



# How to Spot a False Prophet or Con Artist

Lesson 1: False Prophets/*Con Artists Do Not Like To Be Found*

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*2 Timothy 3:13*

OPENING DISCUSSION QUESTION: *What comes to mind when you think of a false prophet or con artist?*

## Rule Number 1: *Con Artists Do Not Like To Be Found*

“Con artists [*and false prophets*] know that being themselves hurts business. Effective con artists must disguise their true motives. Whether your first contact with the con artist is through an unsolicited telephone call or a stranger ringing your doorbell, the con artist takes great pains to look, sound and speak like you or me. Often, con artists like to blend in with others in your group whether that group be political, community (such as the local senior center), religious or other. They quickly get to know a lot of people in the group so they can count on this common bond to spread the word about their questionable investments and reel in unsuspecting investors.”

*(State of Connecticut Department of Banking (<https://portal.ct.gov/DOB/Consumer/Consumer-Education>))*

*The primary information in this lesson series was gleaned from an article entitled, “How to Spot a Con Artist.” It is a helpful tool for those who are investors or desire to be. The danger signs noted there are appropriate for believers: new or experienced.*

**Read 2 Timothy 3:10-13.** In this section of Paul’s second Letter to Timothy, Paul is imprisoned for the preaching of the Gospel and will soon be executed. He writes to Timothy to empower the church to carry on in his absence. The mission of spreading the Good News must continue. Here in chapter three, Paul takes up “the wider problems for the churches by false teachers [con artists]... The false teachers were still on the prowl...” and Paul charges all who take up the cross of Christ “to complete the ministry that God has given them” with truth and integrity. (*NLT Study Bible*)

## Questions to Guide our Study:

1. What purpose is there in Paul reminding Timothy (vs. 10) of his “teaching, way of life, purpose, faith, patience, faith, love, and endurance”?
2. Why does Paul recall for Timothy the tough times in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra (v. 11)?
3. Is “persecution” (vs. 12) *necessarily* a result of godliness? How could this be used by false prophets?
4. What will *ultimately* happen to “evil-doers” and “imposters”?

### Think on this...

False prophets and con artists have a lot in common (as we will see). They won’t present you their business card identifying them as such. As believers, we are charged to be acquainted with correct teaching revealed through the Good News of Jesus Christ, though we may face persecution as a result.