

Recognizing False Teachers/Prophets

TIPS SCRIPTURE GIVES US TO HELP RECOGNIZE FALSE TEACHERS/PROPHETS

1. They Say What People Want to Hear

- 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. **2 Timothy 4:3**
 - If the prophet or teacher you're following always makes you feel good, then it can be a red flag. While prophecy is to edify and build up the church, and teaching is to equip the saints, there has to be correction, rebuke to help people grow.
 - ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work. **2 Timothy 3:16-17, NLT**

2. They Teach a Doctrine Other than Christ

- But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories” (**2 Peter 2:1-3**).
- This one is tricky because those who are **knowingly** trying to deceive people usually do it very subtly. Of course, none of us is perfect. We're talking about people who **knowingly** try to deceive people. **WAKE UP! PAY ATTENTION!!**

3. The Use Tricks to Pull People In

- For **false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect**. See, I have told you ahead of time” (**Matthew 24:23-25**)
- This man will come to do **the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles**. He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, NLT**
- This includes prophecy! Is it prophecy or divination? Even the diviner can get some information right. The prophet hears from GOD; the diviner from Satan.

4. They Are Dishonest about Their Real Intentions

- For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness” (**2 Corinthians 11:13-15**).

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5. They Seek to Divide Congregations

- I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people” ([Romans 16:17-18](#))

6. They Ignore the Need for Repentance & Gloss over their own sin as well as others sin

- The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; **they did not expose your sin to ward off your captivity.** The prophecies they gave you were false and misleading” ([Lamentations 2:14](#)). **A prophet should deal with sin to help save your life!!!**
- Her prophets whitewash these deeds for them by false visions and lying divinations. They say, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says’ — when the Lord has not spoken” ([Ezekiel 22:28](#))

7. They Substitute Their Own Words for God’s Word

- Then the Lord said to me, ‘The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions, divinations, idolatries and the delusions of their own minds”’ ([Jeremiah 14:14](#))
- **There should be a confirmation in your spirit when you receive a prophetic word!**

8. They Do Damage to People’s Lives

- Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. **By their fruit you will recognize them”’** ([Matthew 7:15-16](#)).
- **A true prophet should enhance your life. 2 Chronicles 20:20 says Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be able to stand firm. Believe in his prophets, and you will succeed. What fruit is coming from following this Man or Woman of God?**

The above tips should ALERT you to the fact that there may be something amiss. When you see any of these things you CANNOT ignore them. The bottom line is that we must be discerning.

What is Discernment?

1. **Distinguishing good from evil** – “test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good”. 1 Thess 5:21
2. **Identifying truth and falsehood** - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. **1 John 4:1**
3. **Spiritual awareness:** But we know these things because God has revealed them to us by his Spirit, and his Spirit searches out everything and shows us even God’s deep secrets.....But we can understand these things for we have the mind of Christ. **1 Corinthians 2:10, 16b**
4. **Knowing God’s will** – What does God have to say about this situation or this person?

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How Do I Develop My Discernment?

1. Start with a pure/clean heart!

- *God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God. **Matthew 5:8, NLT***
 - **Example:** When I was looking for an item this morning the curtains were closed in my room. It was totally dark but when I let the room be flooded with light I could see clearly. Some sin clouds our seeing/thinking, but when we purify ourselves consistently the light of God will shine and you will see things you couldn't see before.
- *So, humble yourselves before God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you hypocrites. Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter and gloom instead of joy. When you bow down before the Lord and admit your dependence on him, he will lift you up and give you honor. **James 4:7-10, NLT***

2. Rely on the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit must be a CONSTANT in your life!!

- *The Spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the full truth. The Spirit doesn't speak on his own. He will tell you only what he has heard from me, and he will let you know what is going to happen. **John 16:13, CEV***
- **You must develop a gentle & quiet spirit yourself!** Pure, reverent lives are characterized by an emphasis on the *inward & spiritual*. (1 Peter 3:4). Too many of us don't like it to be quiet!
- **The Holy Spirit often speaks in quiet.** 1 Kings 19:11-13—God speaks to Elijah in a whisper. You can't hear God's whisper if you're not **quiet, still and in peace!**

3. Seek wisdom from God through prayer & meditation

- *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. **James 1:5-8***
- Too many of us use **our** wisdom to understand what's going on in the world. Look at your response to what GOD did when He put Donald Trump in office. Your human intellect has put together the reason for this but it's MUCH deeper. And as long as we rely on **our** intellect the enemy will continue to be able to manipulate and control us. People missed Jesus as Savior and crucified Him because they refused to believe God when send someone who looked & acted like Jesus to come into the world. Open your mind and accept that God does NOT operate the way **you** think He should!!

4. Know the Tactics of the Enemy

- *So that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes. **2 Cor 2:11, NLT***
 - **Examples:**
 - **If you heart is not pure, Satan will use ANY sin in your life as an open door which can lead to deception.** (Maybe you have a critical spirit and because of

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*this you hold unforgiveness or bitterness in your heart. This gives Satan the **legal right** to operate in your life. And according to Rev. 12:9 he is the deceiver of the whole world. The scripture even states that “even the very elect” will be deceived*

- **If you have ANY desire that is greater than a desire for God, Satan will use this.** For instance, if you want to be married REALLY badly, Satan will often deceive you and bring counterfeits into your life. Your desire for that thing will cloud your judgment and you will hear the voice of your desire rather than the voice of God.
- **Satan will also use your good qualities to lure you into deception.** For instance, if you're a giver he will bring people into your life who will suck you dry. Your compassion for people will be your driving force rather than relying on the Holy Spirit even in your giving
- **He will use often use scripture to trip you up.** He even did this to Jesus, so it's imperative that you study, seek Godly counsel for things you don't understand and pay attention when something just doesn't feel right!!!

5. **Study God's Word:** EVERYTHING YOU FACE CAN BE FOUND IN THE WORD!!

- *And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to check up on Paul and Silas, to see if they were really teaching the truth. **Acts 17:11, NLT***
- *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success **Joshua 1:8***
- *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. **2 Timothy 3:16-17***

6. **Seek Godly Counsel**

- ¹⁴Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. **Proverbs 11:14, KJV**
- **Be willing to receive correction, guidance and be open to change**
- **Acknowledge where you are spiritually and that there is ALWAYS much more to learn.**