

The training here in Matthew 10:40-42 is recognizing true believers vs. false believers. Having discernment to know a true convert of Jesus, is a message Jesus gives teaching on in Matt. 7:15-23 (know them by their fruit), 13:30 (wheat and tares together), John 15:6 (those who do not abide), 1 John 2:19 (went out from among us), 1 Jn 3:14-15 (one who hates his brother), 1 Cor. 5:11 (one who practices sexual immorality, greed).

➤ Shepherds are to purify the church. The church is made up of those who are born again who love the word of God, the people of God, and to serve the Lord.

A true believer in Christ is marked by a love and respect for the faithful and humble shepherds of the church. What about bad shepherds? Are we loyal to them at all costs? What is the extent of our obedience to them? **Two examples of how Paul was treated by the church:**

1. **Paul and the Corinthian Church:** Acts 18, Paul stays in Corinth 18 months (18:11) in AD 50-52 preaching and teaching the Gospel to them. 1 Corinthians is the second letter to the church (1 Cor. 5:9-11) after telling them to remove the sexually immoral from the church body and rebuking them for the quarrelling and fighting happening among them. Paul had to give them instructions for properly partaking of the Lord's Supper.

- a. Paul defended himself from those who felt that other leaders were their leader in 1 Cor. 3:1-9.
- b. Paul's preaching and ministry was looked down upon by others because he wasn't entertaining enough and like the sophists of the day, 1 Cor. 2:1-6.
- c. Some judged Paul for his ministry as an apostle, 1 Cor. 4:1-4.

2 Corinthians is the 4th letter to the Church in Corinth responding to how they had treated Paul. The 3rd letter sent to the church grieved Paul to send to them (2 Cor. 2:1-4). In 2 Corinthians 13:1-3, Paul gives clear warning that he will confront the members practicing sin if he comes again. Not sparing anyone who has listened to gossip and slander concerning him (Prov. 17:4).

- a. He tells them to test themselves (13:5) to see if they are in the faith. This "testing" is to give proof of their salvation. What assures them of salvation?
- b. Also, in V5, he tells them to examine, or scrutinize, themselves to see if their faith is pure.
- c. In V6, Paul is even having to defend to some in the church that he is even saved.

2. **Paul and the Thessalonian Church:** 1 Thess. 5:12-13, Paul gives instruction to a newly established church. Paul likely only stayed in Thessalonica a few weeks to 3 months (Acts 17:2 "three Sabbaths"). The elders that were established likely were new believers with limited scriptural knowledge compared to other churches. The same Holy Spirit appointed and chose those men to lead there (Acts 14:23, 20:28, Eph. 4:11). **What are they commanded to do: 1) V12, to know them. 2) V13, to love them. 3) V13, to help them.**

- a. **To know them:** V12, know their strengths, frailties, areas they are less gifted, that they are human, their passion, their responsibility (Heb. 13:17), and their families.
 - i. Know them well enough that they can speak into your life, and that you would receive it from them.
 - ii. **Why know them?** So that you won't be critical and harsh towards them.
- b. **To love them:** V13, *regard* them, or choose your opinion to hold of them. Also *very highly in love*. That is with warm affection because of their work to feed and care for you.
 - i. Those in Galatia had grown cold towards Paul even when they first received him in weakness and sickness and as an angel from God, Gal. 4:13-16.
 - ii. Those who preach and teach are worthy of donor honor, 1 Tim. 5:17.
- c. **To help them:** V13, live in peace with one another. Being kind to one another, Eph. 4:31-32. Living in peace with all men, Rom. 12:18-19.
 - i. Confront the unruly brother, V14-15, those living in sin or causing issues.
 - ii. How does this help? It preserves the time of shepherds to study, pray, and help others.

Jesus gives three principles in Matthew 10:40-42:

1. **Reception:** V40, if they receive the apostles, they have received the message as from Jesus. They would receive it joyfully and support the disciples, Matt. 10:9
2. **Reward:** V41, the apostles are operating as prophets of God. Those who receive the message of the prophets receive the same reward they have. The one who receives the message of God is a true believer, receiving eternal life.
3. **Relief:** V42, serving the lowliest of those coming to Christ is worthy of reward. Those whom the disciples send aid to, as the brethren do the work to care for the body, they receive the reward of the one who sent them.

Further Discussion and Application

Looking at Hebrews 13:17, the Lord gives us instructions on how to treat our shepherds. Why should we obey them? What is the goal of the shepherds in the church for each member? What standard will the shepherds be judged by? Why has God given you these shepherds to submit to?

Hebrews 12 begins with Christ as our example of humility and the One who will empower us to continue living for Him when our eyes are fixed upon Him. The chapter then describes how God disciplines us for our own good. Discipline is an act of love and preparation for our eternal home with God in heaven (12:22-24). Looking at the question above, why are shepherds necessary and a gift from the Lord to us?

What are the signs of a true believer? What do they spend their life doing? What is their passion? Why do they pray? Why do they serve? What does a true believer look like?

For those in the body of Christ playing church, why should we lovingly confront them? What should we warn them about? What should tell them to do? Why should we seek holiness and purity in our lives? How can confronting a wayward brother be an act of great mercy? How can discipleship, man to man, be a solution that proactively strengthens the church and brings sanctification to its members (John 17:17)?