

We are warned against those who will rise up among us and seek to bring harm to the flock in Acts 20. They will come from our own midst and prove to be contrary shepherds. The elders are expected to provide deliverance from these by calling the company to follow the Lord. Cautions are given in 1 Timothy in dealing with elders who sin and I think one must be careful in assessing judgments. But when any teacher wants the flock to follow Him more than the Lord or to follow Him absolutely in contra-distinction to other believers, that is a bad sign. We will not be misled, however, if we remember the truth of v. 9 that the Lord knows how to deliver the godly and to punish the unjust appropriately.

#### B. Keep all practices Biblical

The negative definitions of those who do not do this are found following verse 10. The pressures of the world about us are intended to make us think, act, and work like it does...having no absolute truth standard. You will see how easily this temptation is offered in verses 14, 18. In a practical way, the Bible is the test of every practice and we will not be misled if we follow it, but if we do not, it is hard to tell where we will wind up. Just consider Balaam for the illustration Peter gives.

#### C. Be content with the life the Lord gives

The situation in verse 19 highlights this as some believers take the inducements the world offers and do not see the condemnation that underlies the whole or the great difficulty in which we place ourselves with this sort of temptation. Today we find all sorts of instruction in how to have more power, more money, more health, etc. (all of which are not necessarily bad in themselves) for the compromise of our spiritual being. But Paul informed Timothy that godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Timothy 6) and we might well make that a watchword for ourselves in the face of these worldly offers. A person's life--ordered by the Lord--is the very pinnacle of existence.

III. Conclusion: Keep yourself for the Lord....don't be misled by others or be turned from your position as a simple follower of the Lord Jesus in the hopes you could make more of yourself. If you are His, be glad.