

- **Be discerning of the pastors and teachers we follow.** Many false teachers are gifted public speakers. They are good at drawing a crowd. They may even have supernatural manifestations that accompany their teaching. If they are not pointing people to Jesus and faithfully teaching the Word of God, don't get sucked in.
- **Holiness helps us discern truth from error.** False teachers' favorite targets are people burdened down with sin. The more we tolerate sin in our lives, the less ability we have to discern between truth and error in our lives.
- **Remember that Jesus wins in the end.** The progress of a false teacher is always more apparent than real. Just as the true character of Jannes and Jambres was eventually revealed God promises that false teacher will eventually be revealed. God will preserve His church and protect His elect.

Life Group Questions

1. Review your sermon notes and the above outline. What stood out in this message? What did you learn that you didn't know?
2. Read 2 Timothy 3:5. This verse talks about spiritual scammers that pedal a religion that appears to be godly but denies its power. What does it mean to present a religious shell devoid of power? Can you think of spiritual leaders who fit this profile?
3. Read 2 Timothy 3:6-7. False teachers love to prey on the weak. According to these verses, what is it that makes some people easier targets than others? How have you seen false teachers target these types of people? What can we do to make sure we are not an easy target for religious scammers?
4. What do you think 2 Timothy 3:7 means when it describes people who are always learning but never able to come to knowledge of the truth? Do you remember a specific time when your Bible started making sense and you began to "get it" spiritually?
5. Read 2 Timothy 3:8. What can we learn about spiritual imposters and the way they work from the way Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses both in Egypt before Pharaoh and at the base of Mount Sinai after they pretended to become converts?
6. Read 2 Timothy 3:9. How does this promise from God bring comfort when it seems like false teachers are winning?



2 Timothy 3:5-9 – How Do I Avoid Getting Spiritually Scammed?

April 11, 2021

1. I should expect spiritual scammers will increase over time.

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 Timothy 3:1 (ESV)

"And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;..." Acts 2:17 (ESV)

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son... Hebrews 1:1-2 (ESV)

- The last days are the period of time between the first and second coming of Christ.

...while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 2 Timothy 3:13 (ESV)

2. I can recognize a spiritual scammer by their love for themselves.

For people will be lovers of self,... 2 Timothy 3:2 (ESV)

3. How do spiritual scammers work?

A. They pedal hollow religion.

...having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 2 Timothy 3:5 (ESV)

They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. Titus 1:16 (ESV)

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works. 2 John 10–11 (ESV)

How can I recognize a false teacher pedaling hollow religion?

1. **Check their character.** Truth and godliness always go together.
2. **Check their teaching.** Does it square with the Word of God? Is it taking the Bible out of context?
3. **Check their followers.** What is the character of their followers' lives? Are they focused on the transforming power of Jesus and the Bible on their spiritual teacher?

B. They prey on the weak.

For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 2 Timothy 3:6–7 (ESV)

They go after women that are morally weak.

They go after women that are intellectually weak.

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. 1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)

C. They actively oppose the truth.

Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. 2 Timothy 3:8 (ESV)

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 (ESV)

D. The progress of false teachers is always more apparent than real.

But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men. 2 Timothy 3:9 (ESV)

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. John 6:37 (ESV)

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. John 10:27–29 (ESV)

For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. Mark 13:22 (ESV)

How do we apply this to our life?

- **Remember that we are in a spiritual war.** Expect false teachers will surface in the church that will undermine confidence in the Bible and the transforming power of Jesus. They will want us to worship them instead of Jesus.