

Now the Spirit expressly says  
that in later times some will  
depart *from the faith* by devoting  
themselves to deceitful spirits  
and teachings of demons.

1 Timothy 4:1

As we stand on the threshold of the coming of Jesus Paul would write to Timothy and point out that the church of Jesus would be critical in the last days and that many would depart *from the faith!*

The word translated **depart** is the word **apostacy** and comes from a Greek verb, *Αφιστέμη*/(Aphistemi).

It Appears 15x in NT.

- ❖ 11x it is translated as “*depart*”.
- ❖ 1 x the translators recognized the context demanded they add, “*from the faith*”.
- ❖ 3x it is translated as “*divorcement*”.

This is exactly what is happening today!  
People are leaving the Church, and many say it is not relevant to their lives.

The Nones are the fastest growing group in America born between 1996 and 2012 and 43% identify as such.

President Ronald Reagan said, “We are only one generation away from atheism”!

Today I want to share 4 observations I've made in the last 40 plus years speaking in hundreds of churches and working with over 2500 senior pastors of various denominations.

# The Crisis in the Church

1 Timothy 4:1

Dr. Gary Frazier

# 1. The Crisis in the Pulpit

Too many today have forgotten the words of Jesus. Mark 10:45:

*45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Preachers today would do well to be reminded of Paul's words of instruction to young Timothy as recorded in 2 Timothy 4:1-4

4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:

<sup>2</sup> Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

<sup>3</sup> For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine.

Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup> They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

There are two sides to this crisis.

First, many preachers today see themselves as **Rock stars** instead of shepherds and expect to be treated as such!

I'm reminded of Peter's encounter with the Roman Cornelius in Caesarea as recorded in Acts 10:25

Listen to what Paul wrote to the believers in Thessaloniki in his 1<sup>st</sup> letter:

2:1 You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. <sup>2</sup> We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition.

<sup>3</sup> For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. <sup>4</sup> On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.

<sup>5</sup> You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed — God is our witness. <sup>6</sup> We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. <sup>7</sup> Instead, we were like young children among you.

## Notice 6 characteristics of Paul:

1. No impure motive or tricks
2. Approved by God/trusted w/Gospel
3. Not trying to please anyone but God
4. No flattery to hide motive of greed
5. Not seeking praise
6. Like young children among you

Are these the characteristics we see today coming from the pulpits of America?

Don't misunderstand me. I believe the majority of preachers are called by God and want to be faithful to serve the Lord and His church.

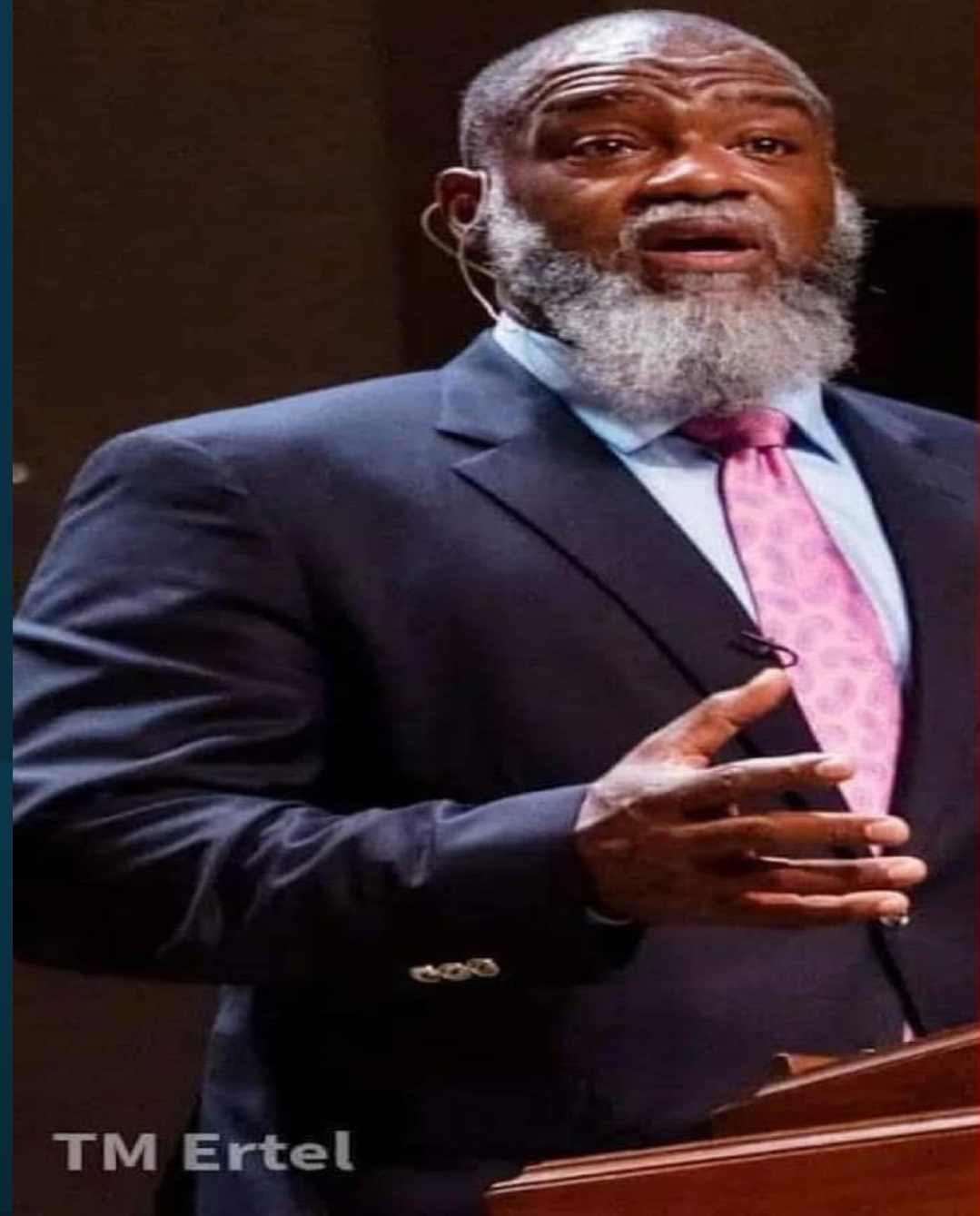
Let me share 2 illustrations from my own ministry...

## 2. The Crisis in the Pew

I'm not trying to offend anyone, but in the last few decades we have raised the most Biblically illiterate people since the dark ages!

Preachers today can teach things they could never have gotten away with a few years ago!

When the pulpit is afraid of “Thus saith the Lord” then the pew becomes woefully ignorant!



**"If we don't know the Bible, if we don't know doctrine, if we don't know theology, it is virtually impossible for us to identify false prophets."**

**Voddie Baucham**

# Concerning The Authority of Scripture:

I wonder how many know there is a

**“Our Beliefs”**

category on the church’s website.

I wonder how many have read this?

Do you know the fourth line item is:

“We believe the Bible to be the inspired

Word of God, inerrant and the

**final authority** for faith and life.”

# Concerning Salvation:

My friend Dr. George Barna's recent research revealed that 22% of evangelical pastors believe salvation is by trust in Jesus but that one must work to maintain it!

Years ago, the late Adrian Rogers spoke about Bible Doctrine saying, *“I asked a young boy what doctrine is, and he replied, it’s what you give sick folk!”*

Dr. Rogers replied, *“That’s right and we have a lot of sick folk who need DOCTRINE!”*

### 3. The Crisis in the Purpose

The church is not to be an entertainment venue!

We do not come to church to be entertained but to be instructed in the Word of God. Then to take the Word to the world!

## 4. The Crisis in the Purse

A few years ago, stats told us 20% of church members gave 80% of the giving.

Today 5% of church members give 95% of the giving. Why?

1 John 3:15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. <sup>16</sup> For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. <sup>17</sup> The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

## Proverbs 22:7

The rich rule over the poor,  
and the **borrower** is slave to  
the lender.

So let me close today by saying yes, the *Church is in Crisis*, and we desperately need a return to the spirit of servitude, but the promise of Jesus is this:

*18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it.*

Matthew 16:18

Further Jesus said,  
“**I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.**”

John 16:33



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