

Know the Danger

2 Peter 2:1-3

Truth: Feasting on God's Word is critical to our growth in godliness.

Main Idea: The church of Jesus is always at risk of being entrapped by sweet talking false teachers. God reserves His harshest judgment on such people and urges us to keep ourselves under the influence of Gospel teachers.

A Mugshot of False Teachers.

1. Their Location

*"I know that after my departure fierce wolves **will come in among you**, not sparing the flock; and **from among your own selves** will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Acts 20:31 Therefore be alert," (Acts 20:29-31 [ESV](#))*

"But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'""(Matthew 4:4 [ESV](#)).

"as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith.'"" (Romans 1:17 [ESV](#))

Truth: We will be deeply influenced by the voices to whom we give our ear.

Truth: The devil loves to work inside the church. Within the body of Christ, the devil finds us a playground with lots of fun slides and swings to use.

2. Their Sneakiness

*"For certain **people have crept in unnoticed** who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4 [ESV](#))*

*"Beware of false prophets, who come to you **in sheep's clothing** but inwardly are ravenous wolves." (Matthew 7:15 [ESV](#))*

How are false teachers sneaky?

1. They often hide the fulness of what they really believe so that their new doctrines will be digested small bite by small bite without distress. That is sneaky.
2. They often use emotionally pleasing means to teach false doctrine (music, stories, emotional appeals). That is sneaky.
3. They often slip the rotten meat of false doctrine in between two slices of wholesome bread. That is sneaky.
4. They often intentionally avoid the God-given authority of elders so as not to be held accountable or confronted by them. That is sneaky.
5. They often leverage relationships through sympathetic stories of the pain in their lives in order to gain loyalties inside the church. That is sneaky.
6. They often target the most emotionally or spiritually vulnerable in the church body, making them feel understood, in order to gain a foothold in the church. That is sneaky.

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1 [ESV](#))

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28 [ESV](#))

Principle: Just as the church is not to be a safe place for people who would harm children so the church is not to be a safe place for false teachers.

3. Their Denials

Denial #1: False teachers often deny the Person and work of Jesus in some significant way.

***“By this you know the Spirit of God:** every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.” (1 John 4:2–3 [ESV](#))*

Three key doctrines regarding Jesus are in view:

- A. Jesus is our pre-existent God.
- B. Jesus is fully man and fully God.
- C. Jesus made an atoning sacrifice for our sin on the cross.

Key idea: False teaching diminishes Jesus and His work. Jesus, both His Person and His work, is central to the Gospel.

Denial #2: False teachers often deny the necessity of practical holiness.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:15-17)

4. Their Fruit

*“I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, **and by smooth talk and flattery** they deceive the hearts of the naive.” (Romans 16:17-18 [ESV](#))*

5. Their End

Practical Steps to deepen the church grasp upon the Gospel:

1. Rejoice in listening to the apostles teaching together with your local church and in your own physical families.
2. Pray for elders/pastors who teach the Word.
3. Love the teaching of sound doctrine.
4. Examine the scriptures to see if what is taught is true.
5. Be prepared for ridicule by worldly people . . . many whom are in the church.