

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

INTRODUCTION TO EVANGELISM

LESSON 11: BEWARE THE FALSE GOSPEL

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled Introduction to Evangelism. This series of lessons aims to prepare participants to effectively share the Gospel with others. Understanding how God equips us for ministry and how to prepare our Gospel message for various worldviews will help us bring the unchanging message of the hope found in Jesus Christ to a world that does not yet know Him.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All other content is © 2019 Trans World Radio Canada, and may be used in any way you like as long as you use it with the purpose of reaching the world for Christ and do not charge for the use of the material. See more license details at www.discipleshipessentials.org/licensing.



INTRODUCTION TO EVANGELISM

LESSON 11: BEWARE THE FALSE GOSPEL

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to learn how to recognize false teachers and false prophets. Participants will learn to ask the Holy Spirit for discernment, and learn practical ways to deal with false teachers.

LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson will be of particular importance if your community faces false teaching, cults, or those who preach a different gospel. These may be specific cults, or even church groups who have drifted away from the true Gospel. It is important for believers engaging in evangelism to be aware of how they may be perceived by others, and to help people recognize the difference between a Biblical Gospel and one made up by man. When possible, use examples of false teachers that your participants may be aware of. If necessary, take some time to outline how their belief differs from the Biblical Gospel.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ Have you ever encountered someone who was part of a cult or believed a distorted message of the Bible?
- ❖ What do cults and false teachers promise in order to attract converts?
- ❖ How can you be sure that your beliefs are true and not based on wishful thinking or the words of skilled speakers?
- ❖ What is the difference between a cult or religious system, and a community of Christians? Is Christianity a religious system or a faith? What is the difference?

STUDY

TEACH

- ❖ **What is a False Prophet?** A false prophet is someone whose teaching is contrary to God's Word. They are not always easily recognizable. You must be on guard. Although they may seem harmless, the message they give will not lead to eternal life and salvation.



- **Biblical Warnings About False Prophets:** Look at the following verses together. As a group, discuss what a false prophet might look like and identify the dangers they represent.
 - “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15).
 - “Not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:7-8).
 - “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, 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” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).
 - “And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray” (Matthew 24:11).

❖ **How To Recognize A False Prophet:**

- You may be familiar with a large organized group that gives a false message of salvation and is led by a false prophet, but you may not be. They are not always easy to recognize. Some false prophets are a part of an organized group and some are not. Make note of the reference of a ravenous wolf that comes dressed in sheep’s clothing.
- The following actions could identify someone as a false prophet:
 - Places other books above or in equal importance with the Bible.
 - Claims to have special insights that are not revealed in the Bible.
 - Claims that salvation comes through works or rituals.
 - Focus is on the leader and not on God.
 - Teachings are not in agreement with the Bible.
 - The approach to the Bible is not balanced and is focussed on a few particular books or passages.
 - False prophets will often seek to control people’s lives and daily routines.

❖ **How To Protect Yourself Against False Prophets**

God’s Word – Consider the central truth of God’s Word.

- **The Saving Message**
 - The focus is on the cross and Jesus dying for us there (1 Corinthians 1:17-18).
 - We do not gain salvation by works (Ephesians 2:8-9).
 - Salvation is sealed by the Spirit when a person believes in the message (Ephesians 1:13).
- **The Saving Person**
 - The only way to salvation is through Jesus (John 14:6; 3:16).
 - Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse our sin (1 John 1:7).



- Jesus is God (John 20:28; Romans 9:5; 1 John 5:20).
- Those who deny Jesus are false prophets (2 Peter 2:1).

➤ **The Saving God**

- There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6,8).
- He exists in three forms: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

❖ **What Not To Do:**

- Don't argue or debate.
- Don't rely on your own strength.
- Don't see them as a personal challenge or threat.
- Don't see it as your sole responsibility to change their point of view.
- Don't be afraid to disagree, even if they hold a position of power or status.

TASK

- ❖ *As a group, discuss what happens when you believe something to be correct and someone argues with you about it. You may wish to be creative and set up a small discussion or debate to illustrate this point. You can choose a frivolous topic such as what order should you put on your clothes in the morning, or what is the most delicious food. Now consider how your response would be different if that same person asked you questions about what you believe and thoughtfully shared their point of view.*

TEACH

❖ **What To Do Instead:**

- Be confident but not arrogant.
 - Engage in discussion. Ask them questions about their beliefs in order to encourage them to examine their doctrine against the Bible.
 - Rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance.
 - Be confident that God works in hearts and hears our prayers.
 - Recognize this is a spiritual battle. Ask friends to pray for you when you plan on witnessing to someone you believe to be a false prophet or is involved with one.
- As a group, read through Ephesians 6:10-18. Recognize that these verses require them to take action. Discuss each piece of armour and what it means to them practically.
- Read 1 John 4:2-3. Discuss the implications of these verses.



DISCUSSION

- ❖ As a group, identify a false religious system or false prophet that everyone would be familiar with. From where does this person's authority come? How does this system contradict God's Word on salvation? How would this system or prophet describe Christ? What spiritual need cannot be met by this person or system?
- ❖ How can you effectively discuss truth with followers of a false teacher? What do you need to do to prepare yourself for these discussions?
- ❖ What is the difference between discussion and debate? How can you ensure a conversation stays calm and not combative?

PRAYER

Pray as a group for the Holy Spirit to give guidance and wisdom when it comes to identifying false prophets. Thank God for His Word of truth, and make a commitment to learn from it and refer directly to it when witnessing to false prophets.