



...he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions. 1 Timothy 6:4

Experts on the errors of churches and ministries overwhelm today's Christian world like the black plague engulfed Europe. Millions die and languish spiritually because these modern day witch-hunters multiply as the pride of the world increases. They find fertile ground to grow in because the church as a whole increasingly refuses the offensive message of the cross with great zeal. The fruit of such ministries and experts breeds strife, malicious talk, and evil suspicions.

For example, we based the “Discernment Dave”™ cartoon in this publication on a real life event. Someone who didn't like something our ministry lives and preaches immediately made an inquiry to a large, well known discernment club. At the mere mention of the words of Jesus in Luke 16:13 the discernment group sounded alarms. A message was sent out that assumed the worst and looked for evil. They broke the law of love Jesus commanded us to keep and in their hearts thought evil of everyone but themselves, (Zechariah 7:10. Romans 13:8). Like the witch-hunters of old who bound suspected witches with ropes and tossed them into the local river, so too would these discernment ministries do the same if they could. The end result is that the person dies. The suspected witch either sank to the bottom and was declared innocent, or rose to the top and was found guilty, either way the person in question was slandered, and of, course dead.

## Do Not Fear

The Pharisees didn't die off after the resurrection of Jesus, they reinvented themselves as a discernment ministry. Discernment groups and individuals, who consider it their duty to point out error in others, overrun Christianity today. What a good trick on Satan's part! He floods the church with experts on what is Biblically wrong with everyone else and the end result causes people to become afraid to obey Jesus. Christ, however, taught that we should not fear such men.

So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. Matthew 10:26



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The last thing the church needs is another discernment ministry, cult-busting group, or self-proclaimed expert. The church needs more obedience by grace to the Word of God. It needs to live out the gospel that silences falsehood and error.

When we look to discernment groups or experts for acceptable doctrine we die spiritually. Each of us should look fully and only to God and by doing so, proper doctrine and a holy life will naturally flow.

These cult-exposing groups stand in the way of Jesus, for they set their own standards and immediately label those who fall short as “dangerous” or false. It never occurs to them that their own Christian walk might be defective. The deception of always looking at others’ faults causes them to think they are sound in the faith. They play the tune of evil suspicions and many willingly dance to it. And many more individuals and churches become afraid of allowing Jesus to lead them forward to righteousness because of the label they might receive.

Let those who love the Lord throw aside every discernment group and “expert” on cults and seek the face of the living God. Let us not be afraid of them, but press on to obey Him who died for our sins. Then the true church will have revival and the purity it desires. Let us pray that we never use the findings of a discernment group or expert as an excuse for avoiding obedience to a living Jesus.

## Above Jesus

A church not falsely labeled a cult is not obeying God enough by the power of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because to follow close behind Jesus equates you with the Devil in most people’s eyes. As Jesus told us, unless we are somehow above Him, we too will find ourselves labeled as evil.

A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household! Matthew 10:24-25

Who called Jesus Beelzebub? At first the worldly Roman leaders did not attack Jesus, but the church, the religious leaders, and those considered the spiritually enlightened handed Jesus over to the governing authorities. Indeed, in their self-righteousness they brazenly attacked and flat out accused Jesus of being (in their eyes) real loser\* and demon-possessed.

The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?” John 8:48

Later, such Bible-studying, self-enlightened individuals pursued Paul from town to town in hopes of hindering his message. They satanically hoped that if they slandered Paul

enough it would poison the minds of those who listened to him. Think of how poison works. One becomes paralyzed and unable to act. So too if they could inject their poison then no matter what Paul did or didn't do, said or didn't say, they viewed him as negative and of Satan. Many belong to the First Church of the Poisoned Mind unable to fellowship with the true church of Jesus.

But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. Acts 14:2

These men caused so much trouble for Paul, though they accused him of being the troublemaker. Everywhere people talked against the sect or "cult" that Jesus formed through Paul's preaching, because of these men.

But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect. Acts 28:22

How this resembles the Christianity today—filled with cult experts.

## Paul, The Cult Leader

These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. Jude 1:16

Stand especially on guard against those who spend their time as faultfinders for the church. Always ask yourself two questions. (1) Is their primary focus to point out the faults of others? (2) What do they preach and live that could be mistaken as error or cultish?

If the answer to the first question is "yes," then avoid them like the plague. They are simply faultfinders. As to the second, if they do not live enough of the Bible to be mistaken for a cult, then they are at best lukewarm and Jesus will soon spit them out.

We can see all this clearly when we look at the example of the New Testament. For instance, it would have been easy to prove Paul unloving and not of Jesus, a violent and controlling man fulfilling his lust for power. Take for example Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians.

What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit? 1 Corinthians 4:21



If we reacted in the worldly wisdom of the discerning, cult-busting group or faultfinding expert, we would easily reject Paul. It would go something like this: “See how Paul threatens them with a whip? His demands must be met if they want his love and approval. See how he subtly brainwashes and manipulates his followers? Everyone should avoid Paul at all costs.”

See how easy one can find fault? If anyone listens to the experts, rather than the Holy Spirit, they will wind up with certainly a “safe” church and preacher but void of the saltiness of Christ.

The book *Love in the First Church\** devotes a section to how discernment ministries would consider the first church a cult today and how if we live the Bible by the grace of the Holy Spirit we too will be falsely labeled as a cult. If this should happen to you and your church, leap for joy.

Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets. Luke 6:22-23

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