

"Old Paths" Baptist Ministries



Marks of False Cults

The following comments have been excerpted from a fine Bible study by James Walker of Watchman Fellowship, an excellent counter-cult organization. I have tried to avoid plagiarism and have endeavored to summarize his teachings on this subject. However, in an effort to reproduce his teachings some overlap of his and my thoughts and comments may occur. I readily agree that his research has been the foundation of this article.

One of the marks of a false cult is the mind-control that many of them exercise over their members. They are taught to believe implicitly what their church and its leaders teach. If they should be challenged or questioned concerning the doctrines that they believe, their mind seems to go into another dimension. It is almost as if they turn their mind off. One man said it this way, "Something clicks when the Mormon feels the church is challenged in any way. Minds seem to go blank. Often, eyes dilate and a testimony is chanted out almost by rote."

Many ex-members of these false cults give very similar testimonies after they have come out of their church. They say that they were "in bondage" or that they had "no control." Consider the following statement,

"...When I say bondage, I don't mean it lightly. My wife is what you would call a 'Jack -Mormon,' but she simply cannot imagine serving God in any other context outside of the Mormon Church. To even suggest that something might not be right about it, causes her to almost fall apart. It is scary how controlled she is. I continue to believe that she is on her way out. She just can't admit it in her heart." And this one, "Thank you for sending me information and the truth, for helping me resign from the bondage and brainwashing."

1. Some basic identifying marks of a false cult are:

- a. Adding to the word of God. They are never content to just let the Bible be their guide. They must supplement the Bible with their traditions, books and teachings of the leaders of the church. Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32
 - b. Subtracting from the deity of Jesus Christ. They will never let Jesus be the Only, Eternal, Omnipotent, God and Saviour of mankind. 1 Timothy 3:16.
 - c. Multiplying the requirements of salvation. They will not allow salvation to be "by grace are ye saved, through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast." The false cults will always bring in some element of works towards achieving salvation.
 - d. Dividing the loyalty of the followers. Followers of a false cult must always divide their allegiance between God and their church. In most instances their church organization becomes the only true path of instruction that you can trust. It, (their church) is the only true church. Their leaders will tell them that they must remain with their organization or be lost.
2. In addition to the above, there will often be the following marks to some degree more or less:
- a. Date setting - "Jesus will come back on February 14th, 1914."
 - b. Majoring on minor doctrines found in obscure passages in the "scriptures."
 - c. Financial exploitation - Bring your money to the leader.
 - d. Denial of Hell.
 - e. Foster paranoia - The "us" against "them" syndrome. Band together or "they" will get us.
 - f. Constantly changing doctrines, their books and writings.
 - g. Spiritism - They will often deal in the occult, spirit worlds, necromancy, magic, and other contacts and dealings with and for the dead.
 - h. Ambiguous hope - Never really sure of eternal life.

Some time ago when I and another man were out on visitation we ran into some of these symptoms. One young lady when confronted with some questions about her church, responded by saying, "I have a testimony." She did not have the answer to our questions, but it didn't matter, because she had "a testimony." What a tragedy that multiplied millions of people have been deceived by these false religions. We must be prepared to bring the power of God's word into their lives as "the bondage-breaker."

God's word tells us to: **"examine yourselves", to "prove your own selves," to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."** We are admonished to **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God (not a church), a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15.** If we will become students of the Scriptures, we will be able to distinguish between right and wrong doctrine and avoid being entrapped in a false cult.

Written by Dr. Robert E. Bliss

