

BUILDING BLOCK #5: WATCH OUT FOR FALSE PROPHETS

Pastor Chad Gilligan | June 4, 2023

I. Be W.I.S.E.

W — Watch Out

Matthew 7:15 “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

A. FALSE PROPHETS ARE DECEPTIVE.

B. FALSE PROPHETS ARE DANGEROUS.

Acts 20:28-31 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹ So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

- ***The best thing to do with a wolf is to stand your ground.***

I — Investigate Their Fruit

Matthew 7:16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

Matthew 7:17-18 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

A. FOUR SIGNS OF A FALSE PROPHET

1. A False Prophet Makes Self Big

- They focus on what they want.

1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, ⁴ they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions ⁵ and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

2 Peter 2:1-3 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. ² Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. ³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

- They focus on what you want.

2 Timothy 4:2-4 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³ 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. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2. A False Prophet Makes God Small

- They often offer a solution of God, plus something else.

Ezekiel 13:22 Because you disheartened the righteous with your lies, when I had brought them no grief, and because you encouraged the wicked not to turn from their evil ways and so save their lives,

- They will cause you to question the goodness of God.
- Believing lies starts with questioning God.
- Is God big or small in your life?

3. A False Prophet Makes Sin Good

Ezekiel 13:22 Because you disheartened the righteous with your lies, when I had brought them no grief, and because you encouraged the wicked not to turn from their evil ways and so save their lives,

- They encourage evil.

Ezekiel 13:10 “Because they lead my people astray, saying, “Peace,” when there is no peace, and because, when a flimsy wall is built, they cover it with whitewash,

- They ignore judgment.

4. A False Prophet Makes Truth Bad

- They disregard the Word of God.

1 Timothy 4:1-10 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. ² Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. ³ They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. ⁴ For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵ because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. ⁶ If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. ⁷ Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. ⁸ For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. ⁹ This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance.

- They create conflict among the people of God.

2 Timothy 2:16-18 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. ¹⁷ Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸ who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.

2 Timothy 2:23-24 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. ²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

S — Search For Truth

Matthew 7:19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

A. TRUTH COMES WITH CONSEQUENCE.

1 John 4:1-6 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. ⁴ You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

B. WE ARE TO TEST FOR TRUTH.

E — Examine Your Own Fruit

Matthew 7:20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

A. IS THERE EVIDENCE IN YOUR LIFE OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Luke 6:43-45 No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. ⁴⁵ A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

B. DO YOUR WORDS REVEAL GOOD THINGS IN YOUR HEART?

C. THE BEST WAY TO IDENTIFY WHAT IS FALSE IS TO KNOW THE TRUTH.

2 Timothy 4:3-5 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. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵ But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.