

## **Week Seven: *What About...Fake Christians?***

### ***Matthew 7:15-23***

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. Read Matthew 7:15-23. What is Jesus' warning in verse 15?
2. We think of a prophet as someone who tells the future, but in the Bible prophets primarily speak out God's truth. Jesus' audience would remember false prophets of the Old Testament who said what would benefit themselves and called it God's Word. How does Jesus teach us to recognize a false prophet?
3. Why is it important to recognize false prophets?
4. What do you think a false prophet's "fruit" might look like today?
5. What resources do you have to assess false teaching and bad fruit?
6. What does Jesus tell us to do when we encounter false teaching (v.1)?
7. Jesus is very concerned that his followers be on the alert for what seems good on the surface but is actually dangerous for them. He is intentional to guard his followers from harm. End your FIFTEEN in thanksgiving for Jesus' wise and trustworthy care for your wellbeing.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. Read Matthew 7:15-20. Have you ever mistaken one thing for something else?
9. Why would people be looking for grapes in a thorn bush or figs from a thistle?
10. What may look good from a distance is not always what it appears. What do you do when you discover something or someone is not what you thought?
11. What is the difference between evaluating a false teacher's fruit and evaluating a person's personal connection to Jesus?
12. Read the preceding verses in this chapter (Matthew 7:1-14). Does Jesus seem more concerned that his followers evaluate their own spiritual condition or the spiritual condition of others?

13. End your FIFTEEN evaluating your own spiritual condition based on Jesus' words in this chapter. Ask God to help you see yourself as he sees you.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

14. Read Matthew 7:15-23 out loud or listen to it on your Bible app. What strikes you in a new way?
15. Jesus tells his followers to recognize false prophets by the results of their lives and words. What kind of words and deeds does Jesus describe in verses 21-22?
16. Does this surprise you? Do these seem like the words and deeds of a false teacher?
17. From this passage, would you say a person without a relationship with Jesus can do good, even miraculous things?
18. What does not make a person a part of God's family or kingdom? What does?
19. If God's will is for all to be saved through Jesus Christ, who enters the kingdom of God?
20. Spend your remaining FIFTEEN in worship. Praise God for his desire and plan to rescue you, unrelated to your words and deeds.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

21. Read Matthew 7:21-23. What do you think Jesus means when he says, "I never knew you"?
22. How does this connect to doing the will of God from yesterday's FIFTEEN (v. 21)?
23. In the Bible, to know someone is more than awareness of their existence. Knowing is deeply intimate and personal. How would you describe a relationship of being known by Jesus?
24. In your experience, can you always accurately discern a sincere connection to Jesus?
25. How would you describe your relationship to Jesus? How would Jesus describe it?

26. End your FIFTEEN in awe of a God who wants a deep personal relationship with you. If you know a song that reflects that kind of love, listen to it or sing it.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

27. Reread Matthew 7:15-23. When does Jesus say his judgment of people's relationship with him takes place? (It's subtle; see verse 22.)

28. When do you think "that day" is?

29. Read Matthew 13:24-29 and 13:36-43. Why aren't the servants allowed to pull up the weeds?

30. Who oversees the separation of the wheat and weeds, and when?

31. While Jesus' followers are to be discerning about what is truth and life, it is not our job to discern the validity of another's love for Jesus. End this FIFTEEN in prayer. Talk with God about discernment and love. Who needs to hear about a beautiful, rescuing relationship with Jesus?