

# The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,*

*holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



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## Consider the Source

In Romans one we clearly see the progressive nature of sin. Specifically, we see the continual plight toward the moral ruin of those who deny the reality of God. Paul said that these deniers of God *"...changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."* They then endeavored to fulfill the lust of their flesh in homosexual ways, *"...men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men..."*

Is there a connection between what we have just observed and the nature of television today? I think so. Television is becoming more unsuitable for children (and adults too for that matter) every year. Not only is there an abundance of immorality, bad language and violence on T.V., but there is also more and more God bashing going on. God's ways are always held as unreasonable. Common biblical teachings are viewed as "outdated" or "silly." Those of us who are Christians marvel at how fast the entertainment industry is slipping into complete moral decadence.

If you are angered by the trends of television, you're not alone. It is disturbing to all of us. However, we should consider the source. The powers behind T.V. are non-Christians who deny the existence of God as did those spoken of in Romans one. John Prizer, a writer and producer in Hollywood, said, *"I can't think of anybody (in Hollywood) in the last 20 years who is active in church affairs."* John Furia Jr., a past president of the Writers Guild said, *"Religion is definitely not taken seriously in Hollywood..."* The attitude of those involved in television is accentuated by Amanda Donohow, an actress in Hollywood who once played a role in a movie in which she spit on a crucifix. Her response was, *"I'm an atheist, so it was actually a joy. Spitting on Christ was a great deal of fun --especially for me, being a woman... I can't embrace a male god who has persecuted female sexuality throughout the ages, and that persecution still goes on today all over the world."* Will things ever get better? Will T.V. ever get cleaned up? Personally, I think it is unlikely. Why? Because of the source. As long as ungodliness prevails in Hollywood, television will continue to get worse. This is a shame, for what could otherwise be a valuable medium in many areas will soon be completely ruined. Yes, there are still some watchable shows on T.V., but sadly, the direction it is going simply mirrors the condition of our society today.

*Don*

# Test The Preacher

Philip Mullins

**W**atch out! The Bible tells us plainly that there are religious teachers and preachers who are false. Unless you keep your guard up, they will deceive and lead you away from the true ways of God.

How can you tell if a preacher is a threat to your soul? How do you know whether or not the preacher you listen to on a regular basis is truly on God's side? Not from his looks. *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves"* (Matthew 7:15). A man may look harmless while on the inside he is trouble. So, how can you tell? *"You will know them by their fruits"* (Matthew 7:16). In time their speech and behavior will show their true colors. Their motives will eventually become apparent.

In the New Testament there is a preacher we read about that was a true and faithful servant of God. His name was Paul and by his example we can learn what the fruits are of a true preacher for Christ. Note these passages about his work from 1 Thessalonians two:

Ver. 4: *"Even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts."* If a preacher adapts his message to what people want to hear, he is not a true messenger of God. A preacher who is only concerned about pleasing other men will not help you to become pleasing to God. If a preacher is not willing to stand against immorality and doctrines not based on God's word, then his loyalty to God is weak, and he is not to be trusted.

Ver. 5: *"For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness..."* A preacher who is covetous is one to avoid. In recent years we have seen a lot of religious teachers and preachers who adorn themselves with very expensive clothes, drive the most luxurious of cars, and live in magnificent mansions. All of which are paid for by the "ministry" that is in constant need of our contributions. What are we to make of this? It should be a sign to us that this man's goal is to lay up treasure on earth and not in heaven. Covetousness is a sign of a false teacher (1 Timothy 6:5).

Ver. 6: *Nor did we seek glory from men..."* Another tip off that one is a false teacher is that he seeks from men praise for his work. The using of clergy titles such as "Reverend" and "Father," the wearing of special garments, and the acceptance of things such as being kissed on the hand or bowed down to are all acts that show a person is seeking glory from men. A religious preacher or teacher is no more important than anybody else in God's sight. Their role is to serve and not to be served.

Ver. 13: *"For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God..."* The best and ultimate test is whether a person's message is the truth of God's word or merely the teachings of men. To determine that you must examine a preacher's message with the Bible. If what he is saying is not found in the Bible, then his teaching is to be rejected. No matter how sincere, kind, or friendly he may be, if he is not proclaiming the truth from God's word, he is going to lead you astray from God.

What about those who regularly preach and teach to you? Are they like the example of Paul? Are they accurately proclaiming the word of God? Examine them and their message closely. If their words and example are not in harmony with the Bible, then beware. Seek for teachers and preachers that are in harmony with God's word. It is a serious matter — your eternal destiny depends on it.