

# How to Discern a False Teacher

## **Last Week** Why should God's People be Concerned about False Teachers?

False teachers distort the truth we need

False teachers are coming from outside the Church; from inside the Church

False teachers clearly predicted by history: O.T., Israel, Jesus, & apostles

***Even when given God's explicit guidance, leaders and followers together often tend toward folly and sin.***

False teachers are hard to detect

False teachers ruin people, churches, themselves

Prepare for false teachers: Study prior; check 'em during

## **Today** How should God's People Discern a False Teacher?

### **Why work to discern a false teacher?** *Mat 7:13-15*

Only two gates, only two roads, only two destinations

***Your teacher helps you pick the best gate, road, and destination. Choose him well.***

Beware of the false prophets

Outer sheep, inner wolves (angels of light? *2 Cor 11:14-15*)

### **How can we know a false teacher?** *Mat 7:16-20*

You will know them by their fruits

Grapes, figs don't come from thorn, thistle

Good tree = good fruit; bad tree = bad fruit

Trees that do not bear good fruit are cut down and burned

So then, you will know them by their fruits

### **What are the fruits of a false teacher?** *Mat 7:21-23*

Not everyone will enter the kingdom of heaven

Only the one who does the Father's will

Not the ones who: Say, "Lord, Lord;" Prophecy in His name; Cast out demons;

Perform many miracles

I will declare to them "I never knew you, depart from me you evildoers"

***The false teacher uses people to do the work of God without teaching them to know the wisdom of God and equipping them to do the will of God.***

### **Good Fruit v. Bad Fruit** *Mat 7:24-27*

The one who acts upon what he hears me teach

Is like the wise man who built his house upon the rock

He will not be destroyed

The one who does not act on what he hears me teach

Is like the foolish man who built his house upon the sand

He will be destroyed

*"Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Jesus, in Mat 5:19*

## Good Fruit v. Bad Fruit *(continued)*

**True teachers bear good fruit:** Properly equipped saints who show regular progress in developing needed qualities . . .



Crown Thinning

Love: Toward God, neighbor, one another, enemy  
 Wisdom: God's Truth sought, understood, applied, obeyed, and taught  
 Faithfulness: To God, to men, in public, in private  
 Courage: In thought, word, deed, not swayed by threats  
 Humility: Teachable, gentle, patient, merciful, servant-spirit  
 Integrity: In all situations, with all people, not swayed by reward nor risk

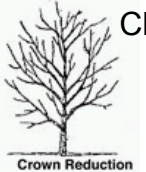
**False teachers bear bad fruit:** Improperly equipped saints who are stuck at inconsistent or shallow levels in the needed qualities . . . *(Mat 23:15)*



Crown Reduction

Love: Selective, conditional, intermittent  
 Wisdom: Selective, duplicitous, mix w/ man's opinion / theory  
 Faithfulness: Conditional, intermittent, unpredictable  
 Courage: Only when threat is small, or reward is big  
 Humility: When agreeable, easy, and safe  
 Integrity: Degrades to duplicity when "needed"

**True teachers help** disciples on their pre-ordained course *(Rom 8:29)* to be like Christ Jesus (even if/when they don't like it) by:



Crown Reduction

Teaching the practical nature of faithful living  
 Encouraging Spirit, wisdom; Challenging flesh, folly  
 Leading into a healthier, more faithful walk with Christ

**False teachers hinder you** on your pre-ordained course to be like Jesus by:



Crown Raising

Enabling you to remain stuck in sinful thoughts, attitudes, habits, practices  
 Catering to your flesh  
 Not teaching you the freeing truth that you need

**True teachers raise your value** to God's kingdom: They stretch you away from handling life via sinful thoughts, words, actions; they stretch you toward handling life via righteous thoughts, words, and actions.



Crown Raising

**False teachers lower your value** to God's kingdom: They use your flaws, sins, ignorance, and weaknesses to further their own agenda. All the while, they fool you into believing that they are helping you toward Christ-likeness.



Crown Raising

***The true teacher helps his followers live, work, and serve according to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.***

## Let's Check Jesus the Teacher, by this Standard of Fruit *(Good Disciples)*

Pharisees:	Hated him	<i>John 15:24-25</i>
Crowds:	Loved him when fed, but left him over "hard stuff"	<i>John 6:60-66</i>
Followers:	Turned on him	<i>Mat 27:21-23</i>
Judas:	Betrayed him	<i>Mat 27:3</i>
Disciples:	Argued with one another, didn't get it, repeatedly	
Disciples:	Abandoned him, denied him	
Disciples:	Learned, obeyed, proclaimed, taught, even when threatened	<i>Acts 1-9</i>

***You don't judge a teacher by those who ignore him, use him, hate him, abandon him, or malign him. You judge a teacher by those who trust him and follow in his steps, even though they may show flaws and stumbles. They are his fruit.***