

HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS

A Bible List of Church Members to Avoid



"For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers...brutal, despisers of good...headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power! And from such people turn away!

(II Timothy 3:1-8)

“Many churches think they are hiding...” like you saw on the cover, hiding behind the American respect of the Bible teachings on church as “a house of prayer”; however Jesus reminded the religious people of His time that while a temple or church was meant by God to be a “house of prayer” and worship, among other things as actually described in the Bible about the New Testament meaning of church, it had been turned into God’s own people as a “Den of Thieves”. Many churches think they are hiding, not from a single sin of the past but from weekly bad habits, in the church and out. They hide within the walls of the church where God can not see, they think, because He is inside, they think. What they are really hiding behind is the respect Americans have for religion and churches. History has changed the world we live in: with the advent of the last great apostasy, the Falling Away, the world in our churches and outside is no longer the same; and therefore the perceptions of the present, much different from earlier times, have to be adjusted to accommodate what God’s people in churches today are truly like. One of the major problems is that the follies or bad habits of church members, as listed on the cover from II Timothy 3:1-5, are no longer considered as sin. Things like “lack of self-control”, pride, and boasting are most generally considered as natural expressions of an aggressive (perhaps type A) and friendly personality; and those characteristics of character and personality deemed so important for success in the world are within the church expressions of a lack of self-discipline and self control. Also what church members today are hiding from is the reality of the difference of a single sin or a few sins committed in the past and bad habits that are repeated each week, in the church and outside. Quite often the self-righteous robe is put on which says that God will overlook while in the church a few sins of the past without the admission that those sins are really habitual, repeated week after week without repentance. After all, they are really “follies” or “bad habits”, not sins!

What promotes such bad behavior and attitudes among church members, of course other than the obvious of tendency to want and sin, is popular preachers and Bible teachers that have the same kind of Falling Away “itching ears” as the people. The phrase “heaping up” of this Falling Away before the Second Coming of Christ speaks of a Falling Away process (II Timothy 4:3,4) from God, Christ, and the Bible {in most cases not even from the real God, Christ, and the Bible}, that is what we might call today an attraction to each other much like magnetic attraction, the itching ears Bible teachers and preachers dish it out, encouraged by the itching ears church members, and the itching ears church members lap it up. The “heaping up” process described in II Timothy 4:3,4--“heap up” to themselves teachers with itching ears--is a grassroots movement among American church members and other Christians that inevitably creates popularity since the Falling away is also inevitably a popular, majority involved movement. Like Jesus foretold, “as sin abounds, the love of many will wax cold”. Certainly “many” is the majority in any church, the only place of the love of Christ is purported to be in the first place; and many bespeaks of the majority in the church. When one tries to prove, as in this book, that popularity is bad, one tends to naturally think of the popularity of Billy Graham; and the

immediate response would be that at the end of that popularity, which we also remember, would mark the beginning in our nation of the Falling Away!

1-1: Why So Much Unsound Doctrine Today?

Besides the intolerance toward sound doctrine (II Timothy 4:3,4) which naturally comes with and perhaps leads the Falling Away, along with the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness, we must account for the large amount of unsound doctrine in Christianity today. The prime reason is increased lack of respect for the Bible as the Word of God. Perhaps there is more superficial respect for the Bible today; but rather as a book, or an inspired book like Shakespeare or Milton, not as the book through which God can and does speak to us everyday. It can also be considered as an academic book without proper regard for this "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God". Even as the can account for the Falling Away from the aspects of II Timothy 4:4,5 with "intolerance toward sound doctrine", with preferences for wants over needs and commands, with "itching ears" Bible teachers that are heaped up all over the world on TV and in churches faster than the Bible as the Word of God can keep up; so the vast multiplication of unsound doctrine and unsound living **{almost the same}** have the same foundations. It just plain does not matter that much about the Bible as the Word of God to most religious leaders and church members. History can be substituted, their own wisdom, denominational documents given priority over the original, indifference, and attempts at interpretation from the natural and other than spiritually discerned. As wisdom has grown in the United States, it has become harder and harder for the academically inclined to admit the source and preservation of the Bible, in fact to even admit the supernatural. And since most Americans don't want to admit that God cares and intervenes that much in world affairs, much less in their lives, it is very difficult for them to comprehend that God spent over one thousand years working through and with a diversity of over 40 authors, prophets and apostles, to formulate a book with which He could adequately communicate to the Creatures which He made. That job is complete; the words that God has spoken, every word out of His own mouth, is once for all delivered as a God-given basis for "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). There is no need for special revelation from the charismatics; in fact, their revelations divert us from sound doctrine and sound Christian living! We just can not get it in our head that after we are in the Falling Away, and that is now, popularity is a bad sign.

1-2: Consider Mr. and Mrs. Average Church Member.

Yet in all intellectual honesty **{to use a phrase coined by Elton Trueblood, the American philosopher of religion}** this does not adequately describe Mr. Average Church Member. You need to look carefully at II Timothy 3:16,17 in its 3 parts--(1) "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God", (2) "and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness", and (3) "that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"--and then with this foundation of (1) this single and most basic of foundational and doctrinal statements about the Bible as the

Word of God: close the (2) close the church administration gap of inadequate teaching and preaching **{that is half doctrine, with no reproof, little correction, and very incomplete instruction in righteousness by example and mythology}**; and (3) also close the gap on Christian living so that from the doctrine and church administration flows sound Christian living. I never understood it completely but I think these two gaps between (1) the Bible and (2) church administration and (3) sound Christian living is what Henry Steele Commager **{for you not into American Studies, Commager, former professor of American History at Amherst, made a great contribution to the History of American Thought in his book THE AMERICAN MIND}** referred to as the “paranoid” nature of American fundamentalism. But this takes a lot of Scripture and analysis to describe this problem, with solutions, in American churches where it is begged that you see ‘Den of Thieves’ and “Hideout for Bad Habits **{the real meaning of Jeremiah 7:11 as you will come to see}** as a Scriptural generalization of what American churches are like in this time of the Falling Away. Before a complete description, and possible solution, is offered in the last chapter, “God’s ‘Called’ People versus God’s ‘Chosen’ People”, you must come to appreciate the failures in churches and denominations on II Timothy 3:16,17 that have caused the historical transition in American churches from the “perilous times” and bad habits {“follies”} of II Timothy 3:1-8 to the Falling Away of II Timothy 4:45, “the time will come” which has come!

1-3: The Period of the Last Days.

If the “last days” started with the Coming of the Holy Spirit in great power and glory on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Christ, and it did according to the Apostle Peter and the Prophet Joel in Acts 2:16-21--Peter first said (2:16) that what you are seeing today is the beginning of the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 and then the Joel quote started with “it shall come to pass in the last days” (2:17); if the end of the last days is also given in Joel 2:32 and Acts 2:21 with signs in the heavens above and the earth beneath--which are certainly evident all over the world today in tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, floods, global warming, and other acts of God **{“blood and fire and vapor of smoke}**, and who can deny these things are happening; and if immediately after these signs in the heavens above and the earth beneath it is the “coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD” as Christ comes again with legions of angels to gather and separate, and certainly the Second Coming is the great and notable One Day of the LORD and Lord that Jesus called “the last day” (John 6:54), then we should right now be up to our necks in: (1) The Falling Away of II Thessalonians, and we are with increased intolerance toward sound doctrine (II Timothy 4:3,4), with a waxing cold of church members for Christ, a Luke warmth that God cannot stand (Revelation 3:14-22), and a vast heaping up on TV, in churches, and in other meetings of “itching ears” Bible teachers; (2) the rising tide of the mystery of sin and lawlessness (II Thessalonians), and we are since America and our churches can not escape this world wide movement. It is a tribute to Satan, indifference and ignorance toward Bible, and to fundamentalism that many church members look for the Second Coming as if it could happen before the Falling Away. More often the fundamentalists have so cluttered up the eschatology of the Falling Away, the withdrawal of the Holy

Spirit from earth, and the new heavens and the new earth with special revelations based on the Scofield Bible Notes, that American church members hardly know what to think. There is a certain advantage of fiction based on fiction as in many of the recent and popular books on eschatology where confusion can dominate over the clarity of the Scriptures like in II Thessalonians. As surely as II Thessalonians is a book of the Bible, one of the 66 books of the Word of God, and as surely profitable as the "ALL {other} SCRIPTURE of II Timothy 3:16,17, so knowing about the Falling Away approximately 40-80 years before the Second Coming is a profitable--for "doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness" as are convictions and knowledge of the Second Coming itself. {Who knows you may be up to your armpits in the Falling Away already along with the deacons, pastors, and other members of your church. In fact the probability is that you are already, based on the daily news and stories about bad habits of church members that are common knowledge in the community and your church.} And this does not even include the cover ups that churches and church leaders, just like the government, do in order to maintain an appearance that is much shinier and cleaner than the spiritual realities.

This book works on the assumption that the problems of the Falling Away and unsound doctrine are somewhat alleviated in their impact on churches and individual Christians when they are faced up to, even as a physician like Jesus said can not heal until the nature of the disease is comprehended. All is well in Zion, and all things continue as they were from the beginning of Creation and the beginning of the United States, is not a bad habit, practice, and perspective of sceptics and scoffers alone (II Peter 3:3), it is more efficiently and effectively practiced by church members who have selectively learned to stick their heads in the sand on certain realities such as the Falling Away. Even as other schools have problems but "not mine", and other countries have problems but "not mine", so also there is a certain weakness of human nature that sees problems in other countries and even other denominations without a recognition of the same or similar problems in their own church.

1-4: To Call a House of God today a "Den of Thieves".

It takes a lot of courage, and perhaps some foolhardiness, to call any House of God a "Den of Thieves", but Jesus did and Jeremiah before Him; however what you will find is a meaning much deeper than on the surface where some wealthy of companies like Enron and World Com have stolen from their own employees while hiding as respected members in their local churches. True Jesus criticized those of the House of God during His time that would buy and sell there, using the status of the House of God as a vehicle for profit much like mega-churches are doing today as well as these operating officers of large corporations are doing. But what Jeremiah referred to in 7:11, and Jesus used that as a basis to cleanse the Temple; was how the people of God treated the House of God as a hideout even as a Gang would that stole, murdered, etc. and then ran right back to the Den as a place of security and safety. In other words at heart of what Jesus and Jeremiah meant was that the people of God were living as they wanted to all week contrary to the

will and covenant of God, then coming on the Sabbath like church members today to say "We are Safe" because we are in the House and Temple of God! We are a member of the elite of God, and in the Temple that God Himself has chosen for His own people. This new book Project for 2008 entitled DEN OF THIEVES, REPORTS FOR CHURCHED AND UNCHURCHED UNBELIEVERS, having faced up to the well known spiritual realities of religion today in American Society like the Falling Away, like the tares in the local churches and denominations, and keeping in mind that Jesus taught to make no effort to separate the tares from the wheat for fear of getting the wheat by mistake; still what must we do about the tares in the church: and further how about those on the way to becoming like Hebrews 3:12, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." These are the unbelievers in the church with certain common issues as unbelievers outside the church. What you will find attached to this newsletter is the second chapter of "Den of Thieves" on "Bible Reports for Unbelievers", and with an introduction of what should be done about it since there should be no effort to shift the tares from the wheat in the kingdom or in the local church. All would admit that among our goals for 2008 should be efforts to make reports to unbelievers. Most generally we do not think about some of those unbelievers as in the local churches and denominations, yet we dare not neglect the tremendous influence which these "tares" have on the churches and the kingdom. Is it not possible to make efforts to neutralize the influences of these tare leaders without trying to separate them from their local church or kingdom; after all, the most influential of those tare-leaders are the false prophets and itching ears Bible teachers, the wolves in the sheep clothing of the local church that have the goals of personal profit and status by making disciples to themselves. Yes, Jesus, Paul, and the other Apostles warned us about these and about their influences; and the fact that we have so much trouble finding one of them today is not because there are none in the United States, it is because they are hidden in local churches and denominations too close to us to see or detect! As you read the attached chapter and as preparation continues on "Den of Thieves", all your comments are appreciated. Simply email them to sungrist@gmail.com or biblecombibleman@yahoo.com.

Whereas in the past, we have had such warnings as from Gambrell who said "we baptists are many but not much"; and books like "In His Steps" by Charles Sheldon, also seminarians like the church administrator who said "you can fill a church with empty people", and the more recent books like "Where Are the Converts", it is hoped that "Den of Thieves" will find a comparable place in the understanding of current church history. While the "Den of Thieves" book with its two offshoots of "Hideout for Bad Habits" and "Reports for Believing" will be generally somewhat limited by being available in only the computer software format of Adobe Reader PDF, you can see how these efforts will simultaneously make some Green effort to what is perhaps the second most crisis of this planet earth compared to the first of the Falling Away! You can with SunGrist_Bible books like "Den of Thieves", "Hideouts for Bad Habits", and "Reports for Believing" then LIVE GREEN, THINK GREEN, AND READ GREEN. If you are not presenting reading

this copy, then you or friends and relatives can download them from the two websites of SunGrist_Bible, www.biblecombibleman.com or www.SunGristBible.com.

Sincerely,

Jerry V. McMichael
Piney Woods
Lincoln National Forest
April 2008

By the way, it was not always comfortable writing the words of this book. Like with Jeremiah it was both bitter and sweet. I despise where we are as churches and church members--I especially hate the loss of the historical heritage of Baptist history and the history and traditions of Southern Baptists--but these are historical facts, with the inevitability of the Falling Away, that we must face up to. Like in II Timothy 2:17,18, the faith of more around us will be overthrown and we neglect the nature and solutions of these two final and great world wise movements: (1) the rising tide of the mystery of sin and lawlessness; and (2) the Falling Away with (a) the abounding of sin that causes a cold waxing toward Christ and God and the Bible and with (b) the intolerance and popularity toward unsound doctrine. Regretfully this is where we are in history now, just not too long before a revelation of the man of Sin and the Second Coming of Christ; and it can not be denied, only fought! Oh yes, there is also the hope of the final House of God, where God finally agrees to dwell among men with Christ, themselves becoming the Temple of the New Jerusalem on the new earth. Do not let the fundamentalists with their eschatological fictions based on fiction, rob the magnitude of this hope from you, and clutter the future. Also pardon this long Preface and the introduction to follow after the Table of Contents!