

## **SIGNS OF A FALSE MINISTRY: Grasping For Money – Abusive Power – Having To Be #1**

*“Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.”*

~Thomas Jefferson

God had accolades of praise for those in the church at Ephesus for testing church leaders who claimed to be something they were not, and for not tolerating those who were found to be false apostles (Rev.2:2). God’s Word gives some clear instruction on the fruits of true ministers of Jesus Christ, and the fruits of those who are not acting according to God’s Word. By their fruits, you will be able to recognize them (Matt.7:16-20), and avoid those who are false (John10:5).

Some may not yet be able to accept it, but the Apostle Paul said false teachers and false apostles will constantly try to take money from you, will try to exercise power and lord it over you – even abusing and offending many in God’s flock – like a slap in the face – and they are often exalting of themselves. A careful examination of 2 Cor.11:9-20 makes this very clear!

Notice verse 20: *“For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you [monetarily], if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face [an abuse, offense or insult].”* (KJV) Such are false apostles, and false workers (Paul said in verse 13). They should not be followed or obeyed.

Obviously, God’s Word teaches us that there is to be respect for the true ministry of Jesus Christ, and God’s Statutes teach us not to muzzle the ox that labors for you, as the laborer is worthy of his hire (1 Tim.5:18). However, when you consider the emphasis some church leaders put on church government apparently to maintain their “preeminence,” and the many good people they have lorded over and disfellowshipped for wrong reasons, and their emphasis on constantly asking people for more money – one has to wonder if what happened in 3<sup>rd</sup> John is happening again.

3 John 9 *“I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words [unjustly accusing us with wicked words (NAS)]. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.”*

God again warns us to beware of men who seek to draw away disciples “after themselves” – men who focus upon themselves or “their” leadership. Apparently this is sometimes done to keep the tithes coming, or to keep the people tied to the man and his organization, instead of teaching God’s people to place the focus upon Christ and His truth – regardless of who it is that serves them. Paul reminded us that he faithfully taught them the whole counsel of God and did NOT constantly seek money from the people (Acts 20:27-33).

Is it possible to live HUMBLY, PEACEABLY and RESPECTFULLY in God’s Church, without blindly following men and without fear of reprisal by men for fellowshiping with your other brothers and sisters in other fellowships of God’s flock? It should be. We should neither fear or hold back growing in God’s truth – nor should we try to force others to see things as we do. We all need to humbly and peacefully grow in truth, even if some leaders have not yet been able to see and accept that truth.

**One should not consider there to be “danger” in pursuing God’s truth, for “*the truth will make us free*” (John.8:32)! Are you free? God protects and blesses those who pursue His truth. Indeed, “*He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; his truth shall be your shield and buckler*” (Ps 91:4). On the other hand, it is impossible to be the servant of Christ if we are still trying to please men (Gal.1:10)!**