on the principle that morality is transferred from one person to another only via the instrument of a teacher that practices that same morality that he preaches. **Prov 13:20** *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.* Again I recommend that you download or read online my tract **CH24**, "[The Power of an Example](#)" (cocontracts.com). The most powerful influence that extremely impacts us is the example of Christ, **1Pet 2:21** *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:* **1John 2:6** *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* A good way of discerning between a true man of God and a false prophet is his focus. A man of God preaches and teaches Jesus

Christ. He upholds that moral example of Christ in the Bible, and shows it to his people through his personal example so that they can emulate it. A false prophet is introspective, in that he focuses on his own life, desires, pleasures, ideas, etc. They preach about themselves and their accomplishments, not Christ.

**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, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 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.* The false prophet has an ego, and that ego controls his actions and plans to build glory to himself. Humbleness is a trait of Jesus Christ, and the distinction between true humbleness, and faked humbleness is very obvious if one is attuned to see it. Humbleness is being invisible. A humble man of God doesn't talk about himself so much. Worse if he talks about his own humbleness. Rather he focuses on Christ. A false prophet wants others to applaud, praise, and extol him. He will tell others that he is humble because he wants their praise. He will do humble acts IN FRONT OF ALL so that they will note that he is a humble man of God. A truly humble man doesn't let other know of his humble acts, just God. **Matt 6:1** *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.* "Perverse things" in **Acts 20:28** means twisted, or improperly interpreted. False prophets put a spin on things, and indeed, most of them are masters at it.

**A Minister is Dangerous and False when the Fruit of his Ministry is Stinks.** God has called us to be fruit inspectors. When something stinks, "throw it away" (get away from it yourself). **The first examination of a minister is what is he morally.** **Prov 20:11** *Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.* You can just examine his life and actions, and a wise and discerning Christian will see what kind of man he is morally. If a person (minister or not) is not the image of Christ, he is either not a good Christian or he is not a Christian at all. It is folly and spiritual suicide to follow people that are not Christlike, and worse yet to let them pour their thoughts into your brain week in and week out. But the problem is that false prophets tend to be charismatic people that camouflage their errors with sweetness and charm that causes many Christians to accept them no matter what they do or say.

**John 15:8** Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. **Gal 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, **23** Meekness, temperance... When we join a ministry to sit under its influence and teachings, we need to evaluate whether it is loaded with spiritual fruit, or carnal works.

**Matt 7:15** Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. The way Satan deceives Christians is by disguising his prophets in the clothing or garb of sheep. They look, act, and speak like regular ole Christians. But they are not. They are ravening wolves, walking amongst Christians with a purpose to destroy and wreck havoc on us. How do we protect ourselves? It has been stated that sheep have no offensive weapons, and basically this is true. But the one offensive weapon is their feet, they can walk away. It is with much pain that I have observed over the years really good Christian brethren who are sitting under false prophets, and they just will not use this protection, to walk out and stop supporting and giving their money, lives, and energies to these false prophets.

**Matt 7:16** Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? **17** Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. **18** A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. **19** Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. **20** Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. This matter of discerning false doctrine and false prophets is not impossible, even if it is very hard. People not under the control of the Holy Spirit have carnal desires and ways of thinking, as well as carnal ways of doing things (methodology), and these things cannot be hidden for long. They can be set aside for godliness, but that doesn't happen if the minister is basically evil in his heart.

**Examining a Minister in His Mirror.** Another way way to discern a false prophet is to simply to examine the effect that man has on the people under him. **Matt 12:33** Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. **34** O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. **35** A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. Many times (almost always) a false prophet has a charismatic personality which is linked with a "bewitching" charm. It is hard to see through the sweetness, courteousy, charm, and smiles to see if what he is teaching and preaching is false. Look at him in a mirror then. When you examine the people closest to him, those that are most extremely copying him among his followers, and what he produces in those ministers around him, you can see his essence without all that sweetness. The fruit of his life and ministry should be goodness, holiness, and piety in others that have received his ministry over time.

**Obama versus Franklin Graham on Islam.** Obama claims that America needs to be better educated about Islam, proposing that it is a peaceful religion. He claims that America is the largest Muslim country in the world. According to Michael Brown's article, the US population of Muslims is only 1%, or 3 million Americans. The top 10 Muslim countries in the world are (from greatest to down) Indonesia 209 million, India 177, Pakistan 167, Bangladesh 134, Nigeria 77, Egypt 77, Iran 74, Turkey 71, Algeria 35, Morocco 32, etc. 3 million isn't a drop in the bucket to these numbers. On this list of Muslim countries from the largest population of Muslims at the top on down, the USA is number 38. Rev. Graham said, "I . . . believe our president is completely and fundamentally mistaken about the intolerant and violent nature of hardened Islamic followers." Obama's interest in removing Muslims from consideration as a threat to the American way of life is extremely disturbing. Does Obama's pro-Islamic interests weigh more in his

own mind than his defense of the United States of American? If the number of radicals among Muslims is only 20-30%, then look at the numbers of Muslims in these nations above, and calculate 20%. That is very disturbing especially if Obama is defending them, tearing down America's diligent eye toward them! ([christianpost.com](http://christianpost.com))

**Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Life.** John MacArthur noted, "the true gospel is a call to self-denial, not self-fulfillment. The gospel is a message about redemption, not about life's purpose. The gospel according to Scripture deals with God's law, His grace, human depravity, redemption from sin, justification, sanctification, holiness, the nature of saving faith, and the lordship of Christ. And the true gospel's most essential features are the cross of Christ and the truth of the resurrection. None of those subjects is dealt with adequately or biblically in *The Purpose Driven Life*". Grace to You Statement.

**Marks of a False Prophet: They are introspective.** One of the marks of a false prophet is that they are always coming up with "new doctrines" that call attention to themselves. One of the surist marks of a false prophet is his attitude. They are normally arrogant, haughty, self-consumed people who use other people to built up their own self-worth and ego. This personality is always a false prophet because it is not the portrait of Christ by any means.

**Redefining Marriage Redefines Parenthood.** (An article by Girl who grew up with two Lesbian moms: taken from [ChristianHeadlines](http://ChristianHeadlines.com)) The gist of this article is that this girl had two lesbian moms, and she wrote the Supreme Court an open letter arguing that the feelings of the adults do not take a more importance place than the God given right of a child to enjoy two parents of different genders. It went viral on the Internet.

**Ministry Burnout Detection:** .There are some signs of ministry burnout. 1. Loss of focus and clarity of thought. 2. Loss of passion for work and ministry. 3. Shift in perspective from leading to maintaining. 4. Perceived atmosphere of hopelessness. 5. Isolation from others. 6. Refusal to engage new challenges. 7. Refusal to solve your ministry problems. 8. Focus on exit (retirement) more than engaging the challenges of your ministry. 9. Lack of patience for mundane things. 10. Shift in your attitude from being in a ministry to having a job. (Taken from Joseph Mattered's [article](http://article.com))

DCox editorial comment – The point is that you lose your efficiency as a ministry of God in that place, that ministry. The "burnout" syndrome is simply this attitude overtaking your better judgment.

**Ministry Burnout Remedy:** 1. Honor the biblical Sabbath (a weekly time of rest, reoperation, and restauration). 2. Daily devotions with the Lord. 3. Prioritize your life. 4. Refocus and recapture your original ministry calling and vision. 5. Stay accountable to others within a leadership community. (Taken from Joseph Mattered's [article](http://article.com))

DCox editorial comment – To remedy this problem one has to return to his ministry and salvation "roots", and restore himself to that fresh perspective on life and ministry.

### Suggestions and Questions

If you have questions about anything in this newsletter, questions outside of this newsletter that you would like for me to address, or doubts or problems, please send me an email with your thoughts: [davidcoxmex@gmail.com](mailto:davidcoxmex@gmail.com)