

THEME: Guard Against Deception

LOOKING BACK

- What was the most important thing you did or heard from the last session?

CONNECT

Spot the Fake

Resources

Bibles, 10 notecards, two letter size (A4) pieces of paper, pens

Icebreaker Activity - Know What's True

Things to Prepare: Write two signs on letter size (A4) papers: "Real Jesus" and "Fake Jesus"

Prepare 10 notecards with the following written on them. Mix them up and place them face-down.

Jesus teaches only about love.	Jesus teaches about God's righteousness.
Jesus gives us health and wealth.	Jesus gives salvation, hope, peace, and joy.
Jesus never says anything negative.	Jesus warns of sin, judgment, and hell.
Jesus is loved and accepted by the world.	Jesus is hated and despised by the world.
Jesus serves our will, not God's will.	Jesus serves God the Father's will.
Jesus hates to offend people.	Jesus offends the world with the Truth.

Activity:

Did you know that the way many people think about Jesus is nothing like who Jesus actually is? God calls us to follow the real biblical Jesus. This fake Jesus is not our Jesus of the Bible. Let each person choose (at least) one notecard at random and place their card under one of the two signs: **Real Jesus** or **Fake Jesus**. Once everyone has done this, we'll discuss it together to see if we agree.

Discuss

- The fake Jesus is not the authentic Jesus. It is a counterfeit (imitation) Jesus. Yet, many people don't realize that they are believing a lie.
- This is deception, built upon counterfeits and lies. There is a lot of deception in the world today, and it is not just about Jesus. Deceived people don't know that they are being deceived because counterfeits often look like the real thing. Think about counterfeit (fake) money. Sometimes, people need special machines to be able to detect counterfeit money.
- In the case of Jesus, we need to be able to tell whether He is the authentic Jesus of the Bible. How can we know? We need to look into God's Word.

TRUTH TO KNOW

Faith Focus: Jesus Warned Us About Deception

Introduction

We want to help you know the Truth and will do our best to tell you what is true, but you don't just need to take our word. You need to read it in the Bible for yourself. So we will open the Bible and read the Truth each time we meet. This week's "Truth to Know" is found in **Matthew 24:3-5, 11, 24**.

Did you know the Bible tells us to be on our guard against deception in the last days?

Background to This Bible Passage

In **Matthew 24:1-2**, Jesus publicly declared that the Temple would be destroyed. He said that not one stone would be left upon another. This was shocking news, even to the disciples. Later, as Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples came to Him to ask Him more questions about this.

The Unfolding Story - Your Interactive Teaching

Read **Matthew 24:3-5, 11, 24**.

- The disciples asked Jesus when the Temple would be destroyed and what signs they should look for to know when He would return. What did Jesus warn them about? *To be careful that no one deceives them and that many will come in His name, claiming to be the Messiah.*
- Deception is serious. Do you think it is already happening? *Discuss examples of deception.*
- The Bible says that it will get worse. Jesus gave warnings, especially for those of us living in these last days before His return. Deception is dangerous because it misleads people. Deception leads people astray - to come off the path that Jesus wants them to be on - and eventually to fall away from faith in Jesus.
- When we follow Jesus, we are walking on a path behind Him. He is our shield, our guide, and our filter. He protects us from danger, helps us sift through things, and to know if they are true. He shows us the way to walk.
- The path that we follow Jesus on is the Word of God. We are to be spending time each day reading the Bible. Let's look together at **Hebrews 5:11-14**. It speaks of having our *senses trained* by constant use and daily practice of living how Jesus teaches us to live. Training our senses is something that happens over time and with practice. Having our senses trained is critical for these days when deception is increasing.
- What causes people to become spiritually dull? *When people are not having their senses trained by spending time in the Word - Deception. When people make choices to disobey God's commands - Disobedience. These choices turn them away from God, making it harder to hear His voice. They are led off the path and into another direction, away from God.*
- Read **1 Peter 5:8**. Who is trying to pull us off God's path? *The enemy, satan.*
- **Ephesians 6:11** tells us to put on the full armor of God so that we can take our stand against the devil's schemes. Jesus is our full armor. He is our shield and the one who helps us to walk in strength, faith, Truth, and peace.
- **Jeremiah 6:16-17** tells us that we must choose the Ancient Path. What can we do practically to choose to stay on the path behind Jesus? *Follow Jesus carefully - pray, read the Bible, listen to the Holy Spirit and wise counselors who love and follow Jesus.*

Activity Suggestion - Be Careful How We Walk

Aim: To practice walking on God's path in a time of increasing deception.

Things to Prepare: Have a Bible handy and put down a long carpet, cloth, or paper representing a path to walk on. You can also imagine the path or use furniture to define it. Then, place some obstacles on the path that need to be avoided or moved away.

Activity – Act Out What It Looks Like to Be Walking On God's Ancient Path:

- **The One on the Path:** One person will walk on the path, carrying a Bible. You may want to blindfold them to show that we walk by faith, not sight. Doing so means they must carefully listen as they walk along the path.
- **Jesus:** One person will represent Jesus, walking just ahead of the person on the path. Jesus will be turning around and warning not to listen to lies.
- **Deceiving Voices on the Side:** A couple of people can stand on the side of the path, representing deceiving voices, trying to make the person hit an obstacle or leave the path.
- Discuss the person on the path's options and then act out the different scenarios. The one walking on the path needs to decide which voices to listen to.
- What other voices could you add to the scenario? For example, wise counsel voices who try to persuade people to avoid obstacles, stay on the path, and keep listening to Jesus. Or a Peer Pressure Person who tries to convince people to run ahead of Jesus instead of following behind Him.
- What else could you change? For example, each time the person ignores wise counsel and/or Jesus' voice, the volume of those voices becomes lower. It becomes harder to hear warnings over time as they are ignored. Or the person walks with their Bible closed, open, or reading it. Or a fog appears that represents confusion.
- Act out the scenarios a few times as you discuss how people could respond.

Discuss - Choosing to Stay On the Ancient Path

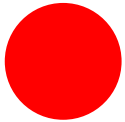
- **Ephesians 5:6-17** tells us to be careful how we walk. What helps us to stay on the path behind Jesus? Read our Bibles daily, listen to wise counsel, and pray to ask God for guidance.
- What happened after the person on the path ignored the warnings from Jesus and the wise counsel? It became harder to hear them and easier to be deceived.
- Sometimes, unconfessed sins in our lives can lead to falling for deception. What did we use to represent sins in our activity? The obstacles on the path were representing sins.
- The Peer Pressure Person was very persuasive in pulling the person in a new direction, away from following Jesus. How can we protect ourselves from people who try to pressure us into something we are unsure about? We can pray about it first and not be so quick to jump into new things.
- Sometimes, when something is wrong, we may experience a small niggling feeling or a lack of peace. This can be a sign from God that we are in danger of being deceived. Hands up if you have ever experienced this. Raise hands, but don't share unless you have time.
- Being able to recognize and avoid being deceived involves our senses. We can choose to have our senses trained by the Word of God, or we can become desensitized by ignoring the warnings that He gives us.
- What do you think happens if we disobey God and give in to doing the wrong thing? We can be more open to deception when we disobey God.
- When deciding if something is right or wrong, it's helpful to look at its fruit (or outcome) to see if it is good. This can be a helpful rule. However, sometimes, we can be fooled by outward appearances. For example, the Bible says that there will be a one-world religion that says that all religions are the same. Will this look good or bad? It will look good on the surface but will be very wrong.
- Deception will increase. How will we sift and weigh what we see in the coming days? We should look at the fruit, look at scripture, pray and ask God for warnings, and don't ignore them.

READY TO GO

Thinking about how this affects our lives and our response to the signs we see.

Think about what you will do to identify and guard against deception.

TIME FOR ACTION



1. **“STOP & THINK” Action Point**

Take two minutes to think about your own life. Are you walking on the path of God’s Word behind Jesus, or are there some areas where you may have been deceived?



2. **“PAUSE TO PRAY” Action Point**

Have a conversation with God about today’s lesson. Ask Him to show you areas in your life where you may have listened to deceiving voices.



3. **“GO & DO” Action Point**

Go and talk with others in your church community. Share your ideas of possible areas of deception, then look into His Word for Scriptures that might help you get back on the path again. You may wish to ask an adult for some help finding these verses.

SPRINGBOARD

Discuss what topic you would like to do together next time. After this session, you may wish to follow up next time with one of the following sessions:

- Don’t Believe People Claiming to Bring Peace
- The Prophetic
- Don’t Conform

DEEPER STUDY

For those who would like to study further the themes raised in this session.

For Study

1. Read through **Ephesians 6:10-20**. What are the most important parts of the armor of God? How does this connect to today's activity of walking behind Jesus on the path?
2. Read **2 Corinthians 10:3-4**. What is a spiritual stronghold, and how does this relate to today's lesson about deception? What is an example of a spiritual weapon?

For Memorizing

1. **Ephesians 5:15-16** (ESV): "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil."
2. **Jeremiah 6:16** (ESV): "Thus says the Lord: 'Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.'"

For Observation

Jeremiah 17:7-8 reminds us to trust God. He speaks to our hearts. Will we trust what He tells us and obey? This will be key to us not being deceived. Watch this [music video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JygIFH4Ly9g) and make up your own mind about how you will respond to deception. You may wish to do the hand motions in the video or make up your own. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JygIFH4Ly9g>)

For Action

Do you have a voice of wise counsel in your life? Who is that person for you? If not, who could you ask to be that voice in your life? Discuss with your parents if there are one or two other people who would be good to go to when you need wise advice.

Before the Next IN:Tribe

Deception is all around us now. Look for some examples. These might be found in media, video games, and even in school curriculum. Look for three common examples and bring them to share at the next IN:Tribe.