

>>Satan was the first false teacher adding falsehood to God's word and deceiving Eve, that she wouldn't die if she ate of the fruit. If someone has a persistent, stubborn determination to follow after false teachers, it is likely the person doesn't bear the fruit of salvation and is an unbeliever. >>Jesus' command: Beware, be careful, of false prophets, those that claim to represent God. Who are wolves in sheep's clothing. One sign to look for: "You will know them by their fruits." >>What is the genuine fruit of a good teacher or elder? What kind of people are being produced from their effort and work? Are they growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus- are those they mentor having an impact on those around them?

What are the signs of a false teacher? Two categories of the fruit from false teachers. Some are obvious and some are not so obvious.

- 1) **Amen Category (Ones we can all agree on):** 1) The fruit of mislead sheep, Jer. 23: 1-2, 10, 32, God blames the leaders for their false teaching. 2) The fruit of lovelessness: Ezek. 34:1-6, shepherds using the flock for their own gain. False shepherds care what people can do for them. 3) The fruit of convincing false logic, Col. 2:4, Rom. 16:18. "smooth, flattering speech," speech that makes *me* the center in a logical fashion. Examples: Because God is love, He loves us, and He understands us. Another, the Holy Spirit is a perfect gentleman so when you are ready you can ask for the Holy Spirit and become a "full" gospel Christian. These make sense based in logic but are not in keeping with the whole of Scripture. 4) The fruit of shaking your confidence, some give false confidence to unbelievers, but some shake the confidence of believers. 2 Thess. 2:1-3, preachers were speaking that the end had come. True teachers give confidence in God's Word. The false teacher shakes your confidence, and then offer to show you what to believe. 5) The fruit of ignorant claims, 1 Tim. 1:6-7, someone placed in leadership without any training to rightly handle the word of God. 6) The fruit of legalism, 1 Tim. 4:1-5, the creating of false standards of righteousness not delineated in Scripture, this is asceticism. What is the difference between wisdom and legalism, 1 Tim. 2:9, Paul commands women to adorn themselves with modesty not an effort to boast about worldly wealth. Legalism is saying that certain things are conditions to being right with God. 7) The fruit of conceited debate: 1 Tim 6: 3-5, those who have an appetite for debate or argument. 8) The fruit of a disgusting life, Tit. 1:10-16, what the false teacher professes and what he lives. 2 Pet. 3:17, "be on your guard." Jude 4, persons crept in unnoticed, ungodly people. Hebrew 13:7, remember the leaders who spoke the word of God and follow their example. 8) The fruit of destructive heresy, 2 Pet. 2:1-3, secretly introduce these heresies. How? The church allows them in. What does Peter mean by, "even denying the Lord who bought them?" These aren't pagan outsiders, these are those acting like Christians, but aren't saved. 9) The fruit of denying the Trinity, 1 John 2:22-23, belief in the Triune God is non-negotiable. Eph. 1:3-14, God the Father chose the elect for salvation, God the Son redeemed the elect for salvation, and God the Spirit sealed the elect for salvation. 10) The fruit of denying the humanity of Christ, 2 John 7, "as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." Jesus intercedes to the Father as one of us. Jesus is human.
- 2) **Oh No! Category:** 1) The fruit of bad emotional manipulation: 2 Tim. 3:6-7, a picture of an emotional woman looking for truth that false teachers have repackaged. 2) The fruit of an altered Gospel, Gal. 1:6, anyone who twists the Gospel. God initiates salvation, man is the recipient and responds. The false teacher is cursed. The false Gospel offers false assurance.

3) The fruit of claiming supernatural power, 1 John 4:2-6, John is warning the believers of those claiming their own spiritual power. Heb. 2:3, "was confirmed to us by those who heard Him [Christ]." Word of faith or those who claim supernatural power are false teachers. 4) The fruit of shifting authority, 1 Tim. 6:20, Paul tells Timothy to guard the truth of the Gospel and the singular authority of the Word of God. Paul charges Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:1-5, to preach the word. These are church leaders who adopt a policy or direction based upon a different authority, worldly wisdom, not based upon biblically sound principles. 5) The fruit of denying God's redemptive plan: the resurrection of the church is a future event. Preterism, 2 Tim. 2:17-18, those who say the resurrection has already passed. The prosperity Gospel can creep into sound churches deceiving believers into misunderstanding what it means to be crucified with Christ. 6) The fruit of false revelation: Jer. 23:16, "leading you into vanity," Jude 3 says the minister of God is to contend for the faith, once for all delivered to the saints. Rev. 22:18-19, Do not add one word to Scripture. Those saying, "God told me!" are false teachers. 7) The fruit of cultural Christianity: the most heinous of the category. Jesus in Rev. 2:14-15, address the Nicolaitans who taught you could be saved and do whatever you want. They taught what the physical body does doesn't matter, only the spiritual. Paul refutes this in Rom. 6:1-2. The teaching of Balaam is found in Num. 22:25. After striking the donkey, the donkey speaks to Balaam. The Angel of the Lord confronted Balaam commanding him to speak only what the AOTL (pre-incarnate Jesus) says to him. 2 Pet. 2:15, Balaam was trying to make a profit from his false prophecies. Num. 31:16, on Balaam's advice the people of Israel acted treacherously. Balaam told Balak to defeat Israel by having the men of Israel commit harlotry with their women, Num. 25:1. The Balaamites are those who preach the word in public and make sin acceptable in private.

Our prayer: 3 John 4, "no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." Psalm 119:9-16, treasure God's word in our hearts, delight in His word, and not forget His word.

Further Discussion and Application

There are many warnings in these texts of Scripture of false teachers. What do you need to shore up in your discipleship of others and personal study of the truth? How can multiple passages of Scripture be used to properly divide the Word of God and cut it straight?

Thinking of past false teaching you believed or when around those who believed false teaching, how did God reveal the truth to you? What did you come to learn from God's Word that gave you great confidence in the truth and not lies? How great was God's grace demonstrated to you as Christ promised in John 10:25-30? What commands of God did you begin obeying?

1 John gives us many warnings of false doctrine that denies the Trinity are those who deny the work the God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in salvation. Eph. 1:3-14 speaks of the work of God in salvation. Why does any other view of the Godhead's work in salvation lead someone astray?