

# Escape From Babylon

## The Series Part 30

# Testing Your Minister

### INSPECTING THE WORK & CHARACTER OF YOUR MINISTERS

Also: Please Find The "Follow The Good Shepherd," "The Shepherd's Calling," "Exposing False Prophets," "Anti-Christ Teachers," and "Escape Plan For Leaders," Bible Studies on our website. We have covered this topic in many ways. As it is very, very important!

**Focus Verse: MATTHEW 7:15-20** "Watch out for false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are voracious wolves. (16) You will recognize them by their fruit. Grapes are not gathered from thorns or figs from thistles, are they? (17) In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. (18) A good tree is not able to bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree to bear good fruit. (19) Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (20) So then, you will recognize them by their fruit."

### **THE "TEST" ALL MINISTERS MUST PASS: SEE IF I (LANCE) PASS!**

We are called by God to honor those He sends to help guide us in the path of salvation. They are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring our well being. We are also told by God not to make their jobs hard. Yet, that being said, we are also called to inspect their fruits. To validate their conduct and ensure they are being faithful in their calling. We are not called to follow them down the primrose path to hell. Or, let them tickle our ears and lie to our faces. So we must be on guard and follow the guide given to us in scripture. While we read let us also inspect ourselves and see if we can pass the test: As we are all called to minister for the Lord.

### **THE STANDARD**

**1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13** "This saying is trustworthy: "If someone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a good work." (2) The **Overseer/Bishop** then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher, (3) not a drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not contentious, free from the love of money. (4) He must manage his own household well and keep his children in control without losing his dignity. (5) But if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for the church of God? (6) He must not be a recent convert or he may become arrogant and fall into the punishment that the devil will exact. (7) And he must be well thought of by those outside the faith, so that he may not fall into disgrace and be caught by the devil's trap.

(8) **Deacons** likewise must be dignified, not two-faced, not given to excessive drinking, not greedy for gain, (9) holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. (10) And these also must be tested first and then let them serve as deacons if they are found blameless. (11) Likewise also their wives must be dignified, not slanderous, temperate, faithful in every respect. (12) Deacons must be husbands of one wife and good managers of their children and their own households. (13) For those who have served well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

**TITUS 1:6-12** “An **Elder** must be blameless. He must be the husband of one wife and have children who are believers and who are not accused of having wild lifestyles or of being rebellious. (7) Because an overseer is God's servant manager, he must be blameless. He must not be arrogant or irritable. He must not drink too much, be a violent person, or make money in shameful ways. (8) Instead, he must be hospitable to strangers, must appreciate what is good, and be sensible, honest, moral, and self-controlled. (9) He must be devoted to the trustworthy message that agrees with what we teach, so that he may be able to encourage others with healthy doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (10) For there are many people who are rebellious, especially those who are converts from Judaism. They speak utter nonsense and deceive people. (11) They must be silenced, because they are the kind of people who ruin whole families by teaching what they should not teach in order to make money in a shameful way. (12) One of their very own prophets said, "Liars ever, men of Crete, savage brutes that live to eat."

### **Do They Conduct Themselves With Honor?**

**HEBREWS 13:18** “Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to **conduct ourselves rightly in every respect.**”

### **Are They Doing God's Will?**

**MATTHEW 7:21** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but **he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.**”

### **Are They Seeking The Kingdom Before Self?**

**MATTHEW 6:33-34** “But **seek first God's Kingdom**, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well. (34) Therefore don't be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day's own evil is sufficient.”

### **Are They Obedient To God And His Law?**

**1 JOHN 2:4-6** “The person who says, "I have come to know him," **but does not continually keep his commandments is a liar**, and the truth has no place in that person. (5) But **whoever continually keeps his commandments is the kind of person in whom God's love has truly been perfected.** This is how we can be sure that we are in union with God: (6) The one who says that he abides in him must live the same way he himself lived.”

### **Are They Teaching Obedience To God? Not Dismissing God's Commands?**

**MATTHEW 5:19** "So whoever sets aside one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom from heaven. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom from heaven"

**MATTHEW 4:17** "From then on, Jesus began to preach and to say, "**Repent**, because the kingdom from heaven is near!"

### **Are They Practicing What They Preach?**

**ROMANS 2:19-24** "and if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light to those in darkness, (20) an instructor of ignorant people, and a teacher of infants because you have the full content of knowledge and truth in the Law— (21) as you teach others, **do you fail to teach yourself? As you preach against stealing, do you steal? (22) As you forbid adultery, do you commit adultery?** As you abhor idols, **do you rob temples?** (23) As you **boast about the Law**, do you **dishonor God by breaking the Law?** (24) As it is written, "God's name is being blasphemed among the gentiles because of you."

### **Are They Willing To Always Preach The Truth Regardless Of The Climate?**

**2 TIMOTHY 4:2-4** "Preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. (3) For a time will be when they will not endure sound doctrine, but they will heap up teachers to themselves according to their own lusts, tickling the ear. (4) And they will turn away their ears from the truth and will be turned to myths. (5) But you **watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fully carry out your ministry.**"

### **Are they like Jesus and Sacrificing Self For The Good Of The Flock?**

**JOHN 10:11-15** "I am the good shepherd. **The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.** (12) The hired hand, who is not a shepherd and does not own sheep, sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and runs away. So the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. (13) Because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep, he runs away. (14) "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me – (15) just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep."

## **THE MINISTERS CALLING**

**EZEKIEL 22:30** "I sought for a man among them to build the wall and stand in the breach in my presence on behalf of the land so that it won't be destroyed, but I found no one,"

**ISAIAH 6:8** "Then I heard the voice of the LORD as he was asking, "**Whom will I send? Who will go for us?**" "Here I am!" I replied. "Send me."

Ministers are called to stand in the gap, pushing back the forces of darkness so that people can learn the scriptures, and be instructed by God. Presenting the opportunity for the people to get into right standing with God. This is why when a minister of God speaks, things become easier to understand. This is also why when the teacher leaves room for sin and rebellion, doubt can start to creep into people's minds and they start to waiver in the message presented to them. The bridge created by the minister is no longer as strong. So at all times, the minister must remember that they are there as a bridge builder between God and man- to set the focus on Jesus as the way. And teach obedience as the correct response to the free gift of salvation.

**GALATIANS 6:1-2** “Brothers, if a person is caught doing something wrong, **those of you who are spiritual should restore that person gently.** Watch out for yourself so that you are not tempted as well. (2) **Practice carrying each other's burdens.** In this way you will fulfill the law of the Messiah.”

## **THE GOOD**

### The Positive Efforts & Work

**COLOSSIANS 3:16-17** “Let the **word of the Messiah inhabit** you richly with wisdom, **teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,** and singing to God with thankfulness in your hearts. (17) And whatever you do, **whether by speech or action, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**”

**EPHESIANS 3:14-21** “This is the reason **I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah,** (15) from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its name. (16) **I pray that he would give you, according to his glorious riches, strength in your inner being and power through his Spirit,** (17) and that the **Messiah would make his home in your hearts through faith.** Then, having been rooted and grounded in love, (18) you will be able to understand, along with all the saints, what is wide, long, high, and deep— (19) that is, **you will know the love of the Messiah**—which transcends knowledge, and will be filled with all the fullness of God. (20) Now to the one who can do infinitely more than all we can ask or imagine according to the power that is working among us— (21) **to him be glory** in the church and in the **Messiah Jesus** to all generations, forever and ever! Amen.”

**EPHESIANS 4:20-27** “But you have not so learned Christ, (21) if indeed you have heard Him and **were taught by Him,** as the truth is in Jesus. (22) For **you ought to put off the old man** (according to your way of living before) who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, (23) and **be renewed in the spirit of your mind.** (24) And you should **put on the new man,** who according to God was created in righteousness and true holiness. (25) Therefore **putting away lying,** let each man speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. (26) Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down upon your wrath, (27) neither give place to the Devil.”

## **ARE THEY SERVING WITH MUCH CARE?**

**1 THESSALONIANS 2:8-12** “We cared so deeply for you that we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but our very lives. That is how dear you were to us. (9) Brothers, you remember our labor and toil. **We worked night and day** so that we would not become a burden to any of you while we proclaimed the gospel of God to you. (10) You and God are witnesses of **how pure, honest, and blameless** our conduct was among you who believe. (11) You know very well that **we treated each of you the way a father treats his children**. (12) **We comforted and encouraged you, urging you to live in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.**”

**1 CORINTHIANS 4:14-16** “I'm not writing this to make you feel ashamed, but **to warn you as my dear children**. (15) You may have 10,000 mentors who work for the Messiah, but not many fathers. **For in the Messiah Jesus I became your father through the gospel**. (16) So I urge you to imitate me.”

**HEBREWS 13:17** “Obey your leaders and submit to them, **for they keep watch over your souls** and will give an account for their work. Let them do this with joy and not with complaints, for this would be no advantage for you.”

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:14-15** “We **urge** you, brothers, to admonish those who are idle, **cheer up those who are discouraged**, and **help those who are weak**. **Be patient** with everyone. (15) Make sure that no one pays back evil for evil. Instead, always pursue what is good for each other and for everyone else”

## **THE WARNING SIGNS**

### **Are They Exhibiting These Evil Tendencies?**

**Now, everyone has a bad day. No one is perfect. Just because you see a minister fail once, don't bring out the pitchforks and torches. Yet, if we see a pattern of wrong behavior, then steps must be taken.**

**2 TIMOTHY 3:1-5** “But understand this, that in the last days difficult times will come. (2) For people will be **lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy**, (3) **unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, opposed to what is good**, (4) **treacherous, reckless, conceited, loving pleasure rather than loving God**. (5) They will **maintain the outward appearance of religion but will have repudiated its power**. So avoid people like these.”

**ROMANS 16:18** “For these are the kind who do not serve our Lord Christ, but **their own appetites**. **By their smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of the naive.**”

**2 PETER 2:17-22** “These men are **waterless springs** and mists driven by a storm, for whom the utter depths of darkness have been reserved. (18) For by **speaking high-sounding but empty words** they are **able to entice**, with **fleshly desires** and with **debauchery**, people who have just escaped from those who reside in error. (19) Although these **false teachers promise such people freedom**, they themselves are **enslaved to immorality**. For whatever a person succumbs to, to that he is enslaved. (20) For if after they have escaped the filthy things of the world through the rich knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again get entangled in them and succumb to them, their last state has become worse for them than their first. (21) For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment that had been delivered to them. (22) They are illustrations of this true proverb: “**A dog returns to its own vomit,**” and “**A sow, after washing herself, wallows in the mire.**”

**JAMES 1:22-26** “But be **doers of the word, and not only hearers**, deluding your own selves. (23) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror; (24) for he sees himself, and goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. (25) But he who looks into the perfect law of freedom, and continues, not being a hearer who forgets, but a doer of the work, this man will be blessed in what he does. (26) If anyone among you **thinks himself to be religious** while he **doesn't bridle his tongue**, but deceives his heart, this **man's religion is worthless.**”

## **ARE THEY SEEKING STATUS AND POSITION?**

**MATTHEW 23:8-12** “But you are **not to be called ‘Rabbi,’** for **you have one Teacher** and you are all brothers. (9) And **call no one your ‘father’** on earth, for **you have one Father**, who is in heaven. (10) **Nor are you to be called ‘teacher,’** for you have one teacher, the Christ. (11) **The greatest among you will be your servant.** (12) And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

**LUKE 20:46-47** “Beware of the experts in the law. **They like walking around in long robes, and they love elaborate greetings** in the marketplaces and **the best seats** in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. (47) They **devour widows' property**, and as **a show make long prayers.** They will receive a more severe punishment.”

**JAMES 2:1-4** “My brothers, do not have the faith of our Lord Christ, the Lord of glory, with respecter of faces. (2) **For if there comes a gold-fingered man in fancy clothing into your assembly,** and if there also comes in a poor man in shabby clothing, (3) **and if you have respect to him who has the fancy clothing and say to him,** You sit here in a good place, and say to the poor, You stand there, or sit here under my footstool; (4) **Did you not make a difference among yourselves and became judges with evil thoughts?**

**MARK 10:42-45** "Jesus called his disciples and told them, "You know that **those who are recognized as rulers among the gentiles lord it over them, and their superiors act like tyrants over them.** (43) That's not the way it should be among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, (44) and whoever wants to be first among you must be a slave to everyone, (45) because even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many people."

**1 CORINTHIANS 9:16** "For if I preach the gospel, I have no reason for boasting, because I am compelled to do this. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"

**If a minister ever attempts to hold the office to gain power, wealth, fame and ungodly influence in his office, he has become apostate and should be rejected until repentance has been fully manifested. END OF STORY!**

## **A GREAT EVIL AMONG THOSE WHO MINISTER!**

### **Are They Seeking To Be Rich?**

How often do you see this on TV, making merchandise of the Gospel?

**MICAH 3:11** "Her **leaders take bribes** when they decide legal cases, **her priests proclaim rulings for profit**, and her prophets read omens for pay. Yet they claim to trust the LORD and say, "The LORD is among us. Disaster will not overtake us!"

**JOHN 2:15-16** "So he made a whip of cords and drove them all out of the temple courts, with the sheep and the oxen. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. (16) To those who sold the doves he said, "**Take these things away from here! Do not make my Father's house a marketplace!**"

**2 CORINTHIANS 2:17** "For we are not like so many others, **hucksters who peddle the word of God for profit**, but we are speaking in Christ before God as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God."

**TITUS 1:10-11** "For there are many rebellious people, idle talkers, and deceivers, especially those with Jewish connections, (11) who must be silenced because **they mislead whole families by teaching for dishonest gain what ought not to be taught.**"

**JEREMIAH 6:13-15** "That is because, from the least important to the most important of them, **all of them are greedy for dishonest gain. Prophets and priests alike**, all of them **practice deceit.** (14) **They offer only superficial help** for the harm my people have suffered. **They say, 'Everything will be all right!' But everything is not all right!** (15) Are they ashamed because they have done such shameful things? No, **they are not at all ashamed.** They do not even know how to blush! So they will die, just like others have died. They will be brought to ruin when I punish them," says the LORD."

**2 PETER 2:1-3** “Now there were false prophets among the people, just as there also will be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves. (2) Many people will follow their immoral ways, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned. (3) **In their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words.** The ancient verdict against them is still in force, and their destruction is not delayed.”

### **The Truth**

**1 THESSALONIANS 2:3-6** “For our appeal to you does not spring from deceit, impure motives, or trickery. (4) Rather, because we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, we speak as we do, not trying to please people but God, who tests our motives. (5) **As you know, we did not come with flattering words or with a scheme to make money.** God is our witness! (6) We did not seek praise from people—from you or from anyone else”

**MATTHEW 6:24** “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

## **ARE THEY EXALTING THEIR OWN UNDERSTANDING?**

**ISAIAH 5:20-21** “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! (21) Woe to those wise in their own eyes, and bright in their own sight!”

**MARK 7:6-9** “He answered them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘**This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. (7) But they worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**’ (8) “**For you set aside the commandment of God, and hold tightly to the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and you do many other such things.**” (9) He said to them, “**Full well do you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.**”

**REVELATION 22:18-19** “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, **if anyone adds to them**, may God add to him the plagues which are written in this book. (19) **If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy**, may God take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book.”

**1 TIMOTHY 4:1-2** “But the Spirit says expressly that in later times some will fall away from the faith, **paying attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons**, (2) through the hypocrisy of men who speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron;”



**2 PETER 1:20-21** “Above all, you do well if you recognize this: **No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet’s own imagination,** (21) for no prophecy was ever borne of human impulse; rather, men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

**EPHESIANS 4:17-19** “Therefore, I tell you and insist on in the Lord not to live any longer like the gentiles live, **thinking worthless thoughts.** (18) **They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart.** (19) **Since they have lost all sense of shame, they have abandoned themselves to sensuality and practice every kind of sexual perversion without restraint.**

**ISAIAH 30:10-11** “They say to the seers, ‘**Don't see visions,**’ and to the prophets, ‘**Don't give us visions of what is right! Instead, tell us welcome things, prophecy illusions,**’ (11) **get out of the way, turn aside from the path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel.**”

**2 TIMOTHY 4:3-4** “For the time will come when people will not tolerate healthy doctrine, but with itching ears will surround themselves with **teachers who cater to their people's own desires.** (4) **They will refuse to listen to the truth and will turn to myths.**”

**MICAH 2:11** “If a lying windbag should come and say, ‘**I'll promise you blessings of wine and beer,**’ he would be just the right preacher for these people!”

**2 PETER 2:1** “Now there were false prophets among the people, just as there also will be false teachers among you, **who will secretly introduce destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them,** bringing swift destruction on themselves.”

### **The Truth**

**PROVERBS 3:5-7** “**Trust in Yahweh with all your heart,** and don’t lean on your own understanding. (6) **In all your ways acknowledge him,** and he will make your paths straight. (7) Don’t be wise in your own eyes. Fear Yahweh, and depart from evil.”

**ISAIAH 55:8-9** “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways,” says Yahweh. (9) “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

**2 CORINTHIANS 4:5** “**For we do not preach ourselves,** but rather Jesus the Messiah as Lord, and ourselves as merely your servants for Jesus' sake.”

**DEUTERONOMY 18:17-22** “The LORD then said to me, “What they have said is good. (18) I will raise up a prophet like you for them from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them whatever I command. (19) I will personally hold responsible anyone who then pays no attention to the words that prophet speaks in my name. (20) “**But if any prophet presumes to speak anything in my name that I have not authorized him to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die.** (21) Now if you say to yourselves, ‘How can we tell that a message is not from the LORD?’ – (22) whenever a prophet speaks in my name and the prediction is not fulfilled, then I have not spoken it; the prophet has presumed to speak it, so you need not fear him.”

## **THE HIDDEN DANGER OF TV PREACHERS**

How can you tell these things of TV Preachers? Do you know these things of your Pastors? Do you know these things about the friends you talk to, and take their advice as sound and from God? Are you paying attention to yourself on these topics? We must be on guard at all times. And take personal responsibility for submitting to Godly teaching and resisting the ungodly imposters. Show patience for your ministers, we all have down days and go through rough patches. Be fast to act on those who are unrepentant, blatant sinners, calling evil good and good evil. Mocking God with their ungodly lives and teaching others to do the same. If we want revival in the Body Of Christ, it should very well start in the pulpit. If you want revival in your life then let it start with you!