

NewSpring Church Personal Study Guide

The Gospel — Week 2 — Really?

Matthew 7:15-16 warns us that appearances can be deceiving. “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.”

Luke 18:9-14 says, “To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable; ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself; “God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers— or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.” But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.’”

- What are some external things we see that cause us to assume people are Christian? According to the Scripture, what are the identifying marks of someone who belongs to Jesus?
- What is this fruit Christ is talking about? (Galatians 5:22-23) What is our role in judging other people’s lives?
- Luke 22:46-47 says, “Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.”
- Why does it seem that religious people have a harder time with Jesus than do “sinners”? How do you keep from becoming the person that Jesus is warning us against?

1 John 5:13 says, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

- Why do people doubt their salvation? What would you say to encourage a friend who doubts their salvation?
- Why is it impossible to love God and hate people at the same time? (1 John 2:9, 1 John 4:19-21)

What kinds of fruit are you bearing? The bible says that a bad tree will bear bad fruit and a good tree will produce good fruit. “A man ought to examine himself” to see what kind of fruit is being produced. If we judge ourselves now we will avoid judgment of God. For “every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”