Introduction

Who’s telling the truth?
Have you ever received an email that turned out not to be true?
How do we know if someone is telling the truth spiritually?

I. TEST THE MESSAGE. VERSES 1-6

Does it fit with the Scriptures?

In verses 1-6, Paul defends the boasting he is about to do.

• He is jealous for the church - as a father of the bride.
• He is fearful that they will be led away from Christ

How did Satan deceive Eve? Genesis 3:1-7

• He questioned God’s Word.
• He questioned God’s character.
• He promised freedom and independence. You can be your own God.
Paul’s concern was valid because of how easily they put up with these men. Don’t be fooled by eloquence! Paul’s focus was not on style. Paul’s focus was on the message.

How do we test the message?
1. What do they say about Jesus? I Corinthians 15:3-4; John 1:1-18; John 14:6
2. What is the spirit of their message? Romans 8:15; Galatians 5:13; I John 4:1-3
4. What do they say about the Scripture? II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21; John 17:17

We believe the Bible is God’s Holy Word, inerrant and inspired, it is our guide for faith and practice.

II. TEST THE MESSENGER. VERSES 7-12

Some thought Paul was a phony because he didn’t accept any money for his preaching. Paul’s policy was to not take money from the church he was currently serving.

Did Paul have a right to earn a living from the gospel? Yes. I Corinthians 9:1-15

How do we test the messenger?
1. What is their character like? I Timothy 3:1-7
2. What is their motivation? I Peter 5:1-5
3. Are they an example to others? I Corinthians 11:1
4. Do they love Christ and the church? John 21:15-17
III. COME TO A CONCLUSION. VERSES 13-15

The irony is dropped and now Paul speaks in the clearest possible terms.

These men are false teachers, deceitful workman, masquerading as apostles of Christ.

To Paul, these people weren’t nice Christians who were a little misguided. To Paul, they were wolves and a threat to the flock. What is at stake is the gospel and our salvation.

“‘You’re creating a Christian message that’s warm, kind, and popular for contemporary culture. . . . What you’ve done is you’re amending the gospel, the Christian message, so that it’s palatable to contemporary people who find, for example, the idea of hell and heaven very difficult to stomach. So here comes Rob Bell, he’s made a Christian gospel for you, and it’s perfectly palatable, it’s much easier to swallow. That’s what you’ve done, haven’t you?’

Martin Bashir from an interview with Rob Bell on MSNBC

“I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.” Romans 16:17-18

Conclusion

The key question is what does the Scripture say?

The best way to protect yourself is to be grounded in the truth of God’s Word.