

What Every Believer Needs to Know about False Ministries

14. Demonic spirits can say true biblical statements

Acts 16:16-19

¹⁶ Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." ¹⁸ She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

¹⁹ When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

There is always a money trail. The Love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Often this is what makes people pursue this darkness.

15. In ministry there are complexities that come with "MIXTURE"

It's important to note that there will often be true elements in a false ministry. So, it's not always about boxing ministries into true and false there may be true elements in a largely false ministry. Sometimes it's better to see it as a continuum. There are many unbiblical aspects in the structure and doctrine of some traditional churches but that does not mean there are no born again believers there.

Just because a minister of the gospel has incorrect motives does not always mean his doctrine is wrong So we are dealing with complexities that should not be oversimplified.

Phil 1:15-18

¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defence of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

The continuum can look a bit like this:

- A. Born again spirit filled minister
- B. Born again but functions and ministers both in the Spirit and the flesh
- C. Born again but is demonised and under the influence of contrary spirits
- D. Unsaved. Never has been saved. He is severely demonized and continuously functions under a contrary spirit.

Miracles can happen through people that have major character flaws.

Romans 11:29-30

²⁹ For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you who formerly disobeyed God have now received mercy through their disobedience, ...

In the NLT it says For God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn.

16. People can change for the worse

Galatians 3:1-3

¹ You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? ... ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?

The context here is to do with legalism, but the principle is the same, you can begin well but not finish strong. Sadly, some ministers started off in the spirit, hence you can trace a wonderful spiritual genealogy, but have now augmented their gift by occultic practices. It's important to judge situations based on what is happening now and not merely someone's spiritual history. Some might say, this is a true mana of God because I knew him at University or because he is my son or cousin and I know he is not a "BAD" person. It reminds me of someone who has a lot of evidence about her husband's cheating and the husband has confessed but his mother is still in denial, She says, "My son is not like that." If you minister has crossed over to the other side please realise that it is possible.

17. False ministries will always have an attractive enticing element

Jer 23:16

This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.

Are they challenging you to live right?

Luke 6:26

Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets

18. Satan uses agents that pretend to be true ministers

2 Cor 11:13-15

¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. ¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their actions ...

19. Occultic covenants come at a great cost

Jesus passed this test, but many ministers of God today are failing it. This is the temptation to augment your power by satanic covenants. The result is blood sacrifice, deaths, commitment to immorality etc. Many musicians, authors, talk show hosts have made such covenants with the enemy.

Luke 4:1-13

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted^[a] by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." ⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'^[b]" ⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to." ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'^[c]" ⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written:

"'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; ¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'^[d]"

¹² Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'^[e]" ¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

What are these opportune times for church leaders and ministers? When they are lonely, battered and bruised.

20. False ministries always exploit people

There is a power dynamic at play. Your powerlessness relative to the leader is highlighted. It encourages the dependency syndrome. Eg Prophet saying “Even if you fast for 7 days you cannot do this.” Compare this with the ministry of Jesus:

John 14:12

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Jesus was so happy and rejoiced when the disciples were used powerfully. He equipped them and sent them out.

Luke 10:17-21

¹⁷ *The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”* ¹⁸ *He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”* ²¹ *At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.*

Jesus empowered His disciples. He was not insecure. This is a sign of true ministry. The believers are released into ministry.

21. False ministries thrive on hidden secrets and revelation

Be very wary when people talk about going to a mountain and getting a special revelation that no one else in the world has ever had. Very often visions and revelations can puff people up.

2 Cor 12:7 ESV

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

Nothing beats the Word. There is no private interpretation of prophecy.

2 Pet 1:20-21

²⁰ *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

A lot of cults started this way. On the African continent our epistemology (how we know what we know) is based on the wisdom of the Fathers. This makes it easy for us to yield to whatever is preached even if it’s not in the Written word. Many of us are unassertive so we rationalise our fear of man by saying, “We must never question the Man of God.” This is how false doctrine and practices can be perpetuated. Remember that in scripture the Bereans were commended for checking whether what the apostles were saying was really in the Scriptures. Don’t feel bad about judging prophecy. Ask yourself, “Who can challenge this person?” Married women feel safer when they are married to a husband who has friends who are strong enough to challenge him. We know this at a personal level yet in church settings some see this as a sign of weakness as they need a hero who is invincible.

22. Miracles do not validate a ministry

Mt 24:24

For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

The enemy’s goal with these miracles is to deceive true believers.

Allow people to speak into your life (Apollos was gifted but open to learn)

Acts 18:24-26

²⁴ Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour^[a] and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

Be patient with Church growth