

Billy Graham Answers: How to Know If Your Church Is a Cult

So you're at a church, eyeing fellow attendees who seem really into the music or really exclusive. You begin to wonder, "What did I just walk in to?"

Maybe the congregation is just an odd church. But there's a chance the group could be something more.

A concerned reader asked Billy Graham a similar question: "My neighbor keeps inviting me to her church (although they don't call it that), but someone told me it's a cult. How can I know? I didn't come from a religious family."

And the renowned evangelist responded with wisdom for the ages:

I'm thankful you are cautious and don't want to become part of a group that will lead you away from what the Bible teaches. While some cults openly deny the Christian faith, others mimic Christian practices and actually claim to believe the Bible—although they deny some of its most important teachings.

Let me suggest three questions or guidelines you might find helpful in evaluating this group. First, what do they believe about the Bible? Is it alone the Word of God (as Christians affirm)—or do they add to it, or claim they alone have translated it correctly? Second, what do they believe about Jesus? Is He alone the divine Son of God, sent from heaven to save us from our sins? Or do they deny this, or claim we must work to save ourselves? Third, what do they believe about other Christians? Do they claim that they, and they alone, have the truth—or do they rejoice that God is also at work elsewhere?

Don't be misled by this person's friendship—but don't be

discouraged either. God loves you; He loves you so much that He sent His only Son into the world to save you. May you discover this great truth—and you will, as you turn to Jesus Christ and invite Him to come into your life.

Then ask Him to lead you to a church where the Bible is preached and taught, and you can grow closer to Christ. Let the Psalmist's prayer become yours: "Strengthen me according to your word" (Psalm 119:28).