
THE ANATOMY OF A COUNTERFEIT PREACHER

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INTRODUCTION

First, understand that true spiritual discernment is always an extension of Christ's love in us (Php. 1:9). The truths in this article should never be used as ammunition for "witch hunts." My motive for writing this was done out of love and to protect the flock of God from the wolves in sheep's clothing. As with any, this article does not cover the subject matter from every possible angle. It would take a book to do that and then some.

When you read something similar to "they are false preachers" in this article, understand that *we*, because of the defilement of sin that exists within American Christianity, have lowered the standard of God's criteria for leadership within the Church. So, it is not my intent to raise the standard to an unrealistic level but to only define the Biblical standard. As it is in the world, so has it been in the Church in America. In the history of the United States of America, we have incrementally given presidents the leeway to subvert the constitutional rights of its citizens for the sake of "security" and "safety." The lines that divide true freedom from tyranny have been obscured. The responsibility to define the true Biblical standard rests upon the shoulders of the five-fold ministry within the Church. Charles G. Finney, the main proponent of the second great awakening in America, preached from a heart that was set aflame by God, that if morality and the fear of God declines in a nation, it is because of a lack of holiness and anointing in the pulpits of that nation (paraphrased). Who can argue with his results? There is a severe lack of moral courage, not only coming from the political platforms of this land, but also from its pulpits.

Jesus told His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mt. 16:6). He later explained to His disciples that "leaven" was referring to "doctrine" which also indicates "influence." They had to beware of any influence coming from them. The Apostle Paul stated concerning leaven:

"You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? (8) This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. (9) A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (Gal. 5:7-9).

He was addressing a problem that the church was having with false apostles who were persuading them contrary to their faith in Christ, turning their loyalty from Him to them and their teachings. Notice that he used the word "persuasion." He also used a variation of it in his first letter of the second chapter to the church in Corinth:

"And my language and my message were not set forth in *persuasive* (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the <Holy> Spirit and power <a proof by the Spirit

and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them>, (5) So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men (human philosophy), but in the power of God” (Amplified Bible).

As Paul stated, a little “leaven” will leaven a whole lump of bread. The point being made was that those things that are originally pure, good, and pleasing in God’s sight can be completely corrupted by just a little wrong enticement, doctrine, persuasion, or influence. What this implies is that whole movements, ministries, churches, and ministers can progressively go from being genuine to counterfeit by accepting wrong doctrine and influences into their thinking. They could be preaching ninety percent truth and ten percent error and qualify as being false preachers.

Think of it this way. If you added a hint of another color of paint, such as black, to pure (ultra) white, it would produce an off-white color. The off-white color could be easily mistaken for real white without having a sample of it to be used for comparison. I was under the impression that the walls in our house were white until we painted some of the trim with ultra or pure white. The difference was quite noticeable. Off-white can never be real or pure white. This is how the devil brings in his persuasive lies. He first interjects nuances and slight deviations that go unnoticed to the unsuspecting and untrained eye. Those people who have spent much time experiencing the pure, real, and genuine things of God will recognize the off-white persuasions of the devil. If we keep ourselves pure and pursue wisdom from God, we will always have that as a standard for comparison.

The one sign that indicates that a ministry has crossed over into being a counterfeit is evidence of *elitism*. It is defined as: 1) “The belief that certain persons or members of certain classes or groups deserve favored treatment by virtue of their perceived superiority, as in intellect, social status, or financial resources [and spiritual authority and position¹].” 2) “The sense of entitlement enjoyed by such a group or class.” 3) “Control, rule, or domination by such a group or class.”

Because of the existence of elitism (which is a demon, by the way), the followers of such ministries will not listen to sound Biblical reason. They are bewitched, intoxicated with the sonnets of high-sounding doctrines of demons that are designed to inflate the egos of men. This bewitching has a similar effect that hallucinogenic and mind-controlling drugs have over the minds of addicts. It is *humanly* impossible to reach them while under the influence. With God, all things are possible.

There is modern “leaven” that is beginning to take hold within various sects of the church (circa 2010 AD). One of those is what some have named the *Grace Movement*. To justify its teachings, its proponents twist certain Scriptures that were addressed to Christians in an attempt to make people think they were addressed to non-believers instead. This movement began by promoting liberating truth concerning God’s grace but has crossed over into extreme or hyped grace. Many of its followers refuse to hear anything contrary to what is being taught which is a sign of elitism.

The Apostle Paul had to confront the Apostle Peter because of hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-21). He was obviously caught up in fearing man instead of God. I am sure that Peter was acquainted with Paul but there is no evidence they were close friends. Whatever the case, Paul had already established a good reputation with the apostles in Jerusalem. The result was that Peter embraced the truth. What if he had refused to repent? Paul would have had no other choice but to mark him as a false apostle to protect the flock of God.

¹ Spiritual authority and position was added by the author to the definition for clarification.

My Father in Heaven once told me: "Son, you must embrace the truth no matter what package it comes in."

As an addendum added later to this article, one response to this suggested that the article may be wrongly "judging" or showing a lack of compassion toward those who are suspect of being counterfeit preachers. It is my view, from a Biblical and experiential perspective, that a person could qualify as a counterfeit church leader but still be a true believer in Christ. That must be taken into consideration in any case. On the other hand, if I had a flock of sheep and saw a wolf attempting to do harm even to my neighbor's sheepfold, there would be no hesitation as to what action I would take to keep them safe. The wolf would receive no mercy for the sake of the sheep. This same paradox exists in God. Mercy must be withheld from some in order to protect others. We must judge those who are counterfeits or we will be judged as partakers of their sins. When Jesus commanded: "Judge not that you be not judged" (Mt. 7:1), He was obviously speaking to hypocrites.

Let us heed the warning signs.

THE WARNINGS

In 1965, Stanley Frodshams gave a crucial prophecy at Elim Bible Institute warning the Church of the coming onslaught of seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. The entire prophecy can be read [here](#). Here are some relevant quotes:

"Listen to the messengers that I will send, but do not hold any man's personality in admiration. For many whom I shall anoint mightily with signs and miracles and wonders shall become lifted up and put upon a pedestal, but they shall fall by the wayside. I do not do this willingly, for I have made provision that they might stand. I call many into this ministry and equip them, but remember many shall fall in that hour. For Babylon shall not stand. They shall be like bright lights, and the people shall delight in their ministries, but they shall be taken over by deceiving spirits and lead many of My people astray."

"For those that perform miracles and speak not righteousness are not of Me. Those that have large crowds that follow them, but speak not of purifying and holiness are not of Me."

"There shall come deceivers among My people, in increasing numbers, who speak for the truth and shall gain the favor and the hearts of the people. For the people shall examine the Scriptures and say, "Is not what these men say true?" Then, when they have gained the hearts of the people, then and only then shall they bring out their wrong doctrines. Therefore I say unto you and warn you, 'Oh people, do not give your hearts to men, nor hold people in admiration, for by these very persons shall Satan enter into My people.' Watch for the seducers. Do you think a seducer will brandish a new heresy and flaunt it before the people? No, he will speak the words of righteousness and truth, and will appear as a minister of light declaring the Word."

The idolization of preachers, ministers, prophets, apostles, teachers, or any spiritual leader is the open door for seducing spirits and doctrines of demons into the Church (1 Tim. 4:1). This prophecy defined it as "holding a man's personality in admiration" or "putting them on a pedestal." We are warned that by doing so, the devil would enter God's people. Can the devil "enter" God's people? Is it in agreement with Scripture? Yes. We are warned by the Apostle Paul not to give place (quarter,

space marked off, habitation) to the devil (Eph. 4:27). The Apostle Peter asked Ananias (a believer) in Acts 5:3, why he allowed satan to *fill his heart* to lie to the Holy Spirit.

Did you notice how the prophecy stated that people would be seduced? First, the false teacher would speak the truth and gain the favor and hearts of the people and then they would present their wrong doctrines. This is similar to the same means that false teachers used to “bewitch” the Church in Galatia (Gal. 3). It is known as the principle of courtship and exclusion. Listen to what Paul said:

“They (the false apostles) zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them” (4:17).

What was happening here is very important for us to fully grasp. *The believers in that church were made to feel that what they already had in Christ was inferior to what was being presented by the false apostles.* They were only showered with “acceptance” if they embraced their “teachings” and “authority.” Otherwise, they were excluded.

To justify themselves, such false leaders will attempt to either shower you with flattery to win you over or mark you as a rebel or an “Absalom” because you refuse to place them on a pedestal as others wrongly have.

In summary, Paul told them that the New Covenant did not consist of Jesus plus something else (as in the works of the law; including Old Covenant festive observances). Jesus is the entirety of all that we need. This is confirmed by what he declared to the church in Corinth, “who [Jesus] became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD”” (1 Cor. 1:30-31). Let everyone glory in the LORD as opposed to the personalities of men because we are complete ONLY in Christ (Col. 2:8-10).

The foremost principle that must be embraced and enforced by every spiritual leader is to never allow anyone to place them on a pedestal, holding their personality in admiration. This temptation from the devil will put us in dangerous competition with Christ’s headship of His Church. The failure of any leader to overcome it will place God’s people at risk as described in the previously mentioned prophecy. What may have started out as a genuine God-ordained ministry will, consequently, become a tool of the devil. The Great Shepherd will rise to protect those who prefer His voice instead of the voice of inflated human rationale, who desire to do His will above their own, and who refuse to compromise the truth that God has written in their hearts.

We must never allow ourselves to be deceived because of an anointing upon someone or the results produced by it. That is no indication that their ministry is legitimately of God.

Demonic influences are lurking within the mind of any church leader who is still motivated by inferiority, insecurity, and the pride that provides a false sense of security through self-justification, self-defense, self-promotion, self-consolation, and the flattery of people. They have not denied themselves and taken up their cross to follow Christ. They have not allowed Jesus to “thoroughly purge His floor” (Mt. 3:11-12).

THE REAL CHURCH LEADER

A church leader, whether they are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers (Eph. 4:11-12), will have a consuming passion, not to *primarily* exercise their gifts or display their anointing, but to be the greatest servant of all. Hirelings, those who are paid money (or adulation) to look after the sheep, will be mainly concerned about themselves. When dealing with resistance from people, they will always react to it as being an attack against them personally or “their” authority. For them, most everything centers on their position and authority because they delight in being positioned above the people and in having the greatest authority in the church. They do not delight in being the greatest servant. Their authority is, therefore, exercised over people instead of in the service of them contrary to Jesus’ command in Luke 22:25-27. *Because their position and authority has become the platform to feed their need to feel superior and be held in high esteem among the people, it will also be the point of most of the spiritual assaults against them until they humble themselves and become servants.* God resists (opposes) the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Pt. 5:5-6). The Lord spoke to me once and said if we, as God’s people, would bow low enough and remain there, that the fiery arrows our enemy would always miss us.

A genuine church leader will be well-studied to make sure they understand God’s ways, protocol, and order in reference to the structure of a New Covenant church. They will be careful to love and protect God’s sheepfold at the expense of their own lives even if they stand alone in their decisions. King David learned the hard way of God’s refusal to compromise protocol when it comes to handling those things He calls precious and holy. Someone was killed as the result (2 Sam. 6).

A church leader cannot be ignorant of the foundational principles that release the full blessing of the New Covenant upon the Church. I will now attempt to cover some of these principles below. These consist of characteristics the Lord has shown me are most important to Him:

1) Creation order

- While both male and female have equal access to all that God has promised in Christ, they have differing roles in the family and also within the Church. This was established by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:8-15. What happens when women are allowed to operate in roles that belong to the man within the family and Church? A genuine church leader, being filled with God’s wisdom, will only allow a church structure that facilitates God’s creation order for the protection of both genders. (See this article entitled [God’s Creation Order](#))

2) Absence of a man-pleasing mind-set

- Man-pleasing is the only ingredient needed for the devil to make those who are candidates to become true church leaders into false ones. Paul said, “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10). A man-pleaser is a false leader.

3) Ruling by Biblical principle instead of emotions

- This is the main reason why the oversight within a Church should be male. Women, if they are truly honest, are more apt to make decisions based on their emotions and so do men who have been mostly imprinted by female influences in their lives. Those leaders

who allow crucial decisions for the church to be based on someone's emotions are more concerned about people's feeling than God's truth. They are false.

4) Loving God's truth

- The true Church leader will love God's truth above anything or anyone else. Jesus testified before Pilate: "For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice" (Jn. 18:37). He also stated earlier in His ministry, "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority" (Jn. 7:17). A church leader cannot truly hear God and the truths that are necessary to secure the overall integrity of the church and impart those things necessary for the Church's growth if they have divided interests. The desire to do God's will must be supreme in their life or they will be deceived by seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.

5) Ruling their household well

- "If a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God" (1 Tim. 3:5). One of the marks of Paul's apostleship was his emphasis on practical Christianity. He made this statement not as a suggestion but as the criteria for Church oversight. He equated "ruling" one's house or church well with "taking care of" them. This establishes what God expects from those who watch over the souls of His people. They must take care of them as a true shepherd does his sheep. Any one claiming to be an apostle, pastor, or leader of a work but allows someone who does not rule their house well to step into a place of oversight in a church is false. They are more concerned about doing what they think is right than doing things God's way. They are endangering the sheep through the open doors of the potential leader's households that are out of order. Often and unfortunately in such cases, the main criteria used for selecting leaders in a church is whether or not that person is loyal to *them*. If being loyal to Christ and His ways has to be compromised in order to be loyal to a minister or church then you must *run from it* or be judged as a partaker of their sin.

6) Hearing God's voice

- It would have been of no intrinsic value to Jesus, if His disciples were "affirming" Him as the Messiah before His Father in Heaven had established it within Him by direct and intimate declaration. In fact, such human affirmation is always proven as undependable, presumptuous, and, ultimately, nothing more than flattery.
- All feelings of self-worth within us have to come directly from God by personal encounters with Him. God-given "gifts" to the Church, such as those listed in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12, can never be used by the endowed person to bolster their personal insecurities. The gifts from God will become false securities instead and are defiled because of the wrong motives of the bearer.
- All outside ministry to us should only define and mature our ability to hear directly from God.

- Reaffirmation, confirmation, and reassurance can come through people but endorsement only comes directly from God.
- The Father's public endorsement of Jesus (Mt. 3-4) became evident to the whole world, not just in anointing, but, more importantly, in His ability to pass all the tests to which He was subjected. Without this, we will spend most of our sojourn here being tossed back and forth by every wind of tribulation and persuasive and seductive doctrine. We will spend most of our time trying to get from people what we should be getting from God.

In addition, any secretiveness about the church/ministry finances without accountability and any evidence of wrongful sexual behavior toward or emotional dependency on other people among church leadership are signals to us that we need to gently and discreetly confront the matter (Gal. 6:1-2) and leave if there is no show of humility. Whatever sinful defilement is on the leadership to whom you submit the oversight of your soul will eventually defile you. In order to keep yourself pure, you will have to leave. Do not allow your soul to be vexed for too long by any such wrongdoing or you will succumb to their ways and be judged by God as a partaker of their sin.

False spiritual manifestations that are portrayed as being of God by a preacher are also indicative of something very wrong in their spiritual foundation. True signs and wonders do not make us fall in love with supernatural phenomena or angels. All of them are designed by God to glorify Christ and *edify* but not entertain the people. Let us never judge such things by how they appear to our natural eyes or by how they make us feel. Is the Holy Spirit bearing witness as to the authenticity of such things?

The counterfeits are *at least* human attempts to manipulate things in an attempt to prove that God favors us. It is similar to when the children of Israel shouted so loud that *the earth shook* after the Ark of the Covenant was brought back into the camp. The Philistines heard it and were afraid at first but emboldened themselves against Israel. Israel took the ark into the battle with them, thinking that it was the key to having God's favor in their midst but were defeated. They assumed that God was on their side because of their excitement over the restoration of a *symbol* of God's presence. They lost that symbol to the Philistines (1 Sam. 4). Too much focus on symbols, signs, and wonders can be no more than attempts to make up for what is lacking of the favor of God.

Someone may respond to some of my statements as being harsh or exclusive. Ignorance of these things is no excuse because knowing God's protocol and ways is the main criteria for being a church leader. In all things, we must seek Heaven's applause above all else. In order to do this, no one who is called to the five-fold ministry should ever compromise, customize, or water-down God's truth for the applause of the religious status quo or to conform to what is expected by people. May my and your greatest admirer be Christ Himself who sought no approval from the face of men. "Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Pt. 2:23).

Beloved, if the church leadership that oversees your soul does not bear these required characteristics...RUN!

A church, religious organization, or movement could be a counterfeit even if people are receiving "love and care" from the leadership. Love and care of the people by the leadership is not just limited to the true church of Christ.

What if a preacher is only off in one or two of these characteristics? Are they humble, teachable, and repentant? If they are not mature in Christ, they should not be a church leader. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Remember Paul's confrontation of Peter referred to in the introduction.

Doctrinal error by itself is no indication that the person under scrutiny is a false leader. Are they elitists? If you are fond of or part of a movement, denomination, ministry, or minister that meets the criteria of elitism...RUN!

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