



GOOD FRUIT Matthew 7:15–20

CONNECT

1. Have you ever experienced a person who turned out to be a wolf in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15)? What were the circumstances when you realized the true nature of this person? How did you respond to the situation?

CELEBRATE

2. In Matthew 7:15, Jesus commands us to beware of false prophets. Read Jeremiah 23:25–28. What are some of the distinguishing marks of prophets who are evil? What are the characteristics of those who are affirmed by the Lord?
3. Jesus says in Matthew 7:16 that we will recognize false prophets or teachers by their fruit. Consider 1 Timothy 6:3–5. Note the issue of “different doctrine” in verse 3, as well as the dissention that erupts in the following verses. Process with your Life Group the destructive dynamics at play in these verses, with attention to the “why” behind them.
4. Contrast your reflections from the previous question on false teachers and their influence with the “fruit of the Spirit” mentioned in Galatians 5:22–23. What does Galatians 5:16 tell us is the key to bearing healthy fruit in our lives and how can we cultivate it?
5. Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:19 that trees that do not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Read James 3:1. What might it look like for us to hold ourselves and others—especially spiritual influencers—accountable regarding doctrine and character, particularly in light of these warnings?

CONTRIBUTE

6. Acts 17:11 tells of those in Thessalonica who “received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” Without expecting the worst of people and being mindful of any “log that is in your own eye” (Matthew 7:3), how could you help yourself and others examine God's Word to ensure biblical faithfulness in your context? What disciplines and resources might you utilize?
7. Process with your Life Group what wise steps you can take to respond to a wolf in sheep's clothing. Evaluate Titus 3:1–11 for God's wisdom in this regard.