

DISCOVER PROPHECY



Exposing the Cultic Agenda

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Follow The Leader

Did you ever play Follow the Leader as a child? I think, next to Hide and Seek, it was one of the most popular games played by children. I played it all the time. My friends and I would play Follow the Leader in the trees. If you touched the ground, you had to go to the back of the line. If the leader touched the ground, he would go to the back and the person in second place would then become the leader.

Playing follow the leader was always a fun game to play. This can be good if the leader is going somewhere we want to go, but what if the leader isn't? And how about today? What if the leader is a false religious leader? What if the leader was leading us in a place we didn't want to go? Today, as adults, we must be very careful if we follow leaders. Even religious leaders.

Satan is the master deceiver and as such he is very careful in planning his deception. He wants as many people as possible to go down with him and if he can use individuals as false prophets to lead well-meaning people away from God, he will.

Cults Are Deadly

Cults seem to be popping up all over the place. Wherever we turn we seem to hear more about cults.

James Warren (Jim) Jones was one of the most well known of the cult leaders. Here this preacher took time to open the Bible before his followers, he changed their lives in a positive way, and seemed to really care about them as individuals.

Jim Jones persuaded his congregation to go on a special mission trip down to Guyana. Nearly every person that went down did not return alive. On November 18, 1977, over 900 people died there in a massive suicide.

Odell Rhodes was one man who escaped from Jonestown and he told reporters what took place that day. They had prepared a special drink of juice or Kool-Aid and mixed in this drink was a poison. The mothers first gave it to their children and then they too took in the drink. One by one the people passed out and died. Hundreds of people, lay dead all over the camp. They'd left home to serve in Guyana and returned in body bags.

Another more recent cult is the Heaven's Gate group. These people actually believed that there was a space ship following the Hale-Bopp comet and that it was passing by to take the true followers to a better place.

Using the Bible and other sources, they convinced the followers to prepare for their departure to a better world. Each one dressed in a special outfit of black. Wearing Nike tennis shoes and carrying a small amount of money in their pockets, they too took poison in drink. Half of the group drank the poison first and died, the others laid them on beds and covered them with a special shroud. Again half of the next did the same and those remaining prepared the bodies. This continued until finally there was just one man who laid himself on a bed and drank his poison. Police investigators say that there was about a week between those who died first and the one who finally died.

These examples are of course extreme cases, but represent a mentality of being led astray from God. I want to give you some insight as to how you and your loved ones can avoid getting caught up in a cult trap. The Bible says that "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" Proverbs 16:25.

Though not all cults commit suicide or appear destructive on the surface, in the end, if led by the Deceiver, Satan, they will go to ultimate death and destruction.

Using the Bible as our guide to gain principles to live by, we will identify five main characteristics of a cult movement. You can teach these to your children and evaluate your own experience to determine whether a movement you or others might be involved with may very well lead you or them away from Christ and the safety of His salvation.

1. Substitutes a Human for Jesus

The first characteristic is that a cult movement will exalt the leadership of an individual above that of Jesus Christ. This group or church may claim to follow Jesus Christ as their leader, but if the human leader operates as a near savior, this is not a movement to be a part of.

"Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other" Isaiah 45:22. The one we should be turning to is God, not a man

or woman.

The Bible says that we should direct our attention and need to Christ, not a human being. For it is in Christ that we experience salvation, not in the workings of a man. Speaking of Jesus the Bible says, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given men, by which we must be saved" Acts 4:12.

New Age movements exalt the leadership and salvation of a human being. Come to this woman and you will find the information you need. The Psychic Network says to call on them and you will find the security you desire. Churches say to come to the clergy to find your forgiveness of sins. The Bible says that all of this must go to Jesus, not mankind!

2. Substitutes Human Teachings for the Bible

Another characteristic of a cult is their using other teachings above that of the Bible. The Bible is where we go to discover eternal truths, not the words of man or tradition. Cults and their leaders will, instead, lift up their own writings and teachings above God's Word. They may even use the Bible, they may hold one in the services, but do their teachings come from the Bible or their own opinions, history or some other persons beliefs?

"Thy word," the Bible says, "is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" Psalm 119:105. If we want to understand eternal truths, we go to the Bible.

David Koresh was a man who claimed to believe and follow the Bible. He had Bible classes and yet he said of himself, "I am the Lord, you are not Branch Davidians, you're Koreshians." Many of the people who followed this man were led astray because they listened to his preaching and believed that what he said was biblical truth. He said that what he was teaching was in the Bible and was true, but the people didn't take the time to look these things up for themselves and they were led astray.

We therefore need to ask of the leaders, "Does the leader's life and teachings harmonize with the Bible?" "You will know them by their fruits," the Bible says, "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit" Matthew 7:16,18.

If the leader is preaching one thing, yet doing another, then we can have certainty that this is not a movement we wish to be involved with. Also, the Bible has some clearly indicated guidelines for prophets and leaders. If these people are not following them, then we can know that they are not true followers of God. A

religious leader, for example, who is saying that he is trying to get people ready for Jesus, yet is living in an adulterous relationship is not following God and will lead people astray.

We need to also compare their teachings with that of the Bible. There are many teachings out there and we must compare the leaders teachings with the Bible truths so that we too aren't led astray. "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" Isaiah 8:20. If the teachings of a leader does not compare with the teachings of the Bible, we should then not be following that leader. We may be misled.

3. Works Miracles to Establish Claims

There are many false religious leaders and organizations that rely on establishing their credibility through the working of miracles (or the apparent working of miracles). When people see the supernatural (or apparent supernatural) work taking place, they just assume that it must be of God.

"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many" Matthew 24:5. These leaders, who are being used by Satan, will cause people to ultimately be led astray. And signs and wonders will be a major tool to account for this. "For false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect" Matthew 24:24.

If it were possible, even the very elect would be deceived by the miracle working false prophets. Just because someone is doing something outstanding doesn't mean that the person is of God. We must rely on scripture!

In the last days, the Bible says that the Devil will use miracles to mislead the populous. "And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast" Revelation 13:13,14. So if we see miracles being performed, yet the leader or organization is teaching unbiblical truths, it may very well be under the direction of the Devil, whether known by the leaders or not!

These miracles then are under the direction of the Devil and the supernatural things taking place are probably the influence of satanic agencies. "For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world" Revelation 16:14.

4. Large Group Conformity

Another characteristic of cult movements is the conformity to the groups values and standards. When someone begins joining the organization, they begin laying upon the individual the rules that are important to its existence.

Cults often use mind manipulation. Either through overbearing excitement that weakens the ability to think things through logically or actually forcing its members to conformity.

The Bible says that we shouldn't make any decisions or lifestyle changes for the benefit of others and in response to their pressure to conform, but it should be because we have come to a place in our lives where we recognize the Lord leading in our lives and for His honor and glory.

"So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God" Romans 14:12. Each of us as individuals must make our lifestyle changes following the direction of God, not for conformity to a group. The decisions we make should be our decisions that the Lord has directed us to make, not for others. We must choose for ourselves. "Choose for yourself today whom you will serve" Joshua 24:15. "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming" Ephesians 4:14. Instead of making changes for others, we must study the Bible for ourselves, know what it says and stand firm on the Word of God, not conformity to a cult.

5. Builds A False Sense Of Excitement

We all like to be a part of something exciting! But often these cult movements build up a sense of excitement that draws people to it. This excitement winds people up so much that when the leader begins speaking, the people just follow along because they are so attracted to the excitement.

Often these movements claim that what you are witnessing is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, when in actuality you are seeing a charisma of the world.

Excitement about what Jesus Christ has done for us is important, don't misunderstand. I think that if there's anything we should be excited about, it should be about Jesus. What I am saying is that the excitement is to an extreme that the emotionalism takes control yielding a following. Don't let the emotions control your understanding of Biblical truth.

"There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" Proverbs 16:25. "The prudent

sees evil and hides himself, but the naive go on, and are punished for it" Proverbs 22:3.

Many Lost Because Of Deception

It is going to be a very exciting day come the second coming of Jesus Christ but for some it will be a very sad day. There will be some, friends, that will not be saved. There will be some who truly believe to be followers of God. These people will have anticipated the coming of Jesus; looking for it; living a life believing that they are following Christ and loving Jesus, but according to the Bible, these people will not be saved. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles? And I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" Matthew 7:21-23.

What a sad day that will be. Jesus will be coming in the clouds of glory with all His angels. These people will see Him coming and will get filled with excitement. This is the event they have been looking forward to. When Jesus comes, they will see others beginning to go into the air to meet with Jesus and will be anticipating going up with them. Unfortunately that won't take place! They will wonder why and Jesus will answer that He doesn't even know who they are.

God's People

Though there will be many who will have been misled by the great deceiver; though these people will have followed after a leader that turned them away from Christ, there will be a people who are committed to Jesus Christ. They will know Jesus and He will know them. These people will be committed to His Word and follow it, despite popular opinion and temptation. These people are described throughout scripture but Revelation 14:12 says, "Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus."

Jesus will come back as He promised. Don't you want to be ready for Him when He comes? You can be, but be sure that you too aren't one that is deceived. Study your Bible for yourself and follow it, not a leader or movement!

