



The Way of Truth

“Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.”

Matthew 7:15-20 (NLT)

1. What is a true and what is a false prophet?

- A prophet is a _____ or _____ for God.

But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality.

2 Peter 2:1-2 (NLT)

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. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NIV)

2. How do we identify false prophets and teachings today?

We identify false prophets by the fruit of their:

- _____.

For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Jude 1:4 (NIV)

- _____.

But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent. You happily put up with whatever anyone tells you, even if they preach a different Jesus than the one we preach, or a different kind of Spirit than the one you received, or a different kind of gospel than the one you believed.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 (NLT)

- _____.

Timothy, guard what God has entrusted to you. Avoid godless, foolish discussions with those who oppose you with their so-called knowledge. Some people have wandered from the faith by following such foolishness.

1 Timothy 6:20-21 (NLT)

3. Why does this seem so hard, and maybe even offensive?

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

Colossians 2:8 (NIV)

4. What's my protection against false prophets and teachings?

- Knowing _____.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.*

Psalms 119:105 (NASB)

- Staying close to _____.

Jesus answered, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. The only way to the Father is through me."

John 14:6 (NCV)

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever experienced a person who lacked character? Can you explain what that looked like and if it was easy or difficult to identify?
2. Have you had a relationship with a family member, friend, or coworker, that could have turned out differently had you evaluated it through God's Word? How could it have been changed?
3. What is a step you could take this week to get closer to Jesus, and what would that look like for you?

Recommended Resources

- *Truth Matters: Knowing God and Yourself*, by Andrew Petiprin
- *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*, by Timothy Keller
- *Uncommon Ground: Living Faithfully in a World of Difference*, by Timothy Keller & John Inazu
- *Truth Changes Everything: How People of Faith Can Transform the World in Times of Crisis*, by Dr. Jeff Myers

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- Content.

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- Consequences.

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