

*"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. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Matthew 7:15-20 (NIV)*

## **Good Fruit**

**What does good fruit look like?** I'm not sure what you mean by good fruit. **That is why we are going to have this conversation. You know that I have said, "apart from me you can do nothing" and that if you want to bear fruit for me you must abide in me.** Yes, I remember those statements quite well. **Have you ever wondered about those statements?** How so? **Have you ever thought that you have done some good things when you weren't abiding in me.** Yes, I have had that exact thought. **I know your thoughts, my asking you about them should not surprise you. Will those good things you have done, without abiding in me, last for all eternity? At the end of time, will those good efforts of yours have made an eternal difference?** No, they will amount to nothing, in light of all eternity. **So, they are not real and true examples of bearing eternally good fruit are they?** No, they are not. **You will need to ask yourself a question.** What's that? **If your good efforts will not last for all eternity are they really good at all? It is my plan that you will bear fruit that will last for all eternity. If your good efforts have kept you from doing my will, are they truly good?** No, they are not.

**You have also done something things that you regret. You have gone and done things that were not pleasing to me. You have done some things that were sinful. What can you call these things that you have done?** I can call them bad fruit. Bad fruit will always reveal a life that is not being lived for you. **That's true.** What can I call things that appear to be good fruit but really are not of any lasting or eternal value? **You tell me.** I could call them false fruit. **Yes, you could. What type of fruit is most dangerous to you?** Both are dangerous. Both are to be avoided. **That's true.** But, false fruit that is of no lasting and eternal value seems most dangerous to me. **How so?** I could waste my entire life doing what will have been of no lasting and eternal value by doing simply what seemed to be good to me. That would be tragic. **Yes, it would.**

**How do you want to be recognized?** I want to be recognized as one of your followers. I want to be recognized as someone who is bearing an abundance of fruit for your kingdom and bringing glory to your name. One day, I want to be able to look back, with you, over my life to see all the fruit that you have enabled me to bear. That is my prayer. That is my hope. That is my desire. This is what I am asking from you. **That is what you will have from me. I have been and will be hearing and answering this prayer of yours.** Thank you, Lord.

*Lord, help me to be on guard against what is true and false and good and bad fruit. Use your word and your Holy Spirit to teach and me what is of you and what is not. May I and your people bear abundant fruit for your kingdom and bring glory to your name. Amen*

## **Spiritual Warfare** *You Will Recognize Them*

"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. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

NIV Matthew 7:15-20

## **Spiritual Warfare** *You Will Identify Them*

"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.

NLT Matthew 7:15-20

## **Spiritual Warfare** *You Will Know Them*

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.

NRSV Matthew 7:15-20

## **Spiritual Warfare** *You Will Fully Recognize Them*

Beware of false prophets, who come to you dressed as sheep, but inside they are devouring wolves. You will fully recognize them by their fruits. Do people pick grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every healthy (sound) tree bears good fruit [worthy of admiration], but the sickly (decaying, worthless) tree bears bad (worthless) fruit. A good (healthy) tree cannot bear bad (worthless) fruit, nor can a bad (diseased) tree bear excellent fruit [worthy of admiration]. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. Therefore, you will fully know them by their fruits.

AMP Matthew 7:15-20

## **Spiritual Warfare** *You Will Know Them*

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "So then, you will know them by their fruits.

NASB Matthew 7:15-20

## **Spiritual Warfare** *You Will Recognize Them*

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

ESV Matthew 7:15-20

## **Spiritual Warfare** *You Will Know Them*

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

NKJV Matthew 7:15-20

## **Spiritual Warfare** *Look For Character*

"Be wary of false preachers who smile a lot, dripping with practiced sincerity. Chances are they are out to rip you off some way or other. Don't be impressed with charisma; look for character. Who preachers are is the main thing, not what they say. A genuine leader will never exploit your emotions or your pocketbook. These diseased trees with their bad apples are going to be chopped down and burned.

MSG Matthew 7:15-20

## **Spiritual Warfare** *You Can Detect Them*

"Beware of false teachers who come disguised as harmless sheep, but are wolves and will tear you apart. You can detect them by the way they act, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit. You need never confuse grapevines with thorn bushes or figs with thistles. Different kinds of fruit trees can quickly be identified by examining their fruit. A variety that produces delicious fruit never produces an inedible kind. And a tree producing an inedible kind can't produce what is good. So the trees having the inedible fruit are chopped down and thrown on the fire. Yes, the way to identify a tree or a person is by the kind of fruit produced.

NLB Matthew 7:15-20

## **Spiritual Warfare** *You Will Know These People*

"Be careful of false prophets. They come to you looking gentle like sheep, but they are really dangerous like wolves. You will know these people by what they do. Grapes don't come from thornbushes, and figs don't come from thorny weeds. In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. In the same way, you will know these false prophets by what they do.

NCV Matthew 7:15-20

# You Will Recognize Them

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Week \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Spiritual Warfare** – Matthew 7:15-20

**In Context:** *Read Matthew 7*

**Begin With Prayer:**

***Here I am Lord. I Am Listening.***

**Meditating On God's Word:** ***(What is God speaking to your heart?)***

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**Considering The Words:** ***(What words speak to your heart?)***

"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. | Do people | pick grapes | from thornbushes, | or figs | from thistles? | Likewise | every good tree | bears good fruit, | but a | bad tree | bears bad fruit. | A good tree | cannot bear | bad fruit, | and a | bad tree | cannot bear | good fruit. | Every tree | that | does not | bear good fruit | is cut down | and | thrown into | the fire. | Thus, | by their fruit | you will | recognize them. Matthew 7:15-20 (NIV)

**Praying The Scripture:** ***(What prayer from your heart will you write?)***

Lord, help me to be on guard against what is true and false and good and bad fruit. Use your word and your Holy Spirit to teach and me what is of you and what is not. May I and your people bear abundant fruit for your kingdom and bring glory to your name. Amen

**What It Means:** ***(What questions speak to your heart?)*** *(Suggested questions for small group discussion are in bold)*

How are you on guard against those who are false teachers?

When have you seen a false teacher lead people astray from the truth?

What will false teachers and false prophets appear to look like on the outside?

**What is a false teacher or false prophet really like on the inside?**

**How will God's word help you to know if someone is teaching and proclaiming the truth?**

How will the fruit of a person's life reveal their true nature?

**What are some examples of good and bad fruit that have helped you to identify true and false teachers?**

**Living It Out:** ***(What action step is God guiding your heart to take?)***

Allow God's word and the Holy Spirit to help you to discern what is true and false and good and bad fruit.

**Seeing It Happen:** ***(What are you trusting God for in your heart?)***

Have faith that the Lord will help you to identify and protect you from false teachers.

**Get Ready To Share:** ***(What can you share with others from your heart?)***

Share with another person or your small group how God's word has helped you to recognize what is true and false.

**Close With Prayer:**

***Quiet Yourself Before The Lord***

*Pause And Offer Prayers Of...*

*With An Attitude Of Faith Listen To What The Lord Wants To Say To You*

Adoration...

Thanksgiving...

Confession...

Intercession...

Petition...

**Journal**

*As You Quiet Yourself Before The Lord*

**What Do You Want To Say To Me Lord?**

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**What Prayers Are You Praying Today?**

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**Prayer Of Blessing**

*(What Prayer Of Blessing Can You Pray For Another?)*

*May you allow the Holy Spirit to help you to recognize bad fruit from false teachers.*

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**Prayer To Carry**

*(What Prayer Would You Like To Carry Throughout Your Day?)*

*Holy Spirit, help me to recognize bad fruit from false teachers.*

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**What Do You Want To Remember About Today?**

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**A Question To Ask God**

*(What Would You Like To Ask God?)*

*Holy Spirit, how will you help me to recognize bad fruit from false teachers?*

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