



Keep Standing Firm: Guarding against Future *COMPROMISE* in Theological Education

2021 Bible College Consultation

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Introduction



Many once-faithful theological education institutions have been compromised.

Many warning passages in Scripture:

- Luke 21:8 – “And [Jesus] said, ‘Take heed that ye be not deceived...”
- Mark 13:5 – Jesus said: “See that no one leads you astray...”
- Acts 20:28 – Paul: “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock... to care for the church of God...”

How must we “take heed” and “be on guard”?

Thesis: **What must we do to guard ourselves and our institutions from falling away?**

Keep Standing Firm



What picture comes to your mind when you think about “standing firm” as a theological institution?





Keep Standing Firm

Guarding against future compromise

1. Common causes of compromise
2. Wise defenses against compromise
3. Motivation to keep standing firm



Beware of Leaven!



- “Jesus said to them, “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. ... Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6, 12).
- What is the spiritual danger of the leaven of which Jesus warns us to beware?



Causes of Compromise



1. The *leaven* of **Counterfeit Teachers**

Mark 13:5-6 – “⁵ And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. ⁶ Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray.”

If we don't rebuke false teaching, then this leavening influence works slowly to mollify and modify the gospel message

Question: Are we in danger because we've stopped publically refuting false teachers in contemporary society?



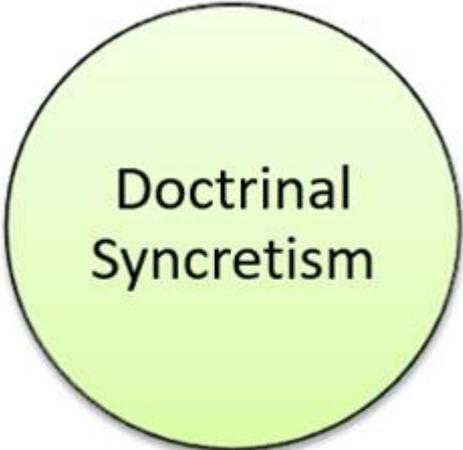
Causes of Compromise



2. The *leaven* of **Doctrinal Syncretism**

- The leaven of ATR (e.g. ZCC, Shembe, etc.)
- The leaven of liberalism (cf. G. Machen)
- The leaven of materialism (Prosperity Gospel)

Question: What must we do to give our students a more solid foundation in God's truth as defense against Satan's lies?



Doctrinal
Syncretism

Causes of Compromise



3. The *leaven* of **Academic Hypocrisy**

Luke 20:46 – “⁴⁶ Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts.”

Matthew 16:6 – “⁶ Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Question: **Have we given a foothold to the devil by tolerating academic pride and hypocrisy in our own institutions?**

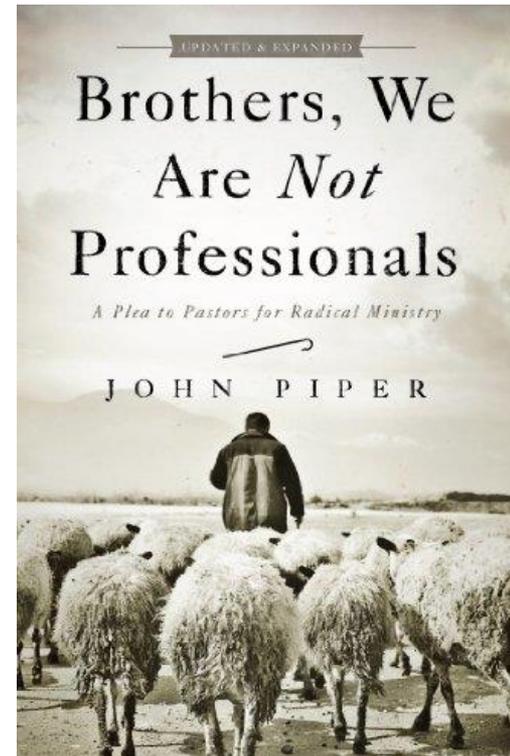


Academic Hypocrisy



*John Piper, **Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry** (B&H, 2013)*

“The world sets the agenda of the professional man; God sets the agenda of the spiritual man... There is an infinite difference between the pastor [educator] whose heart is set on being a professional and the pastor whose heart is set on being the aroma of Christ, the fragrance of death to some and eternal life to others (2 Cor. 2:15–16).”



Causes of Compromise



4. The *leaven* of **Institutional Blindness**

Luke 11:34 – “³⁴Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. ³⁵Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness.”

- Academic hypocrisy
- Theological hobbies
- Political ideologies
- Faculty disunity/division

Question: Is the “eye” of our institution still healthy? What should we do to keep our spiritual “eyes” healthy?



Causes of Compromise



5. The *leaven* of **External Pressures**

- Political pressures
- Academic pressures
- Financial pressures

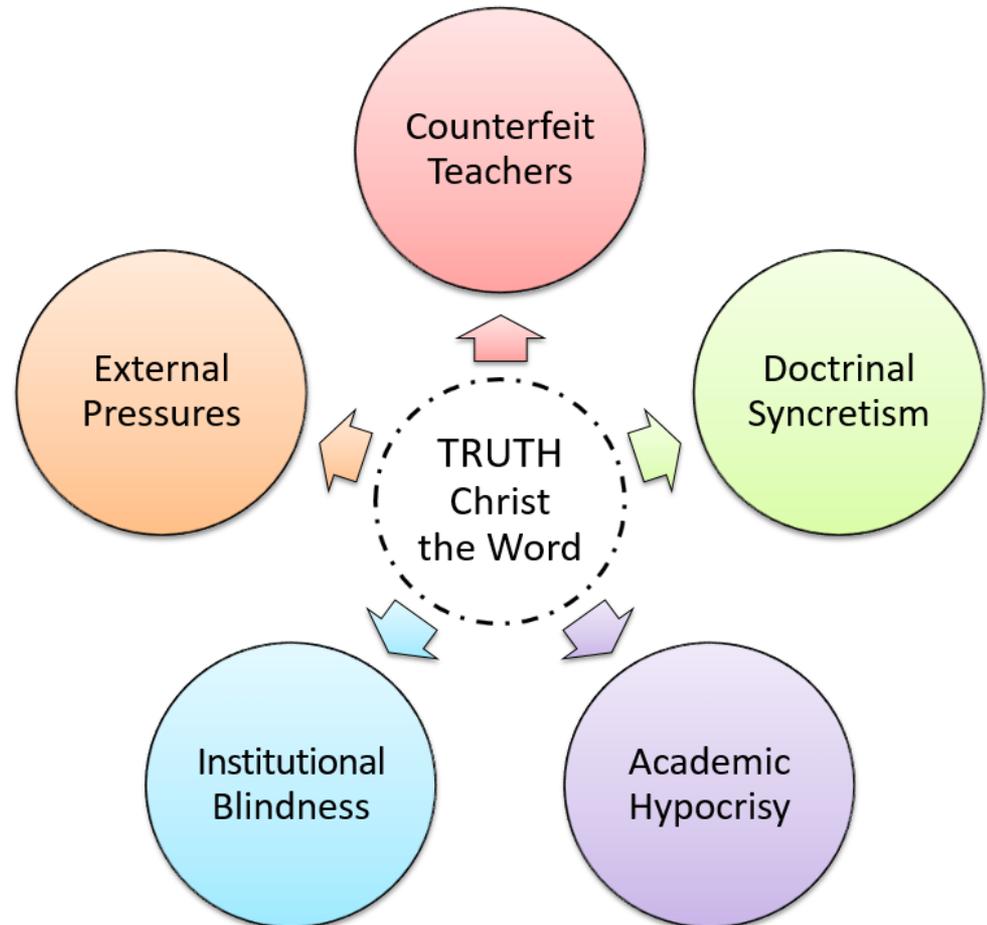
Question: Are we willing to sacrifice our illusions of so-called success in order to follow Christ more fully and consistently?



Causes of Compromise



- Counterfeit Teachers
- Doctrinal Syncretism
- Academic Hypocrisy
- Institutional Blindness
- External Pressures



Wise Defenses – Biblical Walls



“Guard the deposit entrusted to you” (1 Tim 6:20).

“**Pay careful attention** to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [*educators*], to care for the church [*seminary*] of God, which he obtained with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).



Defenses Against Compromise



- Defense 1: **Stay Focused**

“You will never reach your destination if you stop to throw stones at every dog that barks.” -- *Winston Churchill*

“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” -- *Apostle Paul, Phil 3:14*

- We are called/commissioned to “make disciples”
- We are serving the church to equip future leaders
- We are empowered to be witnesses of Christ



Defenses Against Compromise



- Defense 2: **Guard Spirituality**

1 Timothy 4:16 – “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

- Fight against idolatrous pride (1 Cor. 10:12)
- Fight against deadly unbelief (Hebrew 3:12)
- Question: **How should we promote humility and piety in our academic institutions?**



Defenses Against Compromise



- Defense 3: **Promote Integrity**

Romans 16:17-18 – “¹⁷ I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. ¹⁸ For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.”

Rom 12:21 – “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

- Spiritual godliness
- Doctrinal soundness
- Academic integrity
- Institutional piety
- Charity and unity



Defenses Against Compromise



- Defense 4: **Defend Mission**

What is our purpose and reason for existence as theological education institutions? How can your institution intentionally protect this mission?

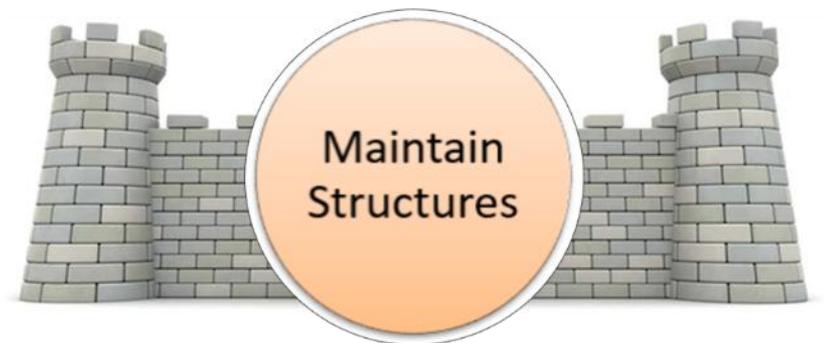
- Church-based ministry
- Practical apologetics
- Faithful evangelism



Defenses Against Compromise



- Defense 5: **Maintain Structures**
- Nothing will protect forever against erosion and decay in a broken sinful world, but we can use all available means to build as strong as possible.
- Build fences for the future (the best offense is defense)
- Question: **What will be the legacy of your institution 100 years from now?**



Defenses Against Compromise



- Remain Focused
- Guard Spirituality
- Promote Integrity
- Defend Mission
- Maintain Structures



Motivations to Stand Firm



- Christ is praying for us to remain faithful.
- God our Father has promised to provide.
- The Holy Spirit unites and empowers us
- Together we are strong standing in the Word

