

“You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?”

Matthew 7:16 NLT

## lectio // Matthew 7:13-20

Jesus seems to always be contrarian to our way of thinking. I would think, actually we ALL believe that we know false teachers, and basically fake leaders by their WORDS - their teaching. We live in a world now where words are ubiquitous, surrounding the globe in seconds. We judge by their words alone. I have no idea how some of my favorite podcasters or preachers live their life. They could have a massive following online and be complete dirt-bags. Jesus says, identity comes from behavior. I think the Apostles Paul and John would be furious if this were the ONLY test of fruit, because false teachers were rampant, spreading heresy in the first century. What IF folks were horribly off in their teaching but sweethearts to the poor and disenfranchised? I'm not saying it's good or right, but actions speak really loud compared to just talking up a good game. Matthew writes down Jesus' thoughts at the end of this discussion - “Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.” Let's just hope we are close enough to “false prophets” and true prophets today to dissect their words as well as inspect their behaviors!

## oratio

Dad,

I'm a big fan of behaviors over words. However, I will probably never know the folks I listen to well enough to see their fruits, I only get to see their followers. And, granted, some of the ones I really enjoyed listening and learning from had secret lives that buried their legacy in a burning pile of social media firestorms. You are the judge of our lives, our words and behaviors. And, those who teach are judged more harshly because they lead others.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root