

Beware of false prophets

Matthew 7:15 (NIV)

True and False Prophets

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

A wolf in sheep's clothing is symbolic for someone who outwardly looks harmless and kind with good intentions but inwardly is full of hate, evil and deceit.

We are warned of this false teacher in the book of Matthew in the Bible.

This person seeks to twist truth and Scripture to fit their own agenda.

They deceive their audience with false prophecy and teachings.

Wolves teach false doctrine while appearing attractive.

Sometimes the truth can get twisted in this life. Blurred. Manipulated.

Lines get crossed.

Things once seen as black and white may start to appear grayer.

It may seem harder to recognize what's true or what's false.

What's light and what's dark?

At the heart of the battle, we face every day, is a real enemy who prowls around seeking someone to devour.

(1 Pet. 5:8) He'll stop at nothing to gain new ground.

He and his forces have quoted God's words since the beginning of time, twisting it, trying their best to manipulate the truth, their main goal only to deceive and lead astray.

They know who God is and the Bible says they “**shudder**” in fear at His name. (James 2:19)

They know that God alone will be victorious and no matter what traps are used today to try to distract us away from Him, in the end, they will not win.

1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

James 2:19 (NIV)

19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Many times the wolf disguised in sheep's clothing knows God's Word better than we thought, crafting and twisting it so much, we might even find ourselves feeling confused over what real truth is anymore.

So how can we spot a wolf in sheep's clothing and how can we see through their deception to protect ourselves?



First, let's look at three signs that help you detect one of these individuals.

Signs of a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

1. They Love Power and Themselves

This leader will try to gain and hold onto power for their own selfish reasons.

Relationships are used and abused solely for the purpose of gaining more control.

A wolf in sheep's clothing will use their position to create rules and standards that were never a part of God's plan.

They do not want to empower people with freedom and truth but rather keep them under his power with boundaries.

2. They Refuse Correction and Respond to Criticism with Anger

When you confront a wolf in sheep's clothing, the response will not be one of humility and repentance.

This person will respond with anger, bitterness, and often turn the criticism back on you.

Their main goal in life is self-preservation and will not let anyone get in the way of their authority.

A wolf will appear meek in front of an audience but will show aggression when confronted.

3. They Use Emotions to Get What They Want

A wolf knows the power of words and emotions to manipulate people.

They use guilt, shame, and fear to keep others under their power.

A wolf knows when to speak sweet words of compliments and when to use cutting words to fuel insecurity.

THEY LACK THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Lack the Fruit of the Spirit**Galatians 5:22-23** tell us what the characteristics and traits are in the life of a person who is following the Holy Spirit.

The wolf does not produce the fruit of the Spirit.

They may be able to appear loving and gentle in front of people but behind closed doors, they lack kindness, gentleness, self-control, and other fruits.

A wolf gives into sinful natures and will display them when feeling attacked.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

22 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.

The best way to expose the false lies of the enemy is to know the Truth of the One voice who matters most.

Know the real and you'll know what is false.



One way federal agents are trained to detect counterfeit money is by learning how to spot what is "fake," by understanding first what is "real."

They study real money, for hours and hours, every part of it.

They know it so well when the counterfeit is set before them, they immediately know that it's false.

Because they know the real thing.

And so it is with us.

As we keep pressing in to know God, who is real, who is Truth, and we set our minds on His Word, spending time there, meditating on it, eventually we become very trained in detecting the "fake."



How to Spot and Respond to a Sheep's Clothing:

5 Reminders from God's Word

1. Watch out.

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep ravenous wolves.

Matt. 7:15’s clothing but inwardly are God reminds us in His Word to “watch out, ” “beware, ” to stay awake.

He knows and understands how difficult it can be to fight this spiritual battle.

Some days we get weary, or we get so busy and distracted, we’re not watching anymore for ways we might get tripped up.

But he tells us, “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.”

1 Cor. 16:13 *God desires the best for us and knows how important it is for us to live aware.*

He freely gives us his strength and protection to stand strong each day, he will never leave us defenseless on our own.

2. Know the real and you'll know the fake too.

“You will recognize them by their fruits...”

Matt. 7:16 *God's Word is clear, it says they'll be known by their fruits.*

Not by how much money they have.

Not by how many followers they have.

Not by how many books they have written or the great things they have done.

They'll be known by what fruit exists in their lives.

Is there love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control?

Are they sharing the gospel of Christ, and pointing others to the forgiveness and freedom that He alone can bring?

What do they say about who Jesus is?

What do they believe about the authority of God's Word?

We may have to look more closely than what is on the outside.

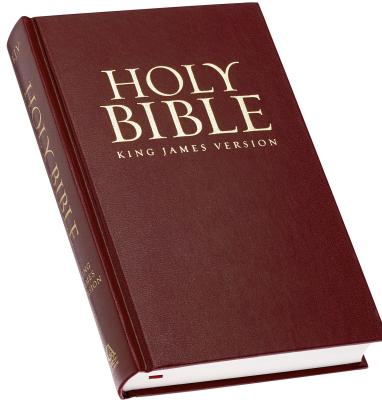
The world often views “success” and popularity differently than how God sees.

What's at the heart?

Eventually, the truth of who they are will be brought into the light.

“He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart.”

1 Cor. 4:5 We can trust His word to be true and rely on Him for guiding us.



3. Know God's word and you'll know when it's being twisted and manipulated.

"For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.

Their end will correspond to their deeds."

2 Cor. 11:14-15 *Sometimes deception may be hidden well, manipulated and cunning, for the Bible makes clear that even Satan disguises himself as light.*

If we don't know His truth, we will never know when we're being deceived.

Study it.

Meditate on His words.

Guard them in your heart.

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Ps. 119:11

Press in close to God. Spend time in His presence. Pray, talk to Him, listen to His voice through His word.

Staying close to His side, living under the protection of His armor and covering, helps us to know when we're staring straight into falsehood.

4. Trust the discernment and wisdom of God's Spirit living through your life.



“...false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

See, I have told you ahead of time.” Matt. 24:23-25

God gives us His Spirit to guide us in discernment and wisdom.

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...”

John 16:13 He wants more than anyone, for us to be guided by Truth.

He tells us “I have told you ahead of time,” so that we will be prepared and watching.

Walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

We don't have to wander through life blindly, unsure of what's true and what's not.

When we're daily asking for his leadership and direction, submitting to his authority over our lives, we can trust the leadership of His Spirit.

When feeling unsettled or sensing something is just not “quite right,” we can press in close to Him, knowing He's faithful to guide us.

5. Surround yourself with other believers you know and trust.



“Knowing this...scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.” **2 Pet. 3:3**

Use caution in who you listen to and choose to take guidance from.

Sometimes when we're in a place where it's hard to see clearly, maybe because of our own pressing worries or cares, we need a trusted friend who can speak the truth in places we need to hear.

This is often true in marriage.

Learning to listen to one another and take into consideration what the other might be sensing or discerning can often have great power in saving us from a heap of trouble up ahead if we'll only heed the warnings that someone we love may speak our way.

“Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.” **Prov. 11:14**

Recognize that sometimes believers may simply disagree.

It doesn't necessarily mean that one is a "false teacher," but only that both might be doing their best to follow God's Word and what He's leading, they just may not agree on everything.

We see this in Scripture and we see it all around us today.

Let's not waste time-fighting against ourselves, but recognize who the real enemy is.

We can choose to give each other grace and kindness.

We can hold on to what matters most, and pursue unity in the body of Christ. Standing strong together, on Christ the Solid Rock.

*"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." **John 8:32***

What You Should Know About the Prosperity Gospel

May 3, 2017

Last week U.S. Postal Service inspectors and IRS criminal investigators raided the offices of **Benny Hinn**, the infamous faith healer and "health and wealth" preacher.

Here is what should know about Hinn and the prosperity gospel movement.



What is the prosperity gospel?



The prosperity gospel (also known as the “health and wealth gospel” or by its most popular brand, the “Word of Faith” movement) is a perversion of the gospel of Jesus that claims that God rewards increases in faith with increases in health and/or wealth.

As Stephen Hunt explains, In the forefront is the doctrine of the assurance of “divine” physical health and prosperity through faith.

In short, this means that “health and wealth” are the automatic divine right of all Bible-believing Christians and may be procreated by faith as part of the package of salvation, since the Atonement of Christ includes not just the removal of sin, but also the removal of sickness and poverty.

What makes the prosperity gospel a false gospel?



David W. Jones outlines five errors of prosperity gospel teaching:

1. The Abrahamic covenant is a means to material entitlement.
2. Jesus's atonement extends to the "sin" of material poverty.
3. Christians give in order to gain material compensation from God.
4. Faith is a self-generated spiritual force that leads to prosperity.
5. Prayer is a tool to force God to grant prosperity.

"In light of Scripture, the prosperity gospel is fundamentally flawed," Jones says. "At bottom, it is a false gospel because of its faulty view of the relationship between God and man."

Simply put, if the prosperity gospel is true, grace is obsolete, God is irrelevant, and man is the measure of all things.

Whether they're talking about the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, giving, faith, or prayer, prosperity teachers turn the relationship between God and man into a *quid pro quo* transaction."

Where did the prosperity gospel come from?



The prosperity gospel originated as an offshoot of Pentecostalism in post-World War II America.

While it started in local congregations and in tent revivals, the movement gained a larger following through the use of radio and television, and became firmly entrenched in the 1980s with the rise of “televangelism.”

While not all prosperity gospel preachers are Pentecostal or charismatic (and most charismatic and Pentecostal Christians are not associated with the prosperity gospel), the movement is still largely connected to revivalist and charismatic churches.

This has made it easier for the movement to gain traction in Africa, South America, and other areas of the world where Pentecostalism is rapidly expanding.

Who preaches the prosperity gospel?



The man who could be considered the father of modern prosperity gospel teaching is Oral Roberts.

The faith-healing evangelist became so influential that he started his own school, Oral Roberts University (ORU).

At the height of his influence, Roberts oversaw a ministry that brought in \$110 million in annual revenue.

Kenneth Copeland, a student at ORU who served as a pilot and chauffeur for Oral Roberts, also became one of the most notorious (and wealthiest) of prosperity preachers.

These men paved the way for the televangelists who became famous in the 1980s, including Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, Benny Hinn, Pat Robertson, and Robert Tilton.

Today, some of the best-known prosperity teachers are Creflo Dollar, T. D. Jakes, Guillermo Maldonado, Joel Osteen, and Paula White.

How can we identify a prosperity gospel preacher?

In a 2014 sermon, John Piper outlined six keys to detecting the prosperity gospel:

1. The absence of a serious doctrine of the biblical necessity and normalcy of suffering, the absence of a doctrine of suffering.
2. The absence of a clear and prominent doctrine of self-denial is a tip off that something is amiss.
3. The absence of serious exposition of Scripture.
4. The absence of dealing with tensions in Scripture.
5. Church leaders who have exorbitant lifestyles.
6. A prominence of self and a marginalization of the greatness of God.

(See also: The Story Behind John Piper's Most Famous Attack on the Prosperity Gospel)



**WORLD RICHEST PASTORS
+ THEIR NETWORTH**



Who in America is attracted to the prosperity gospel?

In 2015, YouGov surveyed 1,000 American adults who describe themselves as either “born again” or as an evangelical Christian, and asked their views about particular preachers and whether wealth is a sign of God’s favor.

On the question, “Do you believe that prayer can make you wealthier?” 15 percent of whites, 42 percent of blacks, and 25 percent of Hispanics answered “yes.”

On the question, “Is wealth a sign of God’s favor?” 9 percent of white, 34 percent of blacks, and 24 percent of Hispanics said “definitely” or “probably.”

When it comes to black prosperity gospel preachers, black evangelicals were much more likely than either Hispanic or white evangelicals to have a “very favorable” or “somewhat favorable” opinion.

Seventy percent of blacks had a favorable opinion of T. D. Jakes compared to 10 percent for whites and 24 percent for Hispanics.

(Most whites and Hispanics answered “not sure”—71 percent and 64 percent, compared to 15 percent for blacks.)

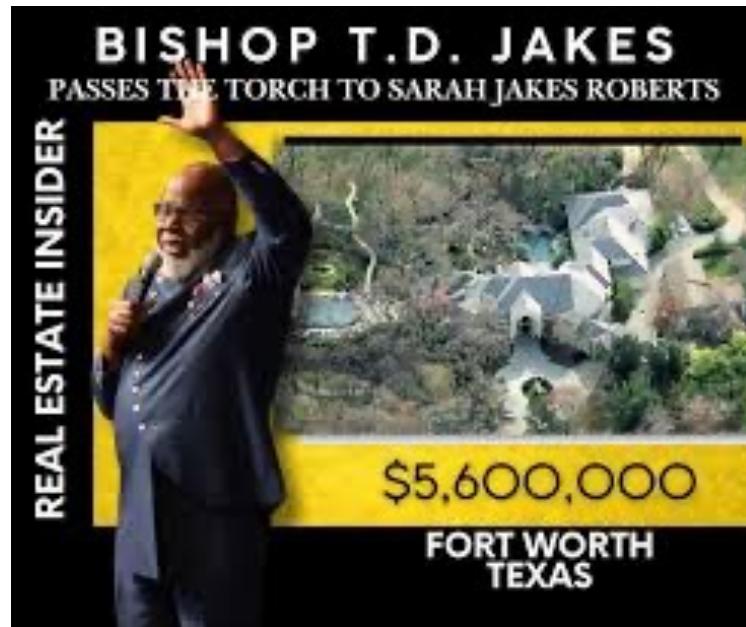
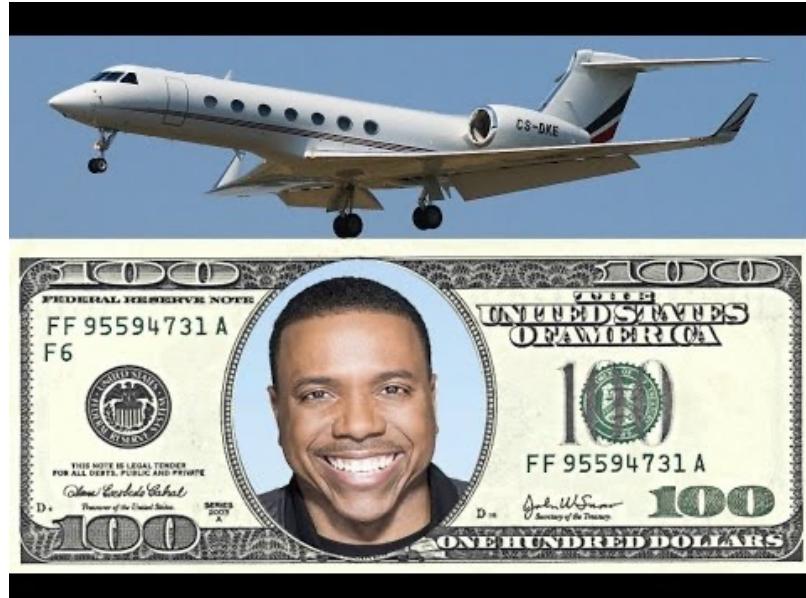
The results were much lower for Creflo Dollar: 28 percent of black evangelicals held a favorable view, compared to 3 percent for whites and 8 percent for Hispanics. (Most whites and Hispanics answered “not sure”—72 percent and 78 percent, compared to 26 percent for blacks.)

However, black evangelicals also held more favorable opinions of prosperity preachers who were not black.

They were more likely to have a “very” or “somewhat” favorable view of: Joel O’steen (51 percent, compared to 22 percent for whites and 39 percent for Hispanics), Pat Robertson (41 percent, compared to 17 percent for whites and 14 percent for Hispanics), Benny Hinn (23 percent, compared to 4 percent for whites and 12 percent for Hispanics), and

Kenneth Copeland (34 percent, compared to 8 percent for whites and 12 percent for Hispanics).

Additionally, one in four black and Hispanic evangelicals believe it is acceptable for religious leaders to become wealthy through their religious work compared to one in seven white evangelicals.



Where can I find resources on addressing the prosperity gospel?

You can download a free copy of *Prosperity: Seeking the True Gospel*, and find *articles and videos by TGC, 9Marks, Desiring God, and others on the internet*.

It has been reported in the media at large that some evangelical Mega-Pastors:

1. Have bought Multiple Private Planes for the “Ministry”
2. Have used the money allocated, to advancing, the Gospel on (TV) around the world, paid by their congregations and (have & are) “piggybacking” on Church Monies, to promote and sell their books, CDs, Movies, Concerts, and they make MILLIONS of Dollars by Defrauding GOD, and His Saints, out of the Tithes & Offerings.
3. Pastors that live in Multi-Million Dollar Mansions that have apparently made their “Money” by pilfering Tithes & Offerings, from their congregation(s) in one way or another.
4. Pastor(s) that COMPEL, their congregants, to sign “ Direct Deposit,” authorization forms, in order to become a member of their “Church.”
5. Friends, Tithes & Offerings, should come from a willing Heart, and not by intimidation, threats (that you’re going to hell or lose your salvation, etc).
6. Amazing how “Christ Jesus,” walked, or rode on the backs of Donkeys, as His mode of transportation, lived in a normal house, not a Multi-Million Dollar Mansion, didn’t fly in Private Jets, didn’t compel people to sign “ Direct Deposit,” authorization Forms to hear HIM “ The Preacher of all Preachers,” a shekel.
7. Some of these Mega-Pastor’s apparently have to Fly First Class, if you want them to come to your Church, for a “ Seminar,” and you Must place them in a 5 Star Hotel, and pay them an Honorarium, of approximately \$25,000 - \$50,000, in order for them to come and preach their “ Falsehoods, Lies, and Boast of the Wealth that God has given them,” what audacity!

8. Friends, if your Church is misusing and abusing, their Tithes & Offerings, on things or items, that they shouldn't be spent on, then I encourage you to either stand up and contend for the faith or LEAVE the church, and ask the Lord to Help you find A God Fearing, God Teaching, and God Serving Church.

I ask you to leave in peace, so as to not be a stumbling block for newly converted saints.

9. Amazing how “Christ Jesus,” walked, or rode on the backs of Donkeys, as His mode of transportation, lived in a normal house, not a Multi-Million Dollar Mansion, didn’t fly in Private Jets, didn’t compel people to sign “ Direct Deposit,” authorization forms to hear HIM “ The Preacher of all Preachers,” a shekel.

1 Peter 4:17 -New International Version

17 For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?



If you are the Angel of one of His Church's and you know, that what this entire post says applies to You, I ask you to take a Minute and Reflect on what you've been doing and TODAY, My Friends, you can turn a corner, and ask for forgiveness of your sins, and start anew, with our Lord !



** Wherever you read in the Bible, and it says, and to the Angel of such and such church The word Angel, in the Greek language means, A Messenger, so, all pastors are the Angel of their respective Churches.

How do we obtain the Forgiveness of our Sins?:



How do we get right with God, regardless of our individual sins?

Just say this Prayer and all of your sins will be forgotten, and you will have Eternal life, with Christ Jesus, in Heaven:

Lord Jesus, I repent of all my sins, and I ask you to come into my life a be my Lord and Savior.

Friends, if you prayed that prayer, I believe that you are born again, and you have ever lasting life, get in a good bible teaching church, and may you keep growing, in the Lord, and may HE use you to help save many souls for His Kingdom !

In, Jesus Mighty Name!

Rev. Jesus Del Rio, Ed