

True or False: Building Discernment in an Age of Deception

October 8, 2023 | Acts 13:4-5 | Pastor Mike Foster

Notes on Acts 13:

Some takeaways:

- Not every powerful teaching is true
- Intelligent people can be deceived
- False teaching must be discerned, rejected, and confronted
- True teaching must be discerned, received, and shared

Comparing false and true teaching based on 2 Peter 2 and Acts 13

False Teaching (2 Peter 2)	True Teaching (Acts 13)
Destructive in nature – ends in slavery and destruction for teachers and hearers (vv. 1, 3, 12, 19)	Productive in nature – ends in freedom and abundant life (vv. 48, 52)
Intentionally deceptive and secretive (vv. 1, 3, 14)	Plainly honest and open
Denies and/or diminishes Jesus (v. 1)	Exalts and/or centralizes Jesus (vv. 23-41)
Emphasizes the works of man	Emphasizes the grace of God (v. 43)
Characterized by immorality – appeals to flesh (vv. 14, 18)	Characterized by righteousness – appeals to faith
Rooted in fabricated stories (v. 3)	Rooted in real history (vv. 16-23)
Driven by greed and self-interest (vv. 3, 14)	Driven by mission and self-sacrifice (vv. 44, 50-51)

Group Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you most from the message?
2. Play an icebreaker game together – “two truths and a lie” – share three statements about yourself including one lie, and see if the group can guess which one is a lie.
3. Share about a time when you were deceived? What happened? How did you feel?
4. Have you ever been exposed to false teaching? Or have you known others who are under false teaching? What is so enticing about false teaching?
5. Read 2 Peter 2:1-3. In what ways is false teaching exploiting?
6. Read 1 John 4:1-3 – According to John, how can we recognize the spirit of God in teaching?
7. In what ways have you observed false teachers to downplay or diminish or outright deny Jesus? How can we ensure that our teaching always prioritizes and magnifies Jesus? How does Paul emphasize the life and work of Jesus in his message in Acts 13?
8. On a practical level, how could you help someone if you were concerned about the teaching they were receiving?
9. What practical steps can you take to protect yourself from false teaching?
10. How can a Christian confront false teaching while also growing in compassion for those who are being affected by false teaching?

For Further Reflection

Read 2 Peter 2, 1 John 4:1-6, Matthew 7:15-20, Acts 20:28-31
Study Acts 13 in more detail – <https://bit.ly/acts13study>
Read “7 Traits of False Teachers” – <https://bit.ly/falseteacherstrait>
Read “8 Ways to Spot False Teachers” – <https://bit.ly/spotfalseteachers>
Browse the sections on world religions at www.carm.org.
Great book for kids ages 9 to 13 – *How do we know that Christianity is really true?* By Chris Morphew – <https://bit.ly/really-true>

